

CHAPTER 7

THE DIALECTICAL STRUGGLE: 1976-1977

The Americans don't read the literature so they're dependent on their great spokesmen to tell them what is going on in the world and what the truth is. The first person who took that role with respect to the IIP critique, was Griffiths. (Greenfield interview, 11.12.90).

Dean Dan Griffiths was regarded by many scholars in educational administration as "one of the giants of the field" (Roulston, 1983:32). He was one of the pioneers in the development of the discipline of educational administration and is regarded as one of the leaders of the Theory Movement. Culbertson believed that:

If Jacob Getzels and Andrew Halpin played the leading roles in diffusing concepts about theory into the Cooperative Programs in Educational Administration (CPEA) network, Griffiths led in disseminating the ideas within the larger field (Culbertson, 1995:43).

His published works span a period of almost fifty years, dating from 1947, five years before his doctorate in school administration was granted from Yale University in 1952. Already by then, he was a "forceful proponent of theory-based research" (Culbertson, 1995:43). He was involved from the earliest days, with the Kellogg funded CPEA programs, firstly at New York State College for Teachers at Albany, then at the CPEA centre at Teachers College,

Columbia University from 1956-1960. In 1960 -61 he was Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia. From 1961-1965 he was Associate Dean at the School of Education, New York University and in 1965 became Dean of the School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions at New York University. This position he held until 1983.

Griffiths was also one of the "leading progenitors of the UCEA idea" (p50) and was offered the position of the first executive director. He rejected this offer, preferring to continue his academic work at Teachers College. Through the years Griffiths has been involved in many UCEA sponsored programs, seminars and projects. He chaired many UCEA instigated committees and was instrumental in attracting "big money" sponsorship for some UCEA programs (p71). In a sense, Dan Griffiths was been pivotal in the growth and development of UCEA. From 1975-1979 Griffiths was editor of the *Educational Administration Quarterly*. He was keen, during that time, "to reaffirm the scholarly side of the journal" (*UCEA Review*, Spring, 1989:3) with primary emphasis on research and scholarship. From the mid 1950s Griffiths's work showed a marked dissatisfaction with existing research and the methods used in research projects and disseminated ideas about theory and its logical positivist underpinnings (Griffiths in Campbell, 1957:354-390). He recalled that he:

... was thoroughly disgusted with what passed for research and serious thought in educational

administration, and was influenced by a number of social scientists trained in the logical positivist mode ... It seemed to me that the logical positivist approach was the proper antidote for self-serving testimonials, the pseudotheories ... and the plain nonsense that constituted the field of educational administration (Griffiths, 1982:3-4).

In monographs, papers, books and many conference presentations, he disseminated the ideas of an administrative science based on theory and theory-based research.

This chapter explores Griffiths's reaction to Greenfield's IIP74 paper and follows the progress of the early exchange between the two scholars that came to be called "the Griffiths- Greenfield debate" (Herda, 1978).

THE GRIFFITHS-GREENFIELD DEBATE

Griffiths's contribution to theory development was initially in the area of decision making (in Halpin, 1958; Griffiths, 1959) in which he was heavily influenced by Barnard and Simon. In the chapter in Halpin's *Administrative Behavior in Education* (1958), Griffiths developed the idea that decision making was the central function of the administrator. He continued to believe in a theory of administrative behavior that would:

make it possible to relate what now appear to be discrete acts to one another so as to make a unified concept. The great task of science has been to impose an order upon the universe ... This is the task of theory in the field of educational administration. Within a set of principles, yet to be formulated, it will be possible to recognise interrelationships among

apparently discrete acts, it will be possible to predict the behavior of individuals within the organisational framework, and it will be possible to make decisions that will result in a more efficient and effective enterprise (Griffiths in Campbell, 1957 p388)

Griffiths's position found its antecedents in the positivistic tradition. Feigl's definition of theory - "a set of assumptions from which can be derived by purely logico-mathematical procedures, a larger set of empirical laws" (Feigl, 1951:182) was the epitome of theory for Griffiths. Only theory "which approximates this definition [can] be acceptable as theoretical" (Griffiths, 1975:15), was Griffiths's belief when he first encountered Thomas Greenfield.

He did not agree that the discussion which occurred between himself and Greenfield should rightly be called "debate". In his words:

I never called them debates. I never called them anything. The thing that was so unusual about this was that in educational administration we don't do this sort of thing. Look in our journals. Look in other people's journals. There are responses to an article, then there's a response to a response. That goes on until somebody gets tired and they stop. We don't do that. You don't see any responses. We don't have dialogue in the field at an intellectual level, largely because we don't have a very well thought out body of knowledge. It's pretty much personal and it's difficult. (Griffiths's interview, 13.11.90).

In 1974 Dan Griffiths was reentering the field of educational administration (Personal correspondence) after eight years of practical administration as Dean of a large department at New York University. He had been involved in

one research project during that time and after that "was not related to the field at all" (Griffiths's interview, 13.11.90). He had been at the first IIP conference in 1966 in USA and Canada and thought that the third IIP conference 1974 would be a good restarting point. "That proved to be one of the best hunches of my life", Griffiths recalled (1994:1).

He was most impressed by a "very provocative paper" (Griffiths, 1985:4) given by Lord Morris who, a day or two before the Greenfield presentation, came "presumably, to read a greeting from the Queen and "show the flag" (p4). Griffiths continued:

He did that, but then took the opportunity to present in a nutshell the case for a new kind of administrator. In the USA we had been talking about a new kind of administrator, but we had not been able to decide what was new. I felt that what Lord Morris said was a highly significant insight and it certainly shook me up (p4).

Griffiths was struck by Lord Morris's comment that:

The new Machiavelli can no longer make up his mind what he wants to do and then bring the people round to putting up with it. His primary problem, almost it seems his whole problem, is to find some act of government, or any act of government, which is acceptable. The peoples do not want to be governed, and clearly, they do not believe that there is any real and final necessity to be governed (in Hughes, 1975:114).

Later reflection led Griffiths to conclude that "although what Greenfield had to say shortly after complemented Lord Morris, this went unnoticed" (Griffiths, 1994:1). Gronn,

commenting upon Griffiths's "creeping scepticism", noted that:

Like Greenfield, Griffiths had begun to dispense with much in educational administration that he formerly esteemed highly. Similarly, too, the point of departure for Griffiths has been his own experience of life in educational organisations as an administrator. His qualms began to firm at Bristol, more as a result of the opening address at the conference by Lord Morris of Grasmere, than because of Greenfield's address ... Lord Morris said a number of things in his address, but the one which struck a responsive chord with Griffiths was this remark: 'People are going to be more difficult to govern, or if you like, the public are going to be more difficult to manage' (Hughes, 1975:18). In short, Lord Morris argued that the administrator 'need not aim to compete with Arnold or with Jowett, but 'will have to show more of the arts and skills of politics' (Gronn, 1983:27).

Griffiths had begun to think about a kind of newness in administration following Lord Morris's address. Greenfield suggested another but related kind of newness.

Griffiths recalled being "thoroughly annoyed" (1994:1) by Greenfield's paper and "to being somewhat taken aback ... not at all prepared for the storm that greeted his presentation (Griffiths, 1985:4). He remembered that the Americans and Australians were most indignant and believed that this was because " he [Greenfield] attacked the professors of educational administration where it hurt the most; he attacked the theory which formed the substance of what they taught" (p4). Using strong religious imagery, Griffiths continued:

I suppose it was an attack on the priesthood, and the priests responded with a vengeance. On the other hand, the presentation was received with wild enthusiasm by

most of the English present. I think this was because the paper dealt with phenomenology at such length and with unrestrained enthusiasm. It was almost as though Greenfield was a saviour leading the chosen people out of the wilderness of positivism. The two extreme feelings released simultaneously created a chaotic situation rarely seen in academic circles (p4).

Griffiths's first public response was soon after the IIP74 conference at the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) in summer, 1974. He took up his defence of theory again at the UCEA Plenary Session in Dallas, February 1975 and this paper was reprinted together with reactions by Donald Levine and William Monahan in the *UCEA Review*, October 1975. Griffiths began his *Thoughts about Theory in Educational Administration - 1975* by agreeing with an Indian participant at IIP that many papers were characterised by "sublime dullness" and commented upon the fact that the "conference climate was tuned to a high degree of international academic political intrigue" (Griffiths, 1975:12). He remarked on his own "healthy scepticism" concerning the claim that a general science of organisations and administration was at hand. Greenfield (1975c:91) had recommended such scepticism in the conclusion to his IIP74 paper. Griffiths noted the opposition it provoked among the Australians, "almost equalled by the Canadians and those from the developing Commonwealth countries " (Griffiths, 1975:12) and followed with some fairly trenchant criticism of Professor William Walker's conference paper, *The Future in Educational Administration as a Field of Study, Teaching and Research*.

When American professors at the NCPEA meeting in the summer expressed similar anxiety at issues Greenfield had raised, Griffiths had decided to initiate, in the UCEA forum, some further thought and discussion focussed on theory.

This discussion and critique of Greenfield's ideas centred on four questions:

1. Are administrative theories particular or general?
2. Is theory a guide to action for administrators?
3. What is the place of theory in the preparation of the practitioner?
4. What should be the new directions in theory development? (Griffiths, 1975:4-5).

Griffiths declared his intention as one of consciousness raising of "some old and some new issues without being either comprehensive or complete" (p5). Part of his own disenchantment arose from the fact that all of the theories used in educational administration, with the exception of Cohen, March and Olsen's Garbage Can Model of decision making, were adapted from theories developed in other fields. Cohen et al. was the only theory developed exclusively from educational institutions and although Griffiths could see no clear relationship between the research and the resulting theory, the theory did speak to his own experience as a university dean. (Greenfield 1975b used the Cohen et al. work as an example of the theory/research relationship that he advocated at the time). This experience led him to state that:

we are now at the stage described by Lord Morris in practice, but not in our theory ... faculties of education really don't want deans ... but administrators are necessary if the institutions are going to operate ... New theories are needed to describe and explain the organisations that are emerging and the administration which will be necessary (p16).

In this context, Griffiths conceded that an examination of phenomenology would be useful but debunked Greenfield's understanding of the word. He also found Greenfield's understanding of Weber to be strange (p17). Griffiths was sharp in his criticism that:

Although Greenfield should be thanked for shaking us out of our theory lethargy, his view of phenomenology was rudimentary and naive. I suspect that what he did was to interpret phenomenology loosely and use it to support some ideological concepts which he holds (p17)

Griffiths out of hand rejected the emphasis on one's personal experience as the centre of theoretical work and Greenfield's definition of theory as "sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behavior within it" (Greenfield, 1975c:83) yet he continued to puzzle over the kind of research that would address the centrality of experience or the actual practice of administration. He warned against developing "phenomenological theories of administration" (p17) and advised that the "use of phenomenology should be restricted to methods of research and as variables in theoretical statements" (p17).

According to Griffiths, "theory has less to offer

the practitioner than we thought" (Griffiths, 1975:14); that few, if any, training programs for administrators are theory-based because "there is not enough theory which has a clear and demonstrated relationship to educational administration on which to base a program of preparation" (pp14-15); and that the "major value of the study of theory is to researchers rather than to administrators" (p15). Indeed, with the exception of Cohen et al., no new theories had been developed since the 1950s because "professors had been diverted from their central task; the creation of knowledge" (p15). There was "just as much fuzziness about theory as there was twenty years ago in the States but there are more fuzzy people than then" (p15). He asserted that the "theory movement has been perverted to an ideology and is badly in need of renovation and redirection" and a beginning could be made with a "reconceptualisation of administration and organisations"(p15). Greenfield would not disagree with such sentiments. Still, in spite of all his criticisms directed against the state theory, Griffiths did not abandon his belief "in the promise of a solid theoretical base for educational administration"(p18).

This first published comment from Griffiths combined a discussion of his own misgivings about theory, the lack of a solid theory base in educational administration and the consequent need for renovation and redirection with critique of Greenfield's thinking. He continued to develop and clarify some of these issues in

subsequent papers, for example the role of experience in administrative life; the nature of theory and the relationship between theory and research. Greenfield continued to restate, change the focus and clarify his own understanding in his answers to his critics. At this point in the history of the interactions between Griffiths and Greenfield, Griffiths cannot be seen strictly "as a respondent to Greenfield but was addressing in his own right, his own particular concerns" (Gronn, 1983:28).

Theory about What?

Griffiths's major question concerning theory was, "What is theory?" Greenfield's counter question was, "Theory about what?" (Greenfield, 1976f). Greenfield declared that, in his reconstruction of theory, Griffiths offered "no new insight" (Greenfield, 1976f:4) but reaffirmed the present approaches to theory, "presumably better done". For Greenfield, the possibility of achieving a general theory of educational administration was simply "an act of faith" (p4). In this rejoinder to Griffiths, Greenfield chose to focus on Griffiths's criticism of theory as ideology.

An "act of faith" expressed a belief in the hearts and minds of some individuals about what would be of value in theory building. Curiously, for Greenfield, a theory of organisations which powerfully expressed organisational realities must deal with organisations "in ideological

terms" (p4). If organisations were considered as "invented social reality" (Greenfield, 1973b:556; 1975c:76; 1976f:7), theory as ideology would address those non-rational variables of organisations such as beliefs and values, feelings and purposes of individuals within the organisation and "the differences in beliefs and values of organisation members and would deal with the problem of the way some beliefs and ideologies came to prevail over others" (p7). Ideology, for Greenfield, was part of the "human foundation of organisational life" (1976f:6) and could not be ignored. Given Greenfield's belief that "ideas are socially maintained and manipulated" (p5) his basic criticism of theory in administration was that:

it treats the external trappings of organisations, but fails to come to grips with their ideological content. since it is the ideological component of organisations which is specific to their historic and cultural context and subject to temporal flux, theory which considers only organisational structure and process achieves a spurious universality by leaving out of consideration what concerns us most in organisations - what is being done within them and through them, who is doing it and how (p5).

Greenfield posed four questions around which to organise his reply to Griffiths's critique. These were - what are organisations? what is theory about them? how should research into them proceed? and what are the implications for the training of administrators? (pp5-9). Most of the content of his answers is a repetition of material already contained in his 1973b and 1975c papers reordered and reorganised to suit the particular issues being addressed.

As Griffiths had cited examples of current research to illustrate his views and give examples of the current position (Griffiths, 1975:17-18) Greenfield cited the 1971 work of Michael Crozier which explored "an organisational ideology through action and change within an institution" (Greenfield, 1976f:9). Research was, in fact, providing theoretical knowledge of an alternative view of organisations. Greenfield added his feelings of hurt and anger at Griffiths's *ad hominem* remarks (p5) and replied using similar religious imagery. Greenfield referred to the "theory priesthood" (p3). He objected strongly because this kind of *ad hominem* criticism distracted attention from the major argument and drew attention to the persons of the critic and criticised.

Greenfield specifically mentioned Griffiths's finding his view of Weber "strange" and noted that it was:

... testimony to the risks of relying on Weberian theory as it is presented in much of current writings about organisation. Weber's cross is that he is more frequently quoted than read - an ironic fate for a man who developed the method of *Verstehen*, the method which explores social phenomena from the individual's point of view outwards. The irony is compounded when we consider that Weber also made major explorations into the question of what science means when a value-free social science does not exist (Greenfield, 1976f:6).

He declared that the point that Griffiths missed in all this, in Weber's work and relevance and in the work of Cohen, March and Olsen, was the importance of the human element in organisations, specific to a historical and

cultural context and subject to temporal flux and to individual differences, motivated by beliefs, values, interests, feelings. Current theory and research, for Greenfield, did not and could not address these variables. Greenfield did not mention the word "phenomenology" once in his reply, although Griffiths' article emphasised Greenfield's use and misuse of the term, as Griffiths saw it. Greenfield's reply did not deviate to argument about terms and varying perceptions of theorists' views. He wanted to strike at the fundamental issues and allowed himself a minimum of personal comment and defence. While being uncertain about the effects of his critique, he was definite in his conviction that theory needed to be improved and that research ought to "inform" theory and not "confirm" it (p9). He encouraged the search for programs "which combined an exploration of organisations through art, literature and history with a critical analysis of current organisational problems" (p9) in an effort to provide greater insight into organisations and greater appreciation of life within them.

Theory in the Real World

The May 1976 edition of the *UCEA Review* published Crane and Walker's reply to Griffiths's 1975 paper. The attention seemed to have shifted from Greenfield, momentarily. Alan Crane from the University of New England, Armidale Australia, had responded to Greenfield's paper at the 1974 IIP conference. (A summary of Crane's

response is printed in Hughes, 1975:300). Griffiths commented that this response:

was a reasoned response which seemed out of place at the time. He said that after Greenfield's paper, we now had another way of doing research. Twelve years later, it seems as though that was the best possible response (Griffiths, 1985:4).

Greenfield recalled that Crane's response was:

to ignore the paper largely and try to repair the damage created by the furore that followed. He was obviously there to pour oil on troubled waters (Greenfield interview, 26.9.90).

Griffiths mentioned the opposition Greenfield's paper evoked among the Australians present at the IIP conference and added, "Apparently, many have the idea that they possess the truth and have deified theory" (Griffiths, 1975:12). Crane and Walker considered themselves included in this group. Griffiths made his comments more specific in reference to remarks made by the "President of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration" - at the time, Professor William Walker. Later in his paper Griffiths was critical of the view of theory presented by Crane and Walker in *Social Science Content for Preparing Educational Leaders* (1973) which they edited with Jack Culbertson. Crane and Walker's response was motivated by a number of issues, some of which were: Griffiths's contention that Australians were in opposition to Greenfield's views; his assumption of some kind of sense of "theory priesthood" among them; his attack on Walker's

perceived elitism and superior attitude of the academic towards the lowly practitioner; his perceptions of "sublime dullness" and "international academic political intrigue" at the IIP conference (Griffiths, 1975:12) and his views of theory mentioned in critique of their own stance. Griffiths was the focus of this article, not Greenfield, as the parry and thrust of argument continued.

In counter argument, Crane and Walker declared that it was the Americans at the IIP:

notably Dan Griffiths himself, rather than those from other countries who were provoked by the competent and confident manner with which Greenfield presented and argued his case for a phenomenological theory approach to the understanding of organisations ... (Crane and Walker, 1976:38)

They declared that they did not know then "and still do not know of any Australian scholar who would disagree with Greenfield's statement" (p38).

They denied too any knowledge of colleagues who presumed to believe that they "possess the truth". They shared "Halpin's aphorism that 'there is more than one gate to the Kingdom of Knowledge'" (p38). They explained clearly the "very wide range of professional and academic expertise represented in the cosmopolitan membership of the Commonwealth Council of Educational Administration (CCEA)" (p38), quite different from the elite nature of UCEA. Because of the largely practitioner membership, Walker's paper was "definitely not prepared for a scholarly

audience" (p38). They totally disagreed with Griffiths's charges of "dullness" and "political intrigue" and wondered "just how closely he [Griffiths] was in touch with what was going on around him" (p35).

Crane and Walker questioned Feigl's definition of theory and its wide acceptance, as claimed by Griffiths (1975:15), drawing attention to developments in the field since Feigl, particularly Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) referred to in Greenfield's paper (1975c:84). Kuhn defined theory as "sets of instructions for looking at reality" (Greenfield, 1975c:84), which was "a long distance from the "purely logico-mathematical procedures of Feigl" (Crane and Walker, 1976:34). Paul Feyerabend was also mentioned in the context of his belief that science progressed:

by the agency of courageous individuals who put forward what appeared to their contemporaries as crazy ideas and tenaciously propagated them until they became accepted orthodoxy (p34).

Both Kuhn and Feyerabend agreed that science rested on no firmer foundation than "a mythology protected by a self-perpetuating priesthood" (Crane and Walker, 1976:36).

Crane and Walker also recalled Oliver Gibson's comment that "science progresses by the denial of common sense" (p36).

These developments in thinking about theory substantiated Crane and Walker's "non-dogmatic approach to theory" which was illustrated in the chapter which Griffiths attacked. Griffiths complained of the "weakness of their theoretical

base", their "soft thinking" and the "loose standards as to what constitutes theory appropriate to educational administration" (pp36-37) which Crane and Walker adopt. The paper concluded with a strong statement of their position, their belief that programs for the preparation of educational administrators must be based on theory; that theory encompasses not only "empirical inquiry - "is" theory - but also philosophy/ethics type -"ought" theory" (p37). Concepts of theory, they believed, had changed and were still undergoing redefinition. The implication was that Griffiths had not changed in his views and had somehow been left behind.

Towards a New Paradigm

Crane and Walker did not have the last word. Neither did Greenfield. Griffiths responded briefly to Crane and Walker's paper in the *UCEA Review*, September, 1976. In what scholars had come to regard as Griffiths's inimitable style, he declared the title of Crane and Walker's article "presumptuous". There was only one sentence in it that was about the "real world" (Griffiths, 1976:11). The good thing about the exchange was that scholars "had begun to talk about theory again" but in Griffiths's perception, neither Greenfield nor Crane and Walker had responded to the substantive issues he had raised. (That was Greenfield's complaint about Griffiths's *ad hominem* criticisms, see Greenfield, 1976f:5). According to Griffiths, Crane and Walker did not understand

Greenfield at all - "what they support, Greenfield categorically refutes" (p11) and they were wrong about "academic political intrigue". He had proof (in the form of a letter from eight American professors) and had taken action on this by way of suggestions made to Jack Culbertson prior to American participation in IIP 1978.

With arguments refuted or dismissed, Griffiths briefly restated his position. He agreed with Greenfield that it was now time to change the paradigm used to study and practice educational administration. He disagreed about the nature of the new paradigm. Griffiths was unsure that a general theory of administration could not be constructed and was not ready to write off the possibility, but could not see theory as a highly personal construct as opposed to a scientific concept. He was not ready to "write off the tradition of scientific investigation and substitute for it personal insights, opinions and prejudices" (p11). Science had not failed. Professors of educational administration had failed in their scholarly responsibilities. Griffiths still preferred definitions of theory that approached Feigl's. He believed that "when you have a theory, it should be in such a form that it is possible to deduce (and not necessarily mathematically), laws which can be tested" (p11). He admitted the "value of phenomenology in understanding the behavior of people in organisations" but did not know how it was possible to have a phenomenological theory of educational administration.

He challenged Greenfield to develop such a theory. Griffiths wanted a continuation of the dialogue, the development of new theories and original research.

The Individual in Organisation

In August 1976, Griffiths gave the Walter D.Cocking lecture at the annual meeting of the National Conference of Professors of Education (NCPEA) at the University of Tennessee. The paper was subsequently published in the *Educational Administration Quarterly* Spring 1977 and reprinted in 1985. In this paper, Griffiths critiqued the accepted paradigm, presented the viewpoint of phenomenology and discussed the theoretical foundations of a new paradigm. It was almost three years since Greenfield's paper at IIP74 and Griffiths continued to write and speak in terms of the current state of theory and the alternative view. He had by now adopted Kuhn's term, "paradigm" to describe a theoretical approach to organisations. Greenfield was never comfortable with the term (Greenfield interview, 26.9.90).

The "accepted paradigm" now replaced "the good old days" in Griffiths's terminology. It consisted largely of the "Getzels-Guba social systems model, role theory, decision theory, bureaucracy and systems theory" (Griffiths, 1985:93). The two major critiques of the accepted paradigm focused on "consideration of the changing posture of individuals in organisations" (p94) and

phenomenology. In considering individuals in organisation, Griffiths restated sections from his 1975 response, *Some Thoughts about Theory in Educational Administration*. He quoted from Lord Morris again about the people not wanting to be governed, and concluded that:

the way people view themselves and their relations to others in organisations has changed to the point that the theories of administrative and organisational behavior we have been using are no longer applicable (Griffiths, 1985:96).

In the discussion on phenomenology Griffiths restated his views from the former paper, mentioned Greenfield's use and meaning of the term from the IIP74 presentation and Greenfield's equation of theory with common sense. Griffiths could not accept this position. He expanded the exposition of phenomenology, begun in his 1975 paper with reference to the work of D.E.Denton. Griffiths could not accept Greenfield's explanation of phenomenology. He concluded that the phenomenological critique had to be heeded if organisational theories were to be built that would give appropriate recognition to the people in the organisation (p96). Griffiths agreed with Denton that "to talk of organisation with the terms of existential language would not immediately negate, throw out, all organisational theory but would be to question the status of such theory" (p97); that "conceptions of knowledge and explanation, to be genuinely human, must be grounded in the feeling-states of individual persons" and that "organisation to be

meaningful must be grounded in the ordinary experience of individuals and talked about in appropriate terms" (p98). Griffiths's position here seemed to be not too far removed from Greenfield's.

Fundamental to a new theoretical paradigm was an understanding of the nature of theory. Griffiths declared that that question was at the centre of his arguments with Greenfield and with Crane and Walker. So much revolved around this issue. Griffiths did not move from his view that theory was "a set of assumptions from which propositions can be deduced by mathematical or logical reasoning" (p101). He identified three positions on the theory continuum: supporters of the status quo; the middle ground, occupied by March, Cohen, Olsen, Weick and Griffiths himself, who were searching for a "new set of concepts and theories" (p101); and those advocating a phenomenological perspective of organisations, like Greenfield and Denton. Griffiths's challenge to Greenfield was to develop a "theory which deals with organisations in ideological terms". Griffiths believed that the result would be "an ideology of organisations that may well be useful but not theoretical" (p102). The Crane and Walker position, Griffiths left off the continuum because "they accepted all of the traditional theories but were not particular in adhering to any standard definition of theory"(p102).

Griffiths believed that groundwork for the new paradigm in educational administration was emerging from the work of Cohen, March and Olsen and their Garbