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[Postmodernism] is not just another word for the description of a particular style. It is also ... a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order - what is often euphemistically called modernization, postindustrial or consumer society, the society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism. This new moment of capitalism can be dated from the postwar boom in the United States in the late 1940s and early '50s or, in France, from the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The 1960s are in many ways the key transitional period, a period in which the new international order (neocolonialism, the Green Revolution, computerization and electronic information) is at one and the same time set in place and is swept and shaken by its own internal contradictions and by external resistance. Jameson, F. (1983) 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in H. Foster (Ed.) Postmodern Culture, Pluto Books, London, pp.112-3.

... at some point following World War II a new kind of society began to emerge (variously described as postindustrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society and so forth). New types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes; the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; the replacement of the old tension between city and country, center and province by the suburb and by universal

standardization; the growth of the great networks of superhighways and the arrival of automobile culture - these are some of the features which would seem to mark a radical break with that older prewar society in which modernism was still an underground force. Jameson, F. (1983) 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', *ibid.*, pp.124-5.

On the basis of such features, Frederic Jameson, one of the key theorists of postmodernity, concludes that a new kind of social formation has emerged in Occidental society. Arguably, this new social formation is characterised

by changed social structures and functions, but this is not its only significance. At the level of the individual and the social group, it is argued, this new period has produced substantial shifts in the way people experience the world. And this has major implications for the conduct of social

and educational science. From the perspective of social and educational theory and research, these transformations are of such significance that, on the one hand, they shake the foundations of previous ways of understanding the world, and, on the other, they demand the development of new forms of analysis and new social practices in philosophy, the arts, natural and social science, and education. For some, these changes are so significant that they may be regarded as decisive - they have called into question the very possibility of doing

philosophy, art, science and education in the ways these activities have been understood over the last century - and perhaps the last four centuries.

In the first section of this paper, I give a brief account of the notion of "modernity" to indicate some of the things to which "postmodernity" is meant to be a reaction, response or addition. In the second section of the paper, I describe some features of postmodernity (though my account must necessarily be highly selective - many other recent sources provide introductions to the concept and character of postmodernity and postmodernism in different fields). In the third section, I make some comments on the relevance of the concept of postmodernity to education. The fourth section addresses a few of the implications of postmodernity and postmodernisms for educational research. In the last section, I make a few suggestions about future tasks for educational theorising, research and evaluation.

Toulmin's account of the rise (and fall?) of Modernity

Statements like "The modern age has come to an end" are easier to resonate to than to understand. We can see why people set such store on the demise of modernity - a demise that is supposedly unavoidable, if it has not already happened - only if we first ask what they mean by the word "modern", and just when do they think that Modernity began.

Raise these questions, and ambiguity takes over. Some people date the origin of modernity to the year 1436, with Gutenberg's adoption of moveable type; some to a.d. 1520, and Luther's rebellion against Church authority; others to 1648, and the end of the Thirty Years' War; others to the American or French Revolution of 1776 or 1789; while modern times start for a few only in 1895, with Freud's Interpretation of Dreams and the rise of "modernism" in the fine arts and literature. How we ourselves are to feel about the prospects of Modernity - whether we join those who are despondent at its end and say goodbye to it with regret, or those who view its departure with satisfaction and look forward with pleasure to the coming of "post-modern" times - depends on what we see as the heart and core of the "modern", and what key events in our eyes gave rise to the "modern" world. Toulmin, S. (1990) *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*. The Free Press, New York, p.5.

In his book *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, Stephen Toulmin gives a history of the rise and what some may regard as the fall of modernity. Toulmin aims to give a broad historical picture against which we may understand the rise of modernity as an idea about science or society or as a framework for a view of rationality. He argues that philosophers' understandings of modernity - and, even more, the views of some contemporary theorists of the postmodern - have been too narrowly focussed on the putative philosophical and scientific achievements of modernity. Especially since the 1930s, philosophers' views of modernity have focussed on the notion of rationality as this has been understood since the publication of René Descartes (1596 - 1650) *Discourse on Methods and Meditations* in the 1630s. This narrowing has obscured some of the

historical questions to which modernity was a response. Toulmin's history takes us back to the years before Descartes to recover something of the historical and philosophical background of the period 1570 to 1610, against which Descartes' contributions are to be understood; and it paints a broader picture of the

social and political history of the development of Cartesian rationalism (and some of its successors) to interpret it as a response to the violent and turbulent circumstances of its genesis.

Toulmin focusses on Renaissance humanism as the forerunner to Cartesian rationalism, and gives a generous account of the kind of tolerant, practical qualities to be found in Renaissance humanism as a philosophical approach: one which did not expect theory to provide more than limited contributions in explaining and controlling human affairs, and which was clearly influenced by Aristotelian ideas of practical reasoning - and, in all of this, against a general background in which religious belief played a major role in understanding how the world was ordered. Cartesian rationalism moved abruptly and decisively away from Renaissance humanism towards more theoretically-oriented forms of thought. In Toulmin's view, the very abruptness of the move demands examination. How did it happen that one form of thought - in the academy and in "educated opinion" at least - could be so decisively replaced by another in a mere fifty years?

Toulmin describes Cartesian rationalism in terms of a "threefold dream":

Three dreams of the Rationalists thus turn out to be aspects of a larger dream. The dreams of a rational method, a unified science, and an exact language, unite into a single project. All of them are designed to "purify" the operations of human reason, by decontextualizing them: i.e., by divorcing them from the details of particular historical and cultural situations. Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*, p.104.

But, from the perspective of the present, the aspiration - the promise - of rationalism nevertheless turned out to be a dream:

To understand why the Rationalists' threefold dream proved a dream, indeed, we may recall some maxims that capture the central contrasts. No formalism can interpret itself; No system can validate itself; No theory can exemplify itself; No formal language can predetermine its own meanings; No science can forecast just what technology will prove of human value. In facing problems about the use of new knowledge for human good, we may ignore the ideal of intellectual exactitude, with its idolization of

geometrical proof and certainty. Instead, we must try to recapture the practical modesty of the [Renaissance] humanists, which let them live free of anxiety, despite uncertainty, ambiguity and pluralism. Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*, p.105

How we interpret the demise of rationalism will not only shape the way we understand modernity but also the way we characterise postmodernity - either as an awakening into a changed contemporary reality in which some important learnings from our modernist past are still relevant (as in the attitudes of Frederic Jameson, Douglas Kellner, and JÅrgen Habermas), or, more simply (and, perhaps, more brutally) as the end of an illusion which may still bedevil our thought and theorising in the present (as in the view of Jean-Franois Lyotard), or (even more dramatically) in which we can do no more than play with the remnants of modernity (as in the views of Jean Baudrillard).

In Toulmin's view, the shift from Renaissance humanism to Cartesian rationalism is to be understood in terms of four subsidiary shifts: (1) from an oral culture in which the theory and practice of rhetoric played a central role to a written culture in which formal logic played a central role in establishing the credentials of an argument; (2) from a practical concern with understanding and acting on particular cases to a more theoretical concern with the development of universal principles; (3) from a concern with the local, in all its concrete diversity, to the general, understood in terms of abstract axioms; and (4) from the timely - a concern with making practical decisions in the transitory situations which demand wise and prudent responses - to the timeless - a concern with understanding and explaining the enduring, perhaps eternal, nature of things.

Toulmin identifies four "generations" in the rise of Modernity For a summary, see Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*, p.129ff.

. The first, dating from about 1570 to 1610, is the period of Renaissance humanism, a period of relative stability before the Thirty Years' War (1618 - 1648) - a period which produced exemplary humanist thinkers like Michel de Montaigne (a confidant of the French king Henri IV - perhaps better known in England as Henry of Navarre - whose assassination on May 14, 1610 was one of the main precipitating events leading to the Thirty Years' War),

Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare. (This was the period in which Descartes was born and grew up; Toulmin cites circumstantial evidence which suggests that Descartes may have been deeply affected by the shock and turbulence which followed the assassination of Henri IV, and that the recent discoveries of Galileo had given the young Descartes a glimpse of a stable natural order which might be addressed in a more contemplative, what we might now call "scientific", way - a vision of order and a task of contemplation both of which could be understood as in some way "above" temporal problems and conflicts.)

The second period, from 1610 to 1640, was one of immense political violence and turbulence in most of Europe.

This period was marked, Toulmin says, by "closing the boundaries" of thought because, in the wars between Protestants and Catholics of the Counter-Reformation, it was no longer possible to appeal to religion as a common ground for resolving disputes. Thus (and crucially for the development of Modernity), a thinker of central importance like Descartes was obliged to look outside religious belief for a new basis upon which to establish a rational system of thought - one which might be capable of gaining assent from all thinking people. This, indeed, was what Descartes attempted to do in his *Discourse on Method* and his *Meditations*, both of which appeared in the 1630s. Toulmin identifies two strains in Descartes work, always in a state of unresolved tension: one, perhaps the best known today, is the stream of thought about a rationalist method which produced the *cogito* and best exemplifies Descartes' foundationalism; the other, Toulmin describes in terms of Descartes the "cryptanalyst" who tried to decode nature and (singlehandedly!) establish the framework for a complete unified science.

The third period, 1650 to 1690, is a transitional period after the Thirty Years' War, marked by diplomacy and the re-establishment of social order at least in the capitals of the emerging nation states, which Toulmin describes in terms of a "struggle for stability".

The fourth period, 1690-1720, is characterised by the establishment of the nation states of Europe more or less as they were to remain until 1914, marked by the realisation of the idea of the "cosmopolis" - the stable nation state whose social and political order in some sense mirrored the stability of the order of nature.

This was a period of significant scientific development, most clearly identified in the work of Leibniz and Newton and in the working out of their scientific systems.

Toulmin identifies a dozen main presuppositions, not (he cautions) assumptions, of Modernity, all of which could be taken for granted as "standing to reason" after about 1700. These were a framework within which the achievements of the early period of Modernist thought should be understood, though all were overturned during the late Modern period (in the hundred years or so before 1914):

The principal elements, or timbers, of the Modern Framework divide into two groups, reflecting the initial division of Nature from Humanity. ... On the Nature side of the division we find half a dozen beliefs:

Nature is governed by fixed laws set up at the creation;  
The basic structure of Nature was established only a few thousand years back;  
The objects of physical nature are composed of inert matter;

So, physical objects and processes do not think;  
After the creation, God combined natural objects into stable and hierarchical systems of "higher" and "lower" things;

Like "action" in society, "motion" in nature flows downward, from the "higher" creatures to the "lower" ones.

On the Humanity side, we find half a dozen similar beliefs:

The "human" thing about humanity is its capacity for rational thought or action;

Rationality and causality follow different rules;

Since thought and action do not take place causally, actions cannot be explained by any causal science of psychology;

Human beings can establish stable systems in society, like the physical systems in nature;

So, humans live mixed lives, part rational and part causal: as creatures of Reason, their lives are intellectual or spiritual, as creatures of Emotion, they are bodily or causal;

Emotion typically frustrates and distorts the work of Reason; so human reason is to be trusted and encouraged, while the emotions are to be distrusted and restrained. Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*, pp.109-10.

After the fourth period, 1690-1720, came the years of political turmoil and revolution which recast the idea of the nation state in which subjects owed loyalty to a monarch; instead, the new order required that the legitimacy of the state depended on the consent of subjects, and rulers - whether princes or parliaments - were required to embody and express the will of the nation. Toulmin describes the period from 1690 to 1914 as "the high tide of sovereign 'nationhood' in Europe" (p.139). In this period, the Modern Framework of presuppositions about Nature and Humanity was progressively challenged and overturned by scientific advances, until not one of its elements was accepted by reasonably educated people. In the latter part of this period (from the middle of the nineteenth century until the First World War), in Toulmin's view, there was a relaxation of the tight grip of Modernity, and (despite accepted views about the narrow-mindedness of the Victorian period) there were signs of a return to the tolerant, open-minded, practical realism which characterised Renaissance humanism. (In Toulmin's view, and contrary to the ideas of some theorists of postmodernism, what is called the "modern" style in late nineteenth century art and architecture might better be understood in terms of the emergence of ideals similar to those which had earlier characterised Renaissance humanism.)

The First World War produced a marked change of attitude towards the more liberal and tolerant spirit which had

begun to emerge in the late nineteenth century. The period between the First and Second World Wars (perhaps running though into the 1950s) was marked, in science as in other aspects of social life, by a return to the quest for certainty, perhaps best exemplified in the work of the Vienna Circle in the '20s and '30s whose members aimed to achieve the unification of science and the re-establishment of positivism. It was against this background of once again "closing the boundaries" in the face of social and political upheaval, Toulmin believes, that the philosophical canon - evidenced in the philosophy curriculum in British universities in the 1930s and 1940s - came to locate the beginning of modern philosophy with Descartes and not, as Toulmin thinks more appropriate, with Montaigne, Francis Bacon and other thinkers now frequently regarded as belonging to the late mediæval (or Renaissance) period. The 1950s were a last gasp of that recent period in which the quest for certainty had once again been in the ascendant - the



period which we might now regard as the high point of twentieth century positivism. The more stable and affluent 1960s permitted the long-delayed catharsis: there was a relaxation of the rigour of the renewed quest for certainty (which had characterised the period from 1914 to the 1950s), and the more tolerant, practical and modest aspirations which characterised Renaissance humanism blossomed once again.

This shift, in which the twentieth century quest for certainty was juxtaposed with the new humanism of the 1960s, produced the conditions under which philosophers, natural scientists, social theorists, artists, educators and others have been driven to seek new kinds of theoretical resolutions between the different streams of thought which, in the '60s and '70s, co-existed very uneasily, contesting the terrain of scientific, philosophical and cultural legitimacy. These are the conditions under which the opposed contemporary theories of postmodernity incubated and developed. Some are more extreme, positing a decisive (perhaps cataclysmic) end to modernity and the aspirations of the modern, while others are more modulated, seeing modernity as in the process of being transformed and extended by the new, "postmodern" era, rather than ended by it. Toulmin himself is clearly of the latter view. In our current era, he says,

... it will be clear that we need to balance the hope for certainty and clarity in theory with the impossibility of avoiding uncertainty and ambiguity in practice. Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*, p.175.

On the basis of his own interpretation of modernity, Toulmin makes an important point about how it has been understood by different authors. In particular, his point concerns the disagreement about dating modernity.

Some writers, especially those from a French background, date modernity from Descartes, and identify the major features of modernity in terms of the quest for certainty as Descartes understood the task. Critics of modernity, like Lyotard, who take this view are thus inclined to see modernity as a failure, and see to see rationality as having been replaced by absurdity, with no room remaining in our era for constructive responses. Defenders of modernity like Habermas, on the other hand, see plenty of room for constructive responses to our changed social, cultural, economic and political conditions, and see

possibilities for sustaining the Enlightenment commitment to emancipation from oppression and false understanding into our new era. In Toulmin's view, the protagonists of these different positions may be at cross-purposes: what the French call modernity may, at core, refer more specifically to Cartesian rationality, while at the core of what Habermas calls modernity may be the progressive, emancipatory, post-Descartes sequence of scientific developments and overturnings of the Modernist Framework of presuppositions which Toulmin outlined - in particular, the achievements of the Enlightenment. While it may be over-optimistic to expect that the great debates over post-modernity can be resolved by dispelling this possible misunderstanding, the point nevertheless suggests that more precision might help in constructing the debate about what contemporary philosophy, natural science, social science and art can borrow from the past (even if it must be reframed or refurbished) and what must be abandoned.

To ask about what contemporary philosophy, natural science, social science and art can

borrow from the past, however, is to presuppose something about what our present condition is. And this is the very matter about which theorists of the postmodern disagree: the extent to which our present is to be understood in terms of its continuities with, as opposed to its ruptures from the past. It is therefore necessary to open the question of what our present "condition" is, whether it is to be understood as "postmodern", and how it might be characterised from the perspective of different theories of the postmodern (including different "postmodernisms").

The postmodern condition

There can be no doubt that the historical circumstances of the late twentieth century are very different from those of earlier epochs. What the transformations of contemporary social life have been, however, and the relative significance of these changes with respect to one another (and with respect to the extent to which the present epoch, as a whole, differs from earlier ones) is a matter of dispute. What the present epoch is - the nature of "postmodernity", if you like - depends not only on the epoch itself but also on the position of the observer or commentator with respect to the epoch. Here, of course, we are mostly interested in the views of

theorists who are themselves located within the period

they are aiming to interpret, and most of them are willing concede that there are particular difficulties and dangers in interpreting the present, not the least of which is their own perspective and their competence to interpret the present given the specificity of their own backgrounds and forms of expertise.

Thus, the present era is interpreted differently by different species of postmodernisms which vary not only in the extent of their approval or disapproval of the transformations underway, but, at an even more basic level, also differ in their judgements about what the key transformations have been. It would not be too facile, however, to say that there is some general agreement that the epoch in which we now live is sufficiently different from former times for it to be reasonable to describe it in terms of discontinuity and some kind of rupture from the past. As has already been suggested, what the ruptures that yielded the new epoch have been, and when they took place, is in dispute among theorists of the postmodern. Nevertheless, there would seem to be at least some agreement that we are in a new era, that this new era poses substantial challenges and maybe confronts us with some serious dangers, and that at least some of the old ways of understanding our world (including at least some elements of the "modern" perspective, whatever it may be) need adjustment if we are to understand and influence the world in which we now find ourselves.

It is impossible here to do justice to the diversity of views of the ruptures that have produced an era of "postmodernity" or to do justice to the variety of theoretical and political responses to the "postmodern" era. This is, after all, the central subject of the contemporary debates about postmodernity. Mentioning some aspects of the diversity, however, may serve to demonstrate just how far-reaching the ruptures have been in terms of the fields in which the contemporary seems discontinuous from the past. And this, of course, is to lend weight to the view that we are in a new and somehow different era, not just experiencing multiple transformations within an era which stretches back into something known and familiar - something we can already understand and which we can use to orient ourselves in the present and immediate future with a measure of comfort and security.

Theoretical self-consciousness about the relationship between the postmodern and theorising about it: the dissolution of the autonomy of the cultural sphere

At this point, it is worth emphasising that there is a the dialectical relationship between "postmodernity" or "the postmodern condition" (the object to be understood)

and postmodernist theorising (which necessarily includes the perspective of a subject construing and attempting to understand that supposed object). One of the peculiarly intense elements of postmodern theorising, which may mark it off from at least some forms of modern theorising, is its consciousness of the difficulties imposed by this dialectical relationship. Theorists of the postmodern are sharply aware that activities like scientific theorising, the arts, and philosophy are not to be regarded as in a privileged position "outside" their times (able to comment on them from a secure, "objective" vantage-point); on the contrary, such activities are to be understood as part of postmodernity and "the postmodern condition". This has been expressed in terms of the dissolution of "the autonomy of the cultural sphere": art, science and philosophy are no longer to be regarded as activities separate or separable from the rest of the world, but as very much within the world, in myriad ways articulating the world for itself. In an "information age", indeed, the cultural productions of artists, scientists and philosophers are now, to an unprecedented extent, all of a piece with that endless, restless babble of voices which names the world in a ceaselessly-multiplying variety of media and messages. And this effect is produced not simply because as the world has become more vocal about itself so that artists, scientists and philosophers must contest for airspace with others who claim no special authority for their knowledge or productions, but also because information itself has become a commodity, so that the cultural sphere, which in times past could at least preserve an illusion of autonomy, has now been actively incorporated into the economic and political spheres.

For Baudrillard See especially Baudrillard, J. (1972) *Pour une Critique de l'Economie Politique du Signe*, Gallimard, Paris (translated into English by C. Levin as *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Telos Press, St. Louis, 1981); (1983a) *Simulations*, trans. P. Foss and P. Patton, Semiotext(e), New York; (1983b) *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities ... or, the End of the Social*, trans. P. Foss, P. Patton and J. Johnston, Semiotext(e), New York; (1984) 'On Nihilism', *On the Beach*, vol. 6, Spring, pp.38-9. , in particular, this is a central feature of the postmodern condition and postmodernity. For Lyotard See especially

Liotard, J.-F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

, too, it is now a banal commonplace that it is by no means clear that art, science and philosophy serve "the good for humankind", but that they serve particular interests - socially, culturally, economically and politically. For Lyotard, in particular, it now makes no sense to pursue the Kantian possibility that the realms of theoretical, practical and aesthetic reason can be integrated to one another; it is not just that they are autonomous, but, rather, that they are internally self-contradictory as well as incommensurable with one another. In his view, we can no longer avert our eyes from this uncomfortable epistemological condition, hoping that something will turn up to integrate what has been seen as only incommensurable for the moment; by now, we are obliged to recognise frankly that we are in this contradictory state, so we must henceforward reject the totalising "grand narratives" and "metanarratives" of modernist approaches to social analysis. See Willem van Reijen and Dick Veerman (1988) An interview with Jean-François Lyotard, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos.2-3, pp. 277-309.

. Moreover, now more than ever, the personal and institutional self-interests of artists, scientists and

philosophers are open to calculation: it is a matter of concern whose interests, apart from their own, these people serve. They may even be, in Lyotard's view, cultural terrorists in the sense that they serve the great terror of totalising ideologies which have served the interests of capital - and, though admittedly only at their worst, Nazism - in modernity. What may once have been, or appeared to be, an autonomous cultural sphere is now part of an information industry, to be understood not just culturally but also economically and politically, as much open to misuse and abuse as print and electronic media or the global electronic networks in which exchanges of goods and services have been replaced by exchanges of information.

Self-consciousness of this location of the cultural sphere within, as opposed to separate from, the economic and political spheres is one important aspect of the consciousness and concerns of different theorists of the postmodern. The institutional boundaries of universities and other cultural institutions like the museum. See, for example, Douglas Crimp (1983) 'On the Museum's Ruins', in

Hal Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London; David Roberts (1988) *Beyond progress: The museum and montage*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos. 2-3, pp.543-57.

, and the personal boundaries which could mark out a personal space around the artistic rebel-critic, were boundaries which could, in some sense, identify a group of people as critics, perhaps even an avant-garde, outside, or in opposition to, other institutions of the modern state and society. Now, however, these boundaries appear to be dissolved, perhaps decisively, so that critical analysis may be understood as merely contributing to the production of alternative images of the world - as one manifestation of the crisis or pathology of the information age or the postmodern condition - rather than as a source of authentic, justified responses to them. Baudrillard seems to accept that the critical space available to the artist or critic is now irrevocably assimilated into the culture "industry"; Lyotard seems to hope that there is still the possibility of some kind of oppositional position, but suggests that the opportunities for criticism are now very limited indeed, amounting to little more than writing against the trends of the age (without much prospect of effect, since the authority of the intellectual has been so compromised by the cultural changes which have redefined the role of the intellectual and the artist, and the institutions which have protected them). Other theorists of the postmodern are more optimistic about the opportunities for and effectiveness of criticism and critical resistance, however, though few (with the possible exception of Habermas, who has taken a stridently "anti-postmodernist" stance in defence of modernity. See Habermas, J. (1981) *Modernity versus postmodernity*, *New German Critique*, vol.22, Winter, pp.3-14; and *Lectures on the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. For a brief critical analysis of

Habermas's views, see Kellner, D. (1988) *Postmodernism as social theory*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos. 2-3, pp.239-69. In Kellner's view, Habermas

and some of his followers have taken too defensive a line on postmodernity, breaking the Frankfurt School critical theory tradition of vigorously accepting the theoretical challenge of developing new theoretical approaches for the analysis of changed cultural conditions. Instead, Habermas has been overly defensive of modernity, seeing the critics of modernity as, in various ways, conservative; in particular, he distinguishes the anti-modernism of the "young conservatives" who "recapitulate the basic experience of aesthetic modernity" (he traces this line of thought as leading "from Georges Bataille via Michel Foucault to Jacques Derrida"), the

premodernism of "old conservatives" who reluctantly give up the unfulfilled promises of modernity and advocate a return to

Aristotelianism (here, Habermas cites Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas and Robert Spaemann - though on some points he might perhaps also include some of the recent works of Alasdair MacIntyre or Stephen Toulmin); and the postmodernism of the "neo-conservatives" who celebrate (if that is the word) the technical advances made possible through late modernity while recommending "a politics of defusing the cultural content of cultural modernity", and keeping "politics as far aloof as possible from the demands of moral-practical justification" (here, Habermas names, among others, the early Wittgenstein, though he conspicuously does not cite Lyotard or Baudrillard). The references here are to a reprint of 'Modernity versus postmodernity' as 'Modernity - An Incomplete Project', in H. Foster (Ed.) (1983) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London, pp.14-5.

) believe that the privileged position of the artist and the intellectual in the high Modern period could ever be recaptured.

One (admirably level-headed) survey of ideas about the nature of postmodernity and theories of the postmodern is to be found in Steven Connor's book *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary* Connor, S. (1989) *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

. Supplemented by a useful bibliography, the book discusses "postmodernism and the academy" and various views of postmodernity (brief and critical introductions to the different kinds of theorising of the postmodern by Jean-François Lyotard, Frederic Jameson, and Jean Baudrillard), then outlines positions on postmodernism in architecture and the visual arts, literature, performance, TV, video and film, and popular culture. A final section outlines a view of postmodernism which advocates "critical modesty" (in contrast to some of the more excessive, apocalyptic visions of postmodernity), and discusses postmodernism and cultural politics (exploring possibilities of resistance, postmodernism in feminism and in post-colonial cultures, and the possibilities of avant-gardism in contemporary culture and politics).

On modernity, Connor takes the view that

... the modernist period is often credited with the discovery or rediscovery of those real intensities of experience which had for so long been concealed or distorted by false structures of understanding. But isn't

it just as likely that this rediscovery of "experience" was the result of reorganisation of categories and relationships, was, in other words, a product of a certain kind of knowledge? If this is the case, then it imposes a slightly greater responsibility on the historian of such concepts. Modernism must be grasped, henceforward, not just in terms of the way it experienced itself, but also in terms of its own modes of self-understanding - the ways it thought it was experiencing itself [*italics in original*]. Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p.4.

Toulmin's book may suggest one way of grasping the historical location of the modes of understanding and self-understanding of modernity, (though Lyotard and Baudrillard are less sanguine about its achievements and its continuing relevance); more importantly, though, Toulmin does present a way of understanding the self-understanding of modernity - perhaps, for those of us who understand our thought to have been shaped by the modern era, our self-understanding.

Connor focusses on the collapse of the supposed autonomy of the cultural sphere in his analysis of the rise of postmodernity, and draws attention to theoretical

self-reflection (or self-consciousness) as a central feature of the rise of postmodernism:

... in seeking to understand modernity and its much-trumpeted sequel, postmodernity, we are forced to use modes of understanding that derive from the periods and concepts under consideration, forced to repeat histories of concepts we might wish to stand clear of. But there is no way to avoid this, no way to duck the consequences of having to think about the relationship of experience and knowledge, present and past, with terms and structures that derive from these things. In trying to understand our contemporary selves in the moment of the present, there are no safely-detached observation-posts, not in 'science', 'religion', or even in 'history'. We are in and of the moment that we are attempting to analyse, in and of the structures we employ to analyse it. One might almost say that this terminal self-consciousness ('terminal' is glamorous, but imprecise, since the point is that such self-consciousness is never terminal) is what characterises our contemporary or 'postmodern' moment. This self-reflexivity will necessarily be evident in what follows [*in the book*], for its argument is that, in trying to understand postmodernism and the postmodernism debate,



we must look at the form as well as the content of that debate, must try to understand the priorities and questions which it produces as its own mode of self-understanding alongside the questions with which it seems to be dealing. Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p.5.

Connor wants

... to draw attention to changing relationships of priority between cultural and critical activity, and the curious and significant self-designation that is involved in the critical discourse around postmodernism. My claim in this book will be, in fact, that this self-reflection is, if anything, more significant than the reflection upon, or description of contemporary culture which seemed to be offered in postmodernist critical theory. Postmodernism finds its object neither wholly in the cultural sphere, nor wholly in the critical-institutional sphere, but in some tensely renegotiated space between the two. Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p.7.

It is surely their awareness of this tension, and their acute self-consciousness about the impossibility of ever again occupying some "objective", or at least institutionally-neutral, sphere from which to observe human affairs that lies at the heart of postmodernity in the academy. While some theorists of the postmodern - Lyotard and Baudrillard most obviously, perhaps - react to this location by adopting a kind of relativism which sees the cultural productions of the academy as pretty much of a piece with other forms of cultural production, shorn of critical capacity by being just more voices in the babel of the contemporary world, others (perhaps Frederic Jameson, more certainly JÄrgen Habermas, still more certainly Steven Connor and other commentators like Stuart Hall Hall, S. (1986) 'History, politics and postmodernism: Stuart Hall

and Cultural Studies', An interview with Lawrence Grossberg, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol.10, Summer, pp.61-77.

and Edward Said Said, E. (1983) 'Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community', in H. Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London (originally published in *Critical Inquiry* 9, September, 1982.

) seem to adopt a more relationist position - a position which (since Einstein) understands that the observer and the observed form a kind of conjoint whole in which any observation of (and hence any theorising about the nature of) the thing observed is recognised to be sharply dependent on the space-time location of

the observer (and, we might add, following Habermas, by the self-interests of, and the knowledge-constitutive interests pursued by, the observer).

Having mentioned in passing the views on modernity and postmodernity of Lyotard and Baudrillard, it is important to mention the views of another, very different, theorist of postmodernity: Frederic Jameson. See especially Jameson, F. (1983) 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in H. Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London; and Jameson, F. (1984) *Postmodernism: or the cultural logic of late capitalism*, *New Left Review*, no.146, July/August, pp.53-92. For two clear, short introductions with critical commentaries, see Kellner, D. (1988) *Postmodernism as social theory*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos. 2-3, pp. 239-69; and Connor, S. (1989) *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

. While agreeing with Lyotard and Baudrillard that postmodernity does represent some kind of an epochal break with the past (though perhaps disagreeing with them on how sharp the ruptures from the past have been), he differs from them in seeing postmodernity as an extension of modernity. Jameson concedes that postmodernity is characterised by new cultural forms, and that there are new kinds of substantive relationships between the cultural and the economic, political and social realms. Unlike Lyotard and Baudrillard, however, Jameson employs Marxian categories to understand postmodernity, seeing it as a manifestation of a third phase of capitalism. Drawing on Ernst Mandel's theory of late capitalism Mandel, E. (1975) *Late Capitalism*, New Left Books, London.

, Jameson characterises early bourgeois capitalist society in terms of a separation of functions and reification of social relationships which are then treated as "objects" (reification); in this phase of capitalism, through reification, the sign became unnaturally distinct from its referent. In its second, expansionary phase, capitalism separated capital from labour and produced still more complex differentiation between the sign and its referents, and still more elaborate reifications, especially through the development of scientific and technical languages which became the specialist preserve of managers, owners and cultural-scientific specialists. This kind of reification was a feature of the high modernist period. The third phase of capitalism, late capitalism, is marked by even more complex forms of reification, in which, as Connor summarises it, "signs are relieved of their

function of referring to the world and this brings about the expansion of the power of capital into the realm of the sign, of culture and representation, along with modernism's prized space of autonomy" Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p.47. . Connor quotes Jameson's view of the result: we are left

with that pure and random play of signifiers which we call postmodernism, and which no longer produces monumental works of the modernist type, but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage: metabooks which cannibalise other books, metatexts which collate bits of other texts. Jameson, F. (1987) 'Reading without Interpretation: Postmodernism and the Video-Text', in D. Attridge, N. Fabb, A. Durant and C. McCabe [Eds.] *The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between Language and Literature*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp.198-223; the quotation is from p.222 of Jameson's text, and appears on p.47 in Connor, S. (1989) *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford. By this clumsy form of citation, I invite the reader to speculate about this essay and others on postmodernism in the light of the substance of what Jameson here asserts (one could similarly describe a hundred other topics in contemporary social and educational theory). On this specific point, there are clear affinities between Jameson's view and that of Baudrillard, of course

- though Baudrillard describes us as having little more to do than play with the remnants of modernity among the images and hyperrealities with which we are constantly presented in and by the media.

The grounding of his theorising of postmodernity and postmodernisms in the changed technical and economic relations of late capitalism makes it clear that Jameson employs a version of the Marxian base-superstructure model which still accords some autonomy to the cultural sphere or superstructure, though also seeing it as dialectically related to the economic base. Arguably, it also draws on Gramscian and Althusserian views of ideology and those views of base-superstructure relationships in which the relationship between base and superstructure is not understood as one-way (in either direction) determination, but as cyclical and reflexive - a key feature of social reproduction and transformation.

On Jameson's view, then, there is a new kind of enmeshing of the cultural, economic and political spheres in postmodernity, but it is still fruitful to employ (transformed versions of) the modernist, Marxian categories in analysing the transformations which together have produced "postmodernity". In this, of course, he is bluntly at odds with Lyotard and Baudrillard, though his views are explored and analysed sympathetically by other social theorists (like Kellner and Connor).

It is not possible, in this very brief survey (I am particularly conscious of neglecting explicit discussion of postmodernity/postmodernism and texts, literature, cinema, and popular culture, and the complex interweaving of contemporary feminist and post-colonialist writings with various postmodernisms - all easily accessible in the plethora of introductions to postmodernism, let alone in the contemporary literature of these fields), to have done more than to show that different theorists of the postmodern focus on different features of postmodernity, and are therefore driven to adopt very different attitudes towards it. It may be useful to carry this exploration just a little further into one realm in which postmodernism is a matter of substantial contemporary debate to elucidate some further features of postmodernity and postmodernism: architecture and the visual arts.

Some issues: aspects of postmodernity in architecture and the visual arts

In architecture and the visual arts, postmodernism seems to have a slightly more narrowed reference. It is defined more particularly in relation to the "modernist" period in art in the late nineteenth century (a period which Toulmin regards as one in which there were faltering steps towards the reinstatement of the Renaissance humanism of the early modernist period of 1570 to 1610). Especially in the early twentieth century, there was a flight from this modernism in a range of abstract, non-representational art movements including, for example, (what Toulmin would describe as the rationalism of) the work of the de Stijl movement and painters like Piet Mondrian, and, in architecture, the "international style" associated with Mies van der Rohe. There is a tension here, however:

though much of the work of the period of avant-garde

movements in art and architecture was "anti-modernist" in one sense, it was still "modernist" in another. For much of this period (the late nineteenth century through to the 1950s), artists could be seen as cultural rebels, expressing a more or less critical (and in this sense modernist) perspective on their cultures, though in architecture it was more difficult to maintain the critical stance (when, in most capitals and large cities of the western world, major public buildings were to be erected on expensive land, in spaces already largely defined by buildings dating from the expansionary days of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and when the buildings themselves needed to gain the approval of public or private developers less interested in critical commentary on their times than in building functional monuments).

Kenneth Frampton Frampton, K. (1983) "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points

for an Architecture of Resistance", in H. Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London.

, writing in the early 1980s, believed that it was still possible for architecture to be critical, and to resist the abstraction and universalism of much architecture of the time. Frampton cites Andreas Huyssens on the limits of avant-gardism in architecture:

The American post-modernist avant-garde, therefore, is not only the end game of avant-gardism. It also represents the fragmentation and decline of critical adversary culture. Huyssens, A. (1981) *The search for tradition: Avant-Garde and Postmodernism in the 1970s*, *New German Critique*, vol.22, Winter, p.34; cited by Frampton, op. cit., p. 19.

Frampton is less pessimistic. Using the idea of Critical Regionalism coined by Alex Tzonis and Lilian Lefaivre Tzonis, A. and Lefaivre, L. (1981) *The grid and the pathway: An introduction to the work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis*, *Architecture in Greece*, vol.15, p. 178; cited by Frampton, op. cit., p.20. , he advocates "arriäre-gardism", or explicitly drawing on critical roots in framing our response to contemporary times. Maintaining faith with the critical ideals of modernity, he believes that it is still possible to use architecture for critical purposes. One aspect of his vision is shaped by Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*:

The only indispensable material in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities for action are

always present will power remain with them and the foundation of cities, which as city states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore the most important material prerequisite for power. Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p.201; cited by Frampton, op. cit., p.25.

On this view, architecture, and no doubt architecture in major cities, may thus be capable of shaping public spaces which will influence - or obstruct - the ways power can be harnessed, and who will have the opportunity to harness it. Frampton writes with scathing and unconcealed contempt of the views of the celebrated American postmodernist architect Robert Venturi (also cited, with an illuminating analysis, as a key figure in postmodernist architecture by Jameson in 'Postmodernism:

or the cultural logic of late capitalism'):

The manipulative basis of such ideologies [as those of people Frampton describes as "positivistic urban planners"] has never been more openly expressed than in Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) wherein the author asserts that Americans do not need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television. Frampton, op. cit., p.25; the reference is to Venturi, R. (1966) *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, p. 133.

Frampton believes that by considering six types of issues (perhaps rebalancing what he sees as out of kilter in postmodern architecture), it is possible for architecture to recover its critical potential: (1) by attention to culture (realising and expressing psycho-social reality) versus civilisation (which he sees as primarily concerned with instrumental reason); (2) by reconsidering how architects can locate themselves to what he sees as the rise and fall of the avant-garde (by taking the "arriäre-garde" perspective of critical regionalism); (3) by considering critical regionalism in relation to world culture; (4) by exploring the possibilities of resistance inherent in the place-form; (5) by exploring the possibilities of culture versus nature in sites and buildings (rehumanising and resocialising spaces by the use of topography, context, climate, light and tektonic forms); and (6) by rebalancing the visual and the tactile (since the latter, Frampton believes, has a

powerful capacity to evoke authentic understandings of our place in the world).

Postmodernity in architecture and the visual arts thus includes the development of (what we may regard as a surviving modernism in) responses to the abstraction and critical avant-gardism which superseded late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernism. On the one hand, some postmodern responses have been the development of forms of art and architecture which extend these features to the point where styles can be borrowed and reinterpreted without particular attention to the periods in which they developed, thus giving the impression that the postmodern style - if there can be such a thing - flattens history to produce the historical "depthlessness" remarked by Jameson in 'Postmodernism: or the cultural logic of late capitalism', *ibid.*

. Since every new, conscious style can do no more than to add to the diversity already embraced within postmodern styles, some argue, architects and visual artists are faced with the bleak prospect of being more or less paralysed in their capacity to offer any coherent criticism of or confrontation with postmodernity. It is as if we were beyond the point at which we can be shocked or surprised by anything, since "anything goes" already. So, some respond, "if you can't lick 'em, join 'em", and contribute to the endless recombination of already existing forms; on the other hand, others argue, new kinds of connection must be found in which the

relationships between the artist, the artefact and the audience can once again be invigorated with a critical sense, and forms of opposition can be created.

I hasten to point out that this is a highly selective and therefore grossly inadequate treatment of the diversity of postmodernisms in architecture and the visual arts, but it may do to illustrate some major themes. I have attempted (1) to illustrate the argument about the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere which some commentators on postmodernity bemoan, and (2) to illustrate the closing of, and unmasking of, the circle of relationships between the culture, the artist, the artefact and the audience, which makes it so difficult to retain a critical capacity in architecture and the visual arts. But this discussion may also have demonstrated that, once art and artists decisively eschewed the function of representation in art - at first, in the early modern period, playfully, and then by playing

endlessly with the possibilities of forms for their own sake - they were on a slippery slope from which it was difficult to recover the authentic critical capacity which modernism sought through art. Even when it most strives to shock or confront, late modernist and postmodernist art has become part of an image industry which (some argue) has exhausted the critical capacity of its audience, transforming the role of the audience into that of passive observer of the spectacle of cultural production. Art became indistinguishable from entertainment. In this way, critical and non-critical art alike have transformed the relationship between art and society so that we now inhabit what Guy Debord (1987) *Society of the Spectacle*, Rebel Press, Exeter (?); cited by Steven Connor (1989), *ibid.*, p.51.

(a member of the radical 1960s group of French social critics called "the Situationists") describes as a "society of the spectacle".

If this view is correct, then the idea of representation is a central element of modernity, and the disavowal of representation (as in non-representational art, or in architecture in which a facade merely decorates and disguises the form and function behind it) is central to postmodernism. Of course it is no longer possible to believe that art or science can offer an entirely "objective" or neutral representation of the world - one uncontaminated by the perspective and interests of the artist (or, for that matter, the audience). But it may be that the issue of representation can provide a platform for making a response to postmodernity - a focus for debate about the relationship between the world, the artist or scientist, the purported representation, and the audience which receives it. Perhaps, in this way (and if one were inclined to believe that the task were still in some way still possible and worthwhile - that is, if, unlike Baudrillard, and like Habermas, Jameson, Connor or Frampton, one still held out hopes of a critical leverage on culture and society through art and

science), it might be possible to recover something of the critical capacity of art and science through a notion of "critical resistance" (which Lyotard, Willem van Reijen and Dick Veerman (1988) *An interview with Jean-François Lyotard, Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos.2-3, pp. 277-309.

, too, still believes possible through a kind of guerrilla action of writing and art which might interrupt the power relations of international culture, economy and



politics).

### Education and postmodernity

On the view of many commentators, then, we are now in an age of postmodernity and postmodernisms, and, though there may be differences in the degree to which these transformations and ruptures are to be regarded as "epochal", it seems reasonable to conclude that we do confront new challenges as a consequence of the

"postmodern condition" in which we find ourselves. It is difficult to summarise the transformations which mark "postmodernity" as different from, or (as some would have it) a new stage of, modernity, but some examples might suffice to sketch the shift.

There has been a transformation of the content and forms of contemporary culture and even in our notions of "culture" (for example, high versus low or popular culture) including dramatic changes in the nature of the media

and in the content and forms of presentation of media images (the "television generation", the "electronic age", the "information age", the "society of the spectacle", etc.); increased awareness of the plurality of national, ethnic and linguistic viewpoints with internationalisation of communications and global interaction, etc.; a radical shift from colonialist to post-colonialist perspectives on modernisation, North-South relations, and questions of "Third World" and community development which produces problems of coping with the plurality of perspectives on the world without any credible source of authoritative readings of societies and their interrelationships; "depthlessness" in perspectives on history and society as historically- and regionally-distinct perspectives appear in the daily montage of media presentations; the loss of the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere (as distinct from the economic and political spheres) with the recognition that culture and communications are an industry and that they are politicised, not "objective", "neutral" or necessarily critical; the apparent loss of a critical space for intellectuals and avant-garde movements; and so forth. Similarly, there have been massive changes in the nature, content and form of economic structures and interrelationships, for example through the shifts which have made a large proportion of the world's production cultural production and the production of information rather than the production of goods and services as these were understood before the Second World War (and in earlier phases of capitalism); the development of "late capitalism"; the global unification of control of the means of production

and a complementary diffusion, fragmentation and privatisation (individualisation) of consumption; new conflicts over the imperatives of development, modernisation and exploitation versus the imperatives of the ecology movement, conservation and the preservation of natural diversity; and so forth. And there have been

massive transformations in the nature, content and forms of political life, for example, through internationalisation; the decline of the nation-state with the rise of transnational economic structures; the restructuring of politics by the media; the emergence of social movements which have restructured previously taken-for-granted relationships between classes, rich and poor, men and women, ethnic groups, and between regional and sub-national groupings; the decline in authority (and legitimation crises) of the state and of cultural institutions (like churches and universities), with the attendant loss of a clear role for critical voices and perspectives (which seem to be swallowed up by, and assimilated into the "information industry" and the media industry).

It also seems reasonable to conclude that our self-consciousness of this condition of postmodernity means that we must take seriously a range of theoretical challenges: there is a major task ahead of re-evaluating our theoretical categories, and their methodological and epistemological (and even their ontological) presuppositions and assumptions. Some have argued that most of our previous, "modern" modes of analysis must now be abandoned (most especially Baudrillard, though others share his view in more modulated tones); some believe that we can still use existing "modern" forms of analysis (Habermas); and some believe that our modes of analysis need considerable supplementation and modification (Jameson, Kellner, Connor, Hall, Said).

Clearly, these transformations in society and in ways of thinking about society - the transformations of postmodernity and postmodernisms - have very substantial implications for education and schooling. Clearly, the former has direct implications for thinking about what can and should be taught (curriculum and pedagogy), and the latter has implications for thinking about how whatever we want to teach can and should be represented in curricula and pedagogies (and for educational research - though we will come to that later).

The representation problem

A decade ago, Ulf Lundgren argued that the central

problem of curriculum is "the representation problem" Lundgren, U.P. (1983) *Between Hope and Happening: Text and Context in Curriculum*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.

. In my view, this notion still provides a helpful way to pose the problem of curriculum, though the problem of "representation" has now become highly problematic.

A curriculum purports to represent to rising generations something knowable and worth knowing about the world. Lundgren pointed out that making any such representation involved problems of selection and organisation of possible curriculum content from the seemingly endless list of things that could be included, pointed out that curricula were always shaped by traditions and conditions in schooling which would favour the teaching of some things rather than others, and (following Basil Bernstein) pointed out that what could and would be included in any curriculum was shaped by prevailing "curriculum codes" characteristic of historical periods and cultures. Perhaps prophetically, he referred to the curriculum code of contemporary Europe in terms of an "invisible code" (in which the principles of selection and organisation of curriculum contents and pedagogies

had been taken out of the purview of teachers and increasingly handed over to specialists in curriculum and curriculum development outside schools); one might now conclude that the difficulty of identifying and characterising the "invisible" code of the present is partly the consequence of the explosion in modes, codes and genres of representation in the postmodern period. To put the matter another way, in the new era of curriculum and curriculum development since World War Two (and especially since the 1960s), there has been a new consciousness, and a greater muddying, of (1) the relationships between the "authors" (for example, curriculum developers, educational policy makers) and the "readers" (teachers, students, school communities, etc.) of curriculum texts; (2) the relationships between the contexts of production in society (including cultural production) and the contexts of reproduction (education ministries, schools, classrooms, etc.); and (3) the relationships of intertextuality between the different kinds of texts which shape the content and forms of curricula (relationships between this curriculum and other curricula, relations between these curriculum materials and the contents of other texts about the world they aim to represent, etc.) have become very muddy indeed.

There is no shortage of educational and curriculum theorists working on these problems, many drawing explicitly on the literature of postmodernity and postmodernism. And even before "postmodernism" became the keyword it is today in and for education and curriculum studies, there was a substantial body of critique which explored the assumptions, presuppositions, ideological prejudices and silences of curriculum texts and their realisations in classrooms, though it was then more fashionable not to say "explored" but "unmasked", or "revealed" - before postmodernism caused theorists to doubt whether what they found "underneath" the surface of things was not the solidity of a "depth perspective" but just another surface, the "outside" of something else. This kind of critique has been supplemented more recently by deconstructionist perspectives (drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida).

Under such conditions, anyone interested in education is trapped between what are, from a modernist perspective, unhappy alternatives: to give up the task of presenting an authoritative view of the world (in that case, why "educate", and why have schools?), or to admit and, if possible, to elucidate the ideological location of what is taught (though some think that this is, and always was, the task of any rational, humanistic approach to education). Such practical necessities have always been forced on educators, of course, but we should not believe that the task today is the same task as it was in former times. Arguably, there is far less consensus today than there once was about what knowledge is of most worth, and

there is certainly far less consent about the nature, authority, credibility and value of knowledge. From this perspective, Habermas's impatience with the "old conservative" premodernists, the "new conservative" antimodernists, and the "neo-conservative" postmodernists becomes explicable, perhaps even reasonable. Given the times in which we live, and given the tendencies in Occidental culture, it is clear that "market forces", "self-interest" and (more broadly) the technical-rational interests of economies now have far more force in shaping the cultural realm than the moral-practical or expressive-aesthetic dimensions of existence. To simplify, cultural production seems increasingly to be harnessed to economic demands, and a large proportion of cultural production has been absorbed into the economic sphere as a "culture industry". Given that the culture industry serves established economic (and political)

interests, it is therefore reasonable to describe them as conservative. On this point, at least, a wide variety of theorists of the postmodern agree (Jameson on the cultural logic of late capitalism; Lyotard on the need for critical interruption of established cultural processes; Frampton on "critical regionalism"; Connor on "critical resistance"; Said on "interference"; and Hall on the continuing obligation of social and cultural theorists to name and articulate the social contradictions which issue in suffering and oppression as a basis for focussing social and political action).

So, it seems to me, it is reasonable to conclude that there is now much more difficulty than in former times for curriculum theorists and developers, as well as for teachers in schools, in confronting the "representation problem" in any principled way.

The

mythical, allegorical elements of the modern viewpoint (the elements that went beyond what the modernist viewpoint could actually demonstrate or deduce about the nature of social reality and the natural world See Ulmer, G. (1983) 'The Object of Post-Criticism', in H. Foster (Ed.) Postmodern Culture, Pluto Press, London, especially pp.95-9; and van Reijen, W. (1988) The 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' read as allegory, Theory, Culture and Society, vol.5, special nos. 2-3, pp. 409-29.

) provided a framework from which it was possible to make some principled selection of what should be taught and how it should be taught. Critics of modernity have pointed out that modernity has been unable to provide a comprehensive justification for

any overall "scientific" framework within which the world might be understood and represented as a coherent whole; they have therefore called into question the very possibility of representation. If they are correct, these fundamental criticisms necessarily imply that we must find new principles on which to determine what is to be taught and learned in schools, and new ways of addressing the practical, moral, political problems of curriculum making and teaching. Moreover, we cannot duck these issues, treating them as the eccentric productions of eccentric theorists; the foundations of education have been called into question, and these theorists demand that we recognise that there is no credible "foundational" perspective which could provide an alternative "basis" (i.e., foundation) for curriculum making. Clearly, there are important tasks for educational researchers and theorists in considering the

diverse implications of this issue.

Despite the absence of a foundational perspective, we do need some principles to guide us, and there is a school of thought that suggests that alternative, non-foundational approaches to addressing the curriculum problem are available (for example, the neo-Aristotelian approach championed

by Stephen Toulmin Toulmin, S. (1990) *ibid.*.

and Alasdair MacIntyre See, for example, MacIntyre, A. (1983) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, second edition, Duckworth, London; (1988) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Duckworth, London; (1990) *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopædia, Genealogy and Tradition*, Duckworth, London.

). Moreover, that we - and the students who are the rising generations yet to take their full place as adult citizens participating in the present and future postmodern world - need some kind of representations to orient us in the world cannot, as a matter of practice, be in doubt. Were we to doubt it (to think the unthinkable), it would be tantamount to saying that education or schooling had no rational basis, and, if so, then the alternative of not having schools and schooling (a new deschooling movement?) should be considered. At least at this point in our history, I do not believe that this is a practical possibility. I think there are no grounds to believe that, by not educating - or schooling - a generation or two, we could somehow short-circuit the reproduction and transformation of postmodernity and thus produce some better world. Indeed, I fear the results of such an experiment, were it possible, would be just the reverse. If this is so, then, though the task of representation may be more difficult in our time, it nevertheless remains practically necessary. Perhaps (and this is a question about which theorists of the postmodern disagree), we need representations of our world - if we can still call them that - which orient but also warn users of certain kinds of dangers: not only dangers in the world but also the dangers in our representations of it.

It is familiar enough in the field of curriculum to hear talk of the curriculum as a "map" I am thinking here particularly of the writings of Denis Lawton and Malcolm Skilbeck.

. It is clear that we should not believe that curriculum "maps" can be innocent representations of our world. But the notion of the map appeals to Jameson, too. he believes that we may not any longer expect to have social theories which represent the the world in the way in which modernism once hoped to do, but that we need representations nevertheless: some kind of "cognitive maps" capable of giving us at least some orientation in the world. Kellner writes of Jameson that, drawing on

"Althusser's theory of ideology as 'the Imaginary representation of the subject's relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence' ... [and Jameson's earlier work]...The Political Unconscious (1981) [where he argued that] narrative was a fundamental function of human being, he now seems to argue that individuals need some sort of image or mapping of their society and the world as a whole" Kellner, D. (1988) Postmodernism as social theory, Theory, Culture and Society, vol.5, special nos.2-3, p.260.

. But the nature of these maps is surely highly problematic. Discussing Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping (in a section of his book significantly entitled "Spaces of Resistance"), Connor writes:

Again, the distinguishing postmodern problem is one of reflexivity, or of the involvement of the activity of theory in the very field which it is attempting to theorize. For a map, at least the kind of map we are used to in the advanced West, presupposes a position outside or suspended placelessly above the field that is being surveyed. The problem for

postmodern cultural theory is to construct a map from inside that world. One response to this reflexive problem has been to turn to the theoretical equivalent of the mediæval periplus, a map that projects the stages of a journey in terms of a temporal narrative. It is clear that the sort of map that allows one, as it were, to feel one's way through history has certain advantages (not knowing where you are going, or why you are going there), but it is also more responsive to the small-scale intimacies and complexities of political life. Jameson suggests that a postmodern map of the world must do two contradictory things at once, rendering the sense of placelessness even as it suggests ways of orienting ourselves to that placelessness:

"The new political art - if it is indeed possible at all - will have to old to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object - the world space of multinational capital - at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion" [Jameson, F. (1984) Postmodernism; or the cultural logic of late capitalism, New Left Review, no.146, p.91].

To articulate questions of power and value in postmodernity is often to identify centralizing principles - of self, gender, race, nation, aesthetic form - in order to determine what these centres push to their silent or invisible peripheries. The project can be seen as one of bringing the consciousness of those peripheries back into the centre. Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, pp. 227-8.

So the educational task in the postmodern era - or, one might say, of education in postmodernity - is to provide such cognitive (would Jameson or Connor object to our replacing that adjective with "cultural"?) maps. But the point of doing so is not merely to represent the world, but also to galvanise people to act in it. The need for cognitive maps is justified by reference to the need for theories of the postmodern to provide spaces for critical resistance to some - or many - of the features of postmodernity as it presents itself. On this need for critical resistance, Edward Said seems generally to agree with Jameson:

...the politics of interpretation demand a dialectical response from a critical consciousness worthy of its name. Instead of non-interference and specialization, there must be interference, crossing of borders and obstacles, a determined attempt to generalize exactly at those points where generalizations seem impossible to make. One of the first interferences to be ventured, then, is a crossing from literature, which is supposed to be subjective and powerless, into those exactly parallel realms, now covered by journalism and the production of information, that employ representation but

are supposed to be objective and powerful.

Much of the world today is represented in this way: ... a tiny handful of large and powerful oligarchies control about ninety percent of the world's information and communication flows. This domain, staffed by experts and media executives, is ... affiliated to an even smaller number of governments, at the very same time that the rhetoric of objectivity, balance, realism and freedom covers what is being done. And for the most part, such consumer items as "the news" - a euphemism for ideological images of the world that determine political reality for a vast majority of the world's population - hold forth, untouched by interfering secular and critical minds, who for all sorts of obvious

reasons are not hooked into the systems of power.

This is not the place, nor is there time, to advance a fully articulated program of interference. I can only



suggest in conclusion that we need to think about breaking out of the disciplinary ghettos in which as intellectuals we have been confined, to reopen the blocked social processes ceding objective representation (hence power) of the world to a small coterie of experts and their clients, to consider that the audience for literacy is not a closed circle of three thousand professional critics but the community of human beings living in society, and to regard social reality is a secular rather than a mystical mode, despite all protestations about realism and objectivity...

[In such ways] ... we have the recovery of a history hitherto either misrepresented or made invisible ... [I]n having attempted - and perhaps even successfully accomplishing - this recovery, there is the crucial next phase: connecting these more politically vigilant forms of interpretation to an ongoing social and political praxis. Said, E. (1983) *ibid.*, p. 157-8.

To call for maps which define "spaces of resistance" is, in a sense, to ask for a form of (what some call) socially-critical education See, for example, Kemmis, S., Cole, P. and Suggett, D. (1983) *Curriculum and Transition; Towards the Socially-Critical School*, Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (now the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board), Melbourne.

. But this is to say that representation of the world (and especially the structures and interests that one might be critical about, or of) must continue to be a function of education - and whether this is possible is clearly in dispute among theorists of the postmodern. Moreover, it is to ask for a form of curriculum which is "modern" in the additional sense that it is critical - a possibility which is also in dispute among theorists of the postmodern (cf. the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere, the bricolage of competing images of society through the media, etc.). Clearly, then, the tasks of education in the postmodern era present new difficulties of self-consciousness for educators, and questions about the epistemological bases for any new forms of representation will have significant implications for curriculum and curriculum theory, as well as for educational theory and research.

Education and the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere

The curriculum problem also raises vexed questions about

the nature and role of education and educational institutions - schooling - in the postmodern era. Those theorists of the postmodern who have made so compelling a case for the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere have demonstrated that there are now new levels of integration of the cultural sphere - regarded as relatively autonomous in modernist theorising - to the economic and political spheres. Of course the connections between these spheres have been evident for a long time David Hamilton's (1987) book *Toward a Theory of Schooling* (Falmer, London) makes a compelling case for the connections between education and other cultural, economic and political trends in the history of schooling since mediæval times.

, and in recent years the economic and political framing of curricula has been the subject of a substantial body of research and polemic. What has changed in the current era, such theorists of the postmodern as Baudrillard and Lyotard seem to suggest, is that, while in the modern era, schools and universities were able to maintain an illusion of (critical) distance from the societies, cultures, economies and political orders they served (this part of the argument is not new), it is now, in the postmodern era, impossible for them to do so. This is because, on the one hand, the interests and self-interests served in and by schooling have been unmasked by late modernity, and, on the other, because the institutions now no longer occupy a privileged place in the maintenance and development of culture as a distinctive sphere: the cultural sphere has been incorporated into the information/culture industry, and has been integrated, to an unprecedented degree, with the political sphere (as one of the administrative functions of the modern technical-rational state). Schools and curricula (and churches, universities and other cultural institutions) now compete, to a hitherto unimaginable degree, with the media/information industry in creating, presenting and defending images of the world; to the extent that they are to be regarded as in the same competition, their canonical authority has now been substantially eroded.

It is also worth noticing that some of the former tasks of schooling seem almost unnecessary in the "information age", the "television age", or (more generally) the "media age". Though the transmission of images of the world through the media might not be orderly, or well adapted to the backgrounds of students/audiences, or coherently-justified, rising generations are exposed to vast amounts of information about their world - information that, in former times, would have been made accessible mostly through schooling and,

especially, literacy. Now, images of the world are readily available, and they arrive in aural and (especially) visual forms which do not necessarily assume the literacy (or the critical capacity) of the audience. Arguably, this is already producing sharply different forms of consciousness, and changed ways of experiencing the world, among rising generations. Richard Bates, Chris Bigum, Lindsay Fitzclarence, Bill Green and Rob Walker at Deakin University are currently investigating these changed forms of consciousness in a project sponsored by the Australian Research Council on "the postmodern student".

. Indeed, one imagines that it is possible to see as old-fashioned, perhaps quaint, the notion that knowledge is formed through the relatively linear following of texts, when for rising generations today so much knowledge of the world is available in the multiplex combination and recombination of media images.

Other tasks of schooling (for example, the tasks of ordering images and knowledge, or developing the critical

stance which allows students to explore the coherence of such images) still seem justified in the postmodern era, of course, but the problem arises of how to organise this kind of education in the midst of the bombardment of images produced by the culture-media-information industry. For example, with the rise of new information technologies (which clearly make a variety of new forms of distance education possible, especially when combined with the economically-attractive option of a "user-pays" approach to learning spaces, where students and their families provide the place for learning, perhaps also pay for the technology to access learning modules, and perhaps also pay for network connect time), there is a substantial problem of defending schools and universities as institutional spaces in which it is possible to organise sustained attention to topics, collective/collaborative reflection, and critical analysis which might provide an orientation to action. The development of national curricula for schools, and the rationalisation, integration and differentiation of universities at the national level, suggests that education is following a similar pattern to that in the increasingly-internationalised economy: a pattern of unification and massification of production and diffusion, fragmentation and privatisation (individualisation) of consumption. As has been widely remarked, in the postmodern world of late capitalism, knowledge and education are increasingly regarded as commodities.

A further issue about the commodification of knowledge and education also deserves attention: not only is the postmodern culture profligate in its production of images, but the nature of the images has also changed. The capacity to transmit and circulate visual images has already been noted. Even more complex, and more significant in its implications, is the question of "simulacra" and "hyperrealities". The images with which we are presented today are not just images of the same order as representational paintings, aiming to be copies of the world. They are also malleable "blueprints" and models which do not only represent existing or "actual" things but also model possible things. Since Diderot's Encyclopédie of the late eighteenth century, diagrams have been used to present and model production processes; now, conceptually-similar hyperreal images and simulacra exist in electronic forms (computer programs, for instance), they are highly adaptable and malleable (and can be recombined in endlessly-varying ways), and they are themselves subject to robotic and automated control as components of "intelligent" systems. Moreover, these simulacra are not only to be valued because they permit the control of complex systems, or because they can replace human labour in many fields of production; they are also commodities to be consumed in an economy increasingly dependent on the exchange of such systems (the software industry, for example).

To take the point still further, the consumption of such "hyperreal" commodities can become an end in itself (as in the endless upgrading of computer systems by "technofreaks", or in the endless development of new media for entertainment - the as in the CD industry, for example). This has substantial educational implications in terms of teaching rising

generations about the world of production when its content, structure, form and functions are in a state of rapid and permanent transformation (making permanently obsolete any curriculum which aims at comprehensiveness as well as concreteness and specificity). It also has implications for the development of contents, structure, form and function in curriculum and teaching: to what extent, for example, can and should the processes of cultural production in schools mirror versus critique processes of production outside schools?

And: since the information and media industries now provide a vast array of training services (commodities, for private consumption as well as in the maintenance of institutions), there are therefore new challenges in

distinguishing what schools can and should teach from what such private providers can offer. On the basis of current trends in the control of educational provision by the state, it is clear that there will be powerful forces to rationalise the educational provision of schools and universities in relation to the training industry (or should we say "the rest of the training industry"?). Here, especially, the question of the loss of the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere is sharply relevant: as university teachers, and school teachers expected to use national curricula are already well aware, "administrative" and policy considerations about the appropriateness of the rationalisation of schooling within the broader technical-cultural sphere of the information/media industry do not arise as questions of whether the rationalisation should occur, but to what extent. Already, there is much renewed debate in the academy (and, one imagines, in policy circles) about many of the old debates of educational theory and philosophy (for example, debates about state versus private education, education versus socialisation versus training versus indoctrination, and general versus liberal versus vocational education). Postmodernity and the postmodern condition force us to reopen these questions for changed times. Of course it was always thus, but, as suggested earlier in the discussion of postmodernist theorising, there are now new questions to ask about the continued appropriateness of the terms in which the debates can be conducted - about the traditions of educational thought which produced and were a product of modern times.

#### Reproduction and transformation

For some time, educational sociologists and reproduction theorists in curriculum have explored questions about the kinds of knowledge transmitted by schools, and the relationships between kinds of knowledge and social, cultural, economic and political structures. They have shown how the structures and forms of schooling have influenced the reproduction of social structures and forms, and how they have contributed to the transformation of established forms. In particular by drawing on the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, it has been possible to show how schools are arenas of contestation, but how they are nevertheless part of the 'ideological state apparatus', generally reproducing hegemonic ideas and ideologies and the changing "cultural capital" of the ruling class. The early version of reproduction theory, the "correspondence theory" of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, took a rather wooden view of these relationships; it was soon replaced by "contestation theory" which more adequately recognised

fluidity and conflict in the process of reproduction, and more adequately recognised that the cultural, economic and political structures of society were also transformed through schooling.

All such theories depend on the notion that it is possible to identify and represent structures in society (as well as the interrelationships between these structures), and that schooling plays a role in

transmitting ideas about what these structures are and how they might be changed. On a reading of the literature of postmodernity, there must therefore be a considerable doubt about the capacity of curricula, schools, teachers and educational policy makers to "read" and "represent" these structures, let alone to change them. Moreover, since schools are to be regarded as part of a cultural sphere increasingly integrated with the economic and political spheres, the "critical distance" afforded the school (or university) as an institution must henceforth be regarded as highly suspect. That is, the two problems of postmodernity I have been discussing (the problem of representation, and the problem of the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere) have direct implications for the work and workings of educational institutions.

A variety of theorists of the postmodern have addressed these problems, for example in discussions of art and the academy, but much more work remains to be done in considering the implications of these views for curricula and schools. As Steven Connor notes Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, pp.13-4:

Perhaps the first point to be made about the academy in this sense is that, for all its apparent marginalization, the power and influence of literary and cultural institutions have increased enormously from the 1930s onwards. In Britain and the US, the numbers of higher education establishments grew enormously during this period, and, despite a conspicuous slowing-down over the last few years, especially in Britain, the public visibility and prestige of such institutions remains enormous. The increasing professionalization of academic study, which Eagleton tends to take as a mark of its retreat from engagement with real issues, is in fact the mode in which it has consolidated and extended its influences over this period. Of course, during this period, the study of cultural forms, and especially, as the dominant discipline, the study of English literature, could represent itself as, and even perform the functions of, a

'counterpublic sphere', sustaining values of creativity, responsiveness, and intellectual and political critique against the purely instrumental function of the university as a mechanism of cultural accreditation.

, despite the loss of autonomy of the cultural sphere, education and educational institutions have an increasing influence in contemporary society. Perhaps their differentiation from other institutions - what we might call their "institutional distance" from other cultural, economic and political institutions - if not their "critical distance", can still give us (critical) hope for the production of better kinds of society through education and schooling.

Drawing explicitly on Gramsci, Edward Said Said, E. (1983) *ibid.*, p.144. makes it clear that there is still a critical power and political potential in reading, writing, texts and ideas - and, we might add, curriculum.

... Gramsci understood that if nothing in the social world is natural, not even nature, then it must also be true that things exist not only because they come into being and are created by human agency (*nascimento*) but also because by coming into being they displace

something else that is already there: this is the combative and emergent aspect of social change as it applies to the world of culture linked to social history. To adapt from a statement Gramsci makes in *The Modern Prince*, "reality (and hence cultural reality) is a product of the application of the human will to the society of things," and since also "everything is political, even philosophy and philosophies," we are to understand that in the realm of culture and of thought each production exists not only to earn a place for itself but to displace, win out over, others [Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, p.171]. All ideas, philosophies, views and texts aspire to the consent of their consumers, and here Gramsci is more percipient than most in recognizing that there is a set of characteristics unique to civil society in which texts - embodying ideas,

philosophies and so forth - acquire power through what Gramsci describes as diffusion, dissemination into and hegemony over the world of "common sense". Thus ideas aspire to the condition of acceptance; which is to say that one can interpret the meaning of a text by virtue of what in its mode of social presence enables its consent by either a small or a wide group of people.

Said's comments here make it clear that the relationship between texts and what they purport to represent is dialectical or double-edged: they may be products of a changed and changing society but they also have the capacity to contribute to change. While some postmodernists seem to take the view that the multiplicity of media and messages is now so great as to defy the possibility of developing sustained critical capacity, Said points out that texts and ideas displace other texts and ideas. One might add, taking a lead from Connor, that this is especially so in spaces like school or university curricula where critical texts and ideas can enjoy (if that is the word) a privileged place in contrast to other ideas, information and images which dominate the popular media.

On the arguments already presented, it seems to me that there is merit in the argument that education and other elements of the cultural sphere have lost or are losing their relative autonomy. But this is not the same as asserting that they are now indistinguishable from, or in some sense subsidiary to, other elements of what might be called the media/information industry. There is still an institutional space - and one might well call it a critical space - in which critical resistance to some of the excesses of postmodern culture is possible. It seems to me that a recognition of this is essential to maintaining modernist, post-Enlightenment hope in the face of the rapid cultural, economic and political transformations of postmodernity. To have hope, of course, is not necessarily the same as knowing what is to be done: for that an analysis, processes of enlightenment of those who might act on the analysis, and democratic decision making about the development of possible programs of action are necessary - in short, what might be developed by a critical social science, or a critical science of education. I do not believe this is to have one's cake and eat it too: to recognise postmodernism and to maintain a modernist stance, though clearly the modernist stance must be redefined for changed circumstances. Indeed, this seems to me to be the approach to the problems of postmodernity taken by a number of the writers I have considered here: Jameson, Connor, Kellner, Said and Hall, for example. It seems to me that undertaking such a task requires considering how education, curriculum, and educational researchers and theorists address the problems of representation and of the loss of relative autonomy of the cultural sphere. I want to address these issues in discussing educational research.

Educational research and postmodernisms

In *Cosmopolis*, Stephen Toulmin outlines a number of responses which he believes might be appropriate to our present historical circumstances.



In his view, much is to be gained by reconsidering and recovering some of the virtues of practical philosophy which marked the earliest of his "modern" periods - the period of Renaissance humanism. This would require a rebalancing of emphases that the modernity of Cartesian rationalism had thrown out of balance; here, Toulmin returns to the categories he used in describing the rise of modernity. Responding to our contemporary circumstances would require, firstly, some shift from the written to the oral - that is, a shift away from the energetic quest of formal theorising towards the kinds of practical reasoning which play such an important role in human social and political life. This shift might entail renewed vigour in the study of rhetoric, and a strengthening of Aristotelianism in philosophy. Secondly, it would require greater attention to the study of particular cases rather than universal principles in all of the sciences, both natural and social. Thirdly, it would require a greater attention to the local, in all its concreteness and diversity, with correspondingly less energy being devoted to the general and abstract. And fourthly, it would require a rebalancing of attention in favour of the timely - philosophy, art and science devoted to the study of the practical contemporary problems which history throws up for us - as against the timeless.

There is much to be said for each of these suggestions. Indeed, it might be argued, the restructuring of natural and social science, and educational research, from the late 1960s to the early 1980s was marked by just such shifts: (1) the recovery of the practical and practical reasoning (for example, through the work of Schwab in

curriculum and educational research); (2) the rise of case study methods, for example in social and educational research (along with illuminative evaluation, responsive evaluation, democratic evaluation, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, and the like); (3) the development of approaches and methods in the natural and social sciences which emphasised local circumstances in all their concrete diversity (for example, in ecological studies, community studies, and the study of particular programs and settings in social and educational research); and (4) the development of ecological appraisals, policy research, and evaluation studies which use the transformed tools of natural, social and educational science to inform decision making both in the service of

the state and its administrative instrumentalities, and in the service of informed and more democratic decision making by citizens and co-workers at the local level.

Arguably, then, in terms of Toulmin's categories, the shift of balances in the natural, social and educational sciences has already occurred. But if this is so, why is it that theorists of the postmodern, and those who greet the coming of postmodernity with such conflicting levels of distaste, remain unsatisfied by the restructuring of the work of the natural and social sciences, and educational research? Is it simply that these theorists have perseverated on old diagnoses of the demise of modernity, or that they are driven to excess by the continuing reliance of so much natural, social and educational science on outmoded rationalistic "modern" approaches and methods, or that they believe that our current circumstances call for something still more in the way of new approaches to science in the new era?

The field of postmodern theorising is not given to understatement, so Toulmin's wise and modest proposals are to be welcomed. But I think that they are also insufficient. They underestimate what is at stake in the postmodernity debate. Indeed, some contemporary theorists Here I am thinking in particular of Jürgen Habermas (1983) 'Modernity - An Incomplete Project', in H. Foster (Ed.) Postmodern Culture, Pluto Press, London, especially pp.14-5.

involved in the postmodernity debates would characterise Toulmin's proposals as "conservative" just because they suggest that the resources needed to address our contemporary historical situation are the resources we already have to hand - resources which were the product of other times.

Furthermore, a critic might suggest, Toulmin's proposals are tantamount to saying that our major cultural institutions still have the credibility and autonomy they were accorded in a world now past, adding that it is in the interests of the academy to put such a view. This raises an important strategic issue over which

theorists of the postmodern disagree: whether to defend the institutions which are themselves so much a product of modernity, or to redouble our efforts to complete the project of modernity by mounting a new institutional attack on some aspects of postmodernity (which may well include an attack on the complicity of cultural institutions in supporting unsupportable aspects of

postmodernity), or to abandon the institutions to find new locations from which critical responses to postmodernity might be

developed.

Because Toulmin's analysis of modernity is at a very general historical and philosophical level, his proposals may be understood as an attempt to speak for our generation at our stage in history. This is something which a postmodernist like Lyotard finds misguided and dangerous. See Willem van Reijen and Dick Veerman (1988) *ibid.*, especially pp. 301-307. See also Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, pp.36-7: More recently, ... Lyotard has turned his eye to issues of cultural politics. Here the question of the decline of metanarrative has less to do with the possibilities or not of scientists agreeing with one another, or knowing why they do, and more to do with questions about the relationships within and between cultures. In an essay entitled 'Missive on Universal History' [Lyotard, J.-F., 'Missive sur l'Histoire', first published in 1985 in *Critique*, vol.41, p. 456; reprinted in his *Le Postmoderne Expliqué aux Enfants: Correspondance, 1982-1985, Galilée, Paris*], Lyotard has mounted an attack on the cultural imperialism of metanarrative by means of a linguistic argument. He argues that if we ask, or attempt to ask a question such as 'Should we continue to understand the multiplicity of social and nonsocial phenomena in the light of the Idea of a universal history of mankind?' the central problem lies in the very use of the word 'we'. This 'we', he writes, is a form of grammatical violence, which aims to deny and obliterate the specificity of the 'you' and the 'she' of other cultures through the false promise of incorporation within a universal humanity. We must therefore wean ourselves away from the 'we', that grammatico-political category that can never exist except as a legitimating device in the service of appropriative and oppressive cultures. Instead, we must embrace and promote every form of cultural diversity, without recourse to universal principles.

: it assumes the possibility of addressing a public from the relative autonomy previously associated with the social location of the intellectual - a position and a role which Lyotard, for example, believes is no longer tenable.

I believe that a different point might be made - at once more modest and, perhaps, more telling: it is that because Toulmin has focussed intensively on what has gone before - a history of modernity - he has not yet addressed the specific difficulties of the postmodern era. Necessary though it is to illuminate the features of modernity to understand what is, or might be, behind us, our contemporary problems are not only the problems of what has gone before. They are also problems of what

has and is to come: a changed historical condition which demands changed social, cultural, economic and political responses (including new theoretical responses). Of course it was always thus: the history of humanity is a history of social, cultural, economic and political transformations. How we respond, in our turn, to our new conditions, may be modulated by Toulmin's liberal and thoughtful vision, but we must still respond to the problems and prospects of the specific changes that already confront us - and, as we have seen, there is much disagreement among theorists of the postmodern as to what the nature and relative significance of these changes may be, and what responses to them are appropriate.

It is clear by now that there is not one "postmodernism"; there is a variety of postmodernisms. At the risk of making too facile a classification, it may be useful to draw some contrasts.

The first position is the one that Habermas describes as "premodern": the

position represented in this paper by Toulmin (though it is also to be found in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre). Advocates of this view argue for the revitalisation of liberal, neo-Aristotelian traditions and forms of life in universities and in other key cultural institutions. While attractive for the depth and subtlety of their historical perspective, and the practicality, modesty and level-headedness of their proposals, these positions seem to presuppose substantial continuity between the present and the modern past. Perhaps, given the historian's perspective on the diversity of human responses to periodic transformations, disruptions, reconstructions, revolutions and developments, they are professionally bound to be level-headed in the face of upheaval and transformation. Nevertheless, it seems to me, this position gives too little recognition to what others are willing to describe as an epochal shift, and to the substantially-changed changed cultural - and economic and political - conditions of our time. So it seems to me that more extensive analyses of contemporary conditions are needed to supplement this perspective.

The second position, not given extended treatment in this paper, is not postmodernist but what might be called "antipostmodernist": this is the position of Habermas, who has staunchly defended the project of modernity, and made a series of direct attacks on the conservatism of various "premodern", "antimodern" and "postmodern" analysts and critics of modernity. Though Habermas makes a compelling case for the continuing relevance of the project of modernity, I am inclined to agree with Kellner Kellner, D.

(1988) *ibid.*, especially pp.262-66.

that Habermas has been overly defensive of modernity and that he has yet to articulate a response to some of the contemporary social conditions which, a variety of theorists of postmodernity agree, amount to an epochal shift to a new social condition which can be described as "postmodern" - though they disagree about the extent of the rupture between the modern and postmodern, and about the degree to which the postmodern might be called an extension of or new form of the modern.

The third positions are those of which Baudrillard and Lyotard are representatives. To some extent, these positions can be understood in terms of their central self-contradictions: for example, they claim that grand narratives are no longer credible, while outlining a grand narrative of cultural transformation towards a postmodern culture; they claim that representation can no longer be regarded as other than illusory (at worst, representation supports the terroristic imposition of a perspective on those it seeks to persuade), yet they present a totalising account of society and culture which, on their own argument, is unrepresentable; and they claim that the cultural sphere can no longer be regarded as autonomous from economic and political orders, yet they make these claims from the security of universities and disseminate them to the cultural theorists of a generation through the usual organs of academic publishing. While perhaps too starkly rendered, these criticisms suggest that their position is not yet wholly convincing, and that more measured responses might be appropriate. On the other hand, it seems to me reasonable to point to the underjustification of the "grand narratives" of various forms of modern and contemporary social theory, and to be circumspect about taking any claims based on the grand narratives at face value - though serious scholars and researchers of a modernist bent have never doubted the need for such circumspection.

The fourth position, by no means unified, seems to me to be represented by the perspectives of Jameson, Kellner, Connor and Said. Clearly, in their different ways, these authors have some limited agreement with the third position - that of Habermas - that certain key elements of modernism must be defended and extended in the postmodern present, though what they are, and how the defence is to be mounted, is a matter for continuing investigation. Theorists in this group, however, seem to acknowledge that theorists like Lyotard and Baudrillard have a point: substantial transformations in our society, culture, economic structures and political forms have taken place, and, because the theoretical approaches of modernity are

underjustified, we cannot rely on those perspectives and approaches in theorising and understanding the present. In their different ways, these authors explicitly recognise transformation as well as continuity, and attempt to adopt a self-consciously reflexive position on the need for the reformulation of theoretical categories and assumptions in the face of changed historical conditions. Though not certain about the direction or dimensions of the task, they recognise that some new forms of critical analysis and critical resistance to postmodernity are required, and that there needs to be a substantial reconsideration of the nature and form of the cultural institutions in which critical work might be carried out.

Perhaps educational theorists and researchers working on the problems of postmodernity See, for example, Cherryholmes, C. (1988) *Power and Criticism: Poststructural Investigations in Education*, Teachers' College Press, New York; Giroux, H. (1990) *Curriculum Discourse as postmodernist Critical Practice*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria; Gore, J. (1991) *On silent regulation: Emancipatory action research and education*, *Curriculum Perspectives*, 1991, vol., no., pp.; Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern*, Routledge, London; Luke, A. and Luke, C. (1990) *Discourse*, vol., no., pp.; Peters, M. (1989) *Techno-science, rationality and the university*, *Educational Theory*, Spring, vol.39, no.2, pp.93-105; Young, R.E. (1989) *A Critical Theory of Education: Habermas and Our Children's Future*, Teachers' College Press, New York and London.

could be classified in ways which parallel some of these social and cultural theorists - though I do not propose to attempt such a classification here. Suffice it to say that the literature of postmodernity and education is now developing apace, and in due course it will no doubt be reviewed and analysed and synthesised by someone better equipped for the task than I am.

Clearly, if education is changing as a consequence of the transformations of society now underway, and if it can or should change in ways different to the ways it is changing (for example, by making different use of the new technologies, or by offering different kinds of literature or literary criticism, or by offering different kinds of vocational preparation or

education for citizenship), then educational theorists, researchers and evaluators should be making the relevant analyses and proposing alternative courses of action. If we take seriously the criticisms of modernity by theorists of the postmodern, however, it is also clear that we will need to reconsider and perhaps to modify our theoretical

categories, our methodological tools, and our choices of problems to study, since most of the approaches we now employ and the topics we address are the product of modernist perspectives and epistemologies.

Some directions for reconsidering educational theorising, research and evaluation might be inferred from the four kinds of positions on postmodernism mentioned earlier.

With respect to the first position, it is clear that some reconsideration of educational science has already followed directions similar to those proposed by Toulmin. Toulmin's proposals for four shifts of emphasis in contemporary science and social science (from the written to the oral, from the study of universal problems to the study of particular cases, from the general and abstract to the local, and from the timeless to the timely) have already been mentioned. These shifts characterised some of the methodological debates and transformations of educational research in the 1960s and 1970s. To reiterate just a few of the relevant developments, there has been the rise of case study and "qualitative" methods in educational research and evaluation; the emergence of "illuminative", "responsive" and "democratic" research and evaluation; the development of the "teachers-as-researchers movement" and the re-emergence of educational action research which fostered practical reasoning among teachers. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, a number of educational theorists and researchers were convinced that these shifts were insufficient: some of us, for example, argued for the adoption of critical approaches of the kind advocated by Habermas. See, for example, Bredo, E. and Feinberg, W. (Eds.) (1982) *Knowledge and Values in Educational Research*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia; Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, Falmer Press, London, and Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria; and Popkewitz, T. (1984) *Paradigm and Ideology in Educational Research*, Falmer Press, London.

A number of shifts in educational theorising, research and evaluation in the 1980s can be related to the second position of postmodernity: that exemplified by Habermas. A large number of educational theorists, researchers and evaluators have been working within the broad outlines of critical theory or critical social and educational science; there has been a considerable growth in studies of an ideology-critical kind, directly or indirectly influenced by the work of Habermas and other representatives of the Frankfurt School; and there has also been a growth in critical educational science following some of the suggestions of the early Habermas on the development of critical social science, and along lines subsequently developed by such theorists

as Brian Fay Fay, B. (1987) *Critical Social Science: Liberation and Its Limits*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

- here, in particular, I am thinking of the rise of critical or emancipatory action research and participatory research in community development contexts. In adopting such approaches, these investigators have no doubt been influenced by the critical spirit of modernity. And it is clear that, in the light of contemporary theorising of the postmodern, some protagonists of these approaches are now reconsidering their positions (for example, deciding whether the balance of argument favours adopting a staunch defence of modernity, abandoning earlier commitments, or adopting some modified position).

The third position has attracted, and continues to attract adherents in the educational research community. While there may be few willing to adopt the tough line advanced by Baudrillard, or the less extreme but nevertheless rigorous position advocated by Lyotard, there are many educational researchers giving these positions serious attention. At the risk of suggesting that the affinities between this and other contemporary theoretical developments are stronger than they are, I think it is reasonable to suggest that some of the work in "deconstruction" (following the work of Jacques Derrida) and some of the educational research inspired by the work of Michel Foucault shows affinities with this position, in particular by treating the discourses of research as "regimes of truth" whose grounding can no longer be considered in terms of any overarching view of rationality, but, rather, in terms of its location in regimes of power. The position of the "genealogists" like Foucault has come under sustained attack from two directions: on the one hand, from the Anglo-American tradition, as represented by Stephen Toulmin and, especially, Alasdair MacIntyre (see, especially, the latter's (1983) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, second edition, Duckworth, London; (1988) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Duckworth, London; (1990) *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopædia, Genealogy and Tradition*, Duckworth, London), and, on the other, from the German critical theory tradition as represented by Habermas (see, for example, his [1987] *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge).

. Some of these developments are prone to the self-contradictions noted by various commentators on

the Baudrillard and Lyotard positions. For example, the work of Kellner (1988) and Connor (1989) already cited.

: in particular, their dependence on modernist views of rationality, their analysis of historical transformations, and their presuppositions about the nature and role of criticism (and the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere) as elements of the framework from which they mount an attack on "grand narratives" of rationality and history, and from which they challenge the presumed autonomy of the cultural sphere.



There can be little doubt that this group of positions will continue to attract adherents in educational research because it offers a general perspective on "power/knowledge" (more closely related to the ideological-critical line than some of its advocates might care to admit) which provides a way of locating the discourses of curriculum, education and educational research within established power structures (though with obvious links to Gramscian notions of hegemony and culture capital which advocates of this position might nowadays want to distance themselves from - especially the "grand narrative" of history undoubtedly present in Gramscian cultural Marxism). Steven Connor Cf. Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p. 11. , too, notes that a Foucauldian perspective might be useful and relevant in fashioning theoretical and methodological responses to postmodernity:

But what if one tried to think of the two dimensions [of academic writing and cultural production, on the one side, and, on the other, the interests and self-interests served by academics working in academic institutions] simultaneously, seeing them as aspects one of the other, without subordinating one to the other as shadow to substance, or husk to kernel? Then we might approach something like the perspective offered in the work of Michel Foucault, which rests upon the determination to analyse knowledge in terms of all of the material relationships within which it exists: "No body of knowledge can be formed without a system of

communications, records, accumulation and displacement which is linked, in its existence and functioning, to the other forms of power. Conversely, no power can be exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge. On this level, there is not knowledge on the one side and society on the other, or science and the state, but only the fundamental forms of knowledge/power" Here, Connor quotes from Foucault, M. 'Theories et institutions pçnales' *Annuaire du CollÇge de France, 1971-2*, quoted in Alan Sheridan (1981) *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth*, Tavistock, London, p. 131.

In any case, the analysis of educational discourses which the "genealogical" position of Foucault has encouraged continues to be needed, whether aimed primarily at "unmasking" their relationships with regimes of power, or seeking to explain these relationships in Marxian, neo-Marxian or post-Marxian terms more closely aligned to modernism (either the unashamed, "unreconstructed" modernism of Habermas, or the reconstructed modernism of advocates of

the fourth position on postmodernity I have described).

It is my impression that the fourth position on postmodernity - which I have associated most closely with Jameson, Kellner, Connor and Said -

has not yet attracted a substantial following in educational research. On the other hand, there is a sharp sense of needing to reconcile emancipation and postmodernity in the writings of some contemporary educational theorists and researchers. In educational research, the writings of feminist researcher Patti Lather See, for example, Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/in the Postmodern*, Routledge, London.

clearly exemplify the tension, and it is clearly evident in the writings of other feminist postmodernists See, for example, Owen, C. (1983) 'The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism', in H. Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, London, Pluto Press; Soper, K. (1991) *Postmodernism, subjectivity and the question of value*, *New Left Review*, no.186, (March-April), pp.120-8.

Arguably, the emancipatory project of feminism has roots in modernity and the

Enlightenment which furnished emancipatory political ideals for a variety of groups, many, of course, based on ideas of class (and perhaps race) rather than gender. So there is a sharp tension - personal and political - for feminist scholars in abandoning emancipatory ideals in favour of some versions of postmodernism. In an essay which firmly locates feminism within this emancipatory project, Sabina Lovibond makes the eloquent political-personal plea: "can anyone ask me to say goodbye to emancipatory metanarratives when my own emancipation is still such a patchy, hit-and-miss affair?" Lovibond, S. (1990) 'Feminism and Postmodernism', in R. Boyne and A. Rattansani (Eds.) *Postmodernism and Society*, Macmillan Education, London, p.161.

. Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson Fraser, N. and Nicholson, L. (1988) *Social criticism without philosophy: An encounter between feminism and postmodernism*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos.2-3, pp.373-94. , however, argue that some reconsideration of feminism and postmodernisms may be needed: they outline a series of tensions and complementarities between the achievements of the postmodernism of Lyotard and of contemporary feminisms, and argue that theoretically, historically and politically some realignments of both are needed (for example, they argue that Lyotard's dismissal of large historical narratives is unjustified, and that various feminisms must beware tendencies to theoretical essentialism).

Similar arguments have been made by theorists of postmodernity concerned with the relationship between

postmodernism and race and ethnicity, and postmodernism and "modernization" in the "Third World" - the views of Edward Said have already been mentioned. See for example, Said, E. (1983) *ibid.*. For the case of feminism, see also Owen, C. (1983) 'The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism', in H. Foster (Ed.) *Postmodern Culture*, London, Pluto Press. Connor, S. (1990) *ibid.*, discusses both cases (pp.229-237).

. A particular issue for feminists and post-colonial critics of culture and development is the threat that the "de-differentiation" The term derives from Scott Lash (1988) *Postmodernism as a 'regime of signification'*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol.5, special nos.2-3, pp. 311-36.

of cultural, economic and political spheres will amount to the disidentification of the claims of specific groups for social justice. Should this happen, the incomplete project of emancipation for these groups will amount to a betrayal of their aspirations for social justice within a reconstructed world and social order.

These two cases - feminism and post-coloniality - raise more general issues about the continuing relevance of the emancipatory metanarrative of modernism to the "postmodern condition" - arguably, a condition in which emancipation from irrational, alienating, unjust social relationships continues to be of central relevance and significance. One wonders, given the more uncompromising versions of the critique of modernism, whether the cure of some postmodernisms is not more deadly than the twin diseases of modernism and postmodernity.

Under our contemporary circumstances, then, it seems to me that there is a need for educational theory, research and evaluation to investigate some of the issues raised by the fourth group of postmodernists I have described, paying particular attention to the tensions and issues raised by the encounters between postmodernism and

feminism and post-coloniality.

#### Concluding comments

In this paper, I have tried to show that the different theories and perspectives of postmodernism have wide-ranging and contradictory implications. I, for one, am not yet ready to make more than a few suggestions on what might be considered in these shifts.

Firstly, following the historical perspective on modernity presented at the beginning of this paper, it seems to me that educational theorising, research and evaluation must

be far better informed by historical perspectives, and be far more self-conscious about its own location in specific historical and social conditions. This would require not only doing more historical work, but also locating the educational processes and settings we study historically, and locating our own theoretical and research activities as products of particular historical circumstances which may or may not be justified in the circumstances of the present. It would follow from this that we should also adopt a far more self-consciously dialectical-historical perspective on the relationship between education and society, and on the relationship between education and educational theory, research and evaluation.

Secondly, in view of the comments I have made about representation, it seems to me that educational theorising, research and evaluation must be far more self-conscious about how it employs particular discourses which have their own histories and social locations; nevertheless, it seems to me, we should not resile from making deliberate claims that we can, within the limits of the discourses we employ, represent aspects of the world of education in ways which are more coherent, less self-contradictory, and more practical than some of the alternative perspectives presented by groups less committed to coherence and comprehensiveness, and more wedded to the service of technical and instrumental values, interests and self-interests which are external to (and sometimes contradictory to) the interests of education and society. Earlier, I quoted Edward Said on just this point. Arguably, the postmodern era in education, curriculum and schooling has been marked from a shift from guidance by educational theory to control by educational policy, and in which the latter is frequently unclear about its technicist, conservative theoretical and political presuppositions and assumptions and their consequences. If this is so, then, through education, teacher education and public education, educational theorists must redouble their efforts to expose the limitations of these presuppositions and assumptions.

Thirdly, following the comments made about the loss of relative autonomy of the cultural sphere and the need to preserve and defend the possibility of developing critical perspectives on society (and education) educational theorising, research and evaluation must work deliberately to establish forms of critical resistance to certain aspects of contemporary, postmodern culture. This relates to my second suggestion, but it implies that educational theorists, researchers and evaluators should address the transformed conditions and forms of communication in contemporary society not by passively accepting that their work is marginal to the popular media treatments of the issues they are

investigating, but by an active commitment to offering and denying authority and credibility to views appearing in the popular media - that is, by joining the popular debates while also asserting, with due modesty and deference to the theoretical problems that now confront us, that their positions are valid and credible because they rest on the force of better argument, not on the interests and self-interests of those who advance them. In an era when we are all too aware of the limitations of our theoretical perspectives, this may seem difficult to do, but it is abundantly clear that our own sense of the limitations of our perspectives and arguments are not matched by a similar humility in the advocates of some of the extreme educational policies now being advanced by governments with the active support, not to say connivance, of the popular media.

A further implication follows from this: it is that there is a pressing need for educational research and researchers to form new alliances with those whose work constitutes education - to do more "practice-based" and "practice-oriented" research, which can foster collaboration between professional educational theorists and researchers, on the one hand,

and, on the other, teachers, students, school communities and school administrators. In this way, despite the rationalising tendencies of contemporary public administration, and despite the fragmenting and diffusing effects of the popular media, we may support and foster social movement rather than relying on the social order - the state - for the realisation of

critical perspectives which articulate and respond to the problems of irrationality, alienation and injustice which continue to disfigure our societies. This point of view has been put by Stuart Hall. See, for example, Hall, S. (1986) On postmodernism and articulation: An interview [by Lawrence Grossberg], *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol.10, no.2, pp.40-56.

, for example, who (referring in an interview to Australian Aboriginal people and the double-sidedness of their marginality and their appropriation into global culture) is quoted by Steven Connor Connor, S. (1989) *ibid.*, p.195.

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In the last ten or fifteen years, marginality has become a very productive space. People are speaking up from the margins and claiming representation in ways in which they probably didn't twenty or thirty years ago. But now the problem of putting your head up above the parapet, so to speak, is to be instantly swept up by this global culture which precisely because it is more sensitively oriented towards

difference, diversity, pluralism, eclecticism sweeps you in. Whatever new voice, they say, yes, you can be part of the global culture. And before you know where you are an Aboriginal painter is just one slot in somebody else's heroic portrait and has lost the sense of a relationship to a culture. Hall, S. (1988) Interview with Stuart Hall, Block, no.14, p.13.

The barb in the last sentence of this quote suggests that there is a kind of hopelessness in attempting to retain local identity in a homogenising world culture. On the contrary, I believe that this dialectical location of difference within plurality is at the heart of postmodernity, and we should not conclude that world communications and totalised images of global culture obliterate all sensitivity to difference. Indeed, though the framework within which arguments over identity, culture, economy and politics may now be global, the green movement, the women's movement and the achievements of post-coloniality demonstrate that a world stage can be fruitful in gaining respect for difference, and in changing the dominant (technicist, masculinist, Eurocentric) frameworks from which differences have formerly been understood. But these movements also demonstrate that critical work which is located in the perspectives of oppressed and marginal groups have force only when authentically understood, grounded in close concrete analysis, and when they are critically and self-critically developed (that is, to show that they have the force of better argument, not special pleading). Educational theory and research has shown that it can make alliances with such social movements (education and the environment, education and gender, education and multiculturalism, education and modernisation). And what this shows, in turn, is that when educational research and theorising is committed to substantive progress with respect to the substantive problems of education and society, locally and globally, it can have an impact in the critical transformation of educational settings, even though it may not fulfil all of its aspirations in educational policy and educational restructuring. This suggests that educational theorists, researchers and evaluators might reconsider their views on the balance and connection between theoretically-oriented, policy-oriented and practice-oriented research in education, and consider how each research study makes some balance between these elements, and between connections with the social order and social movements.

To pursue suggestions like these, it seems to me, would be to attempt to do the work of

"cognitive mapping" regarded as so essential by Jameson, and to seek to identify what Connor describes as "spaces of resistance" in a continuation of the critical work of modernity, though perhaps in transformed activities and forms like those Said describes in his discussion of "critical resistance" - a task which even Lyotard, despite his pessimism about the prospects for criticism in the postmodern era, seems to regard as an appropriate response to our changed historical circumstances.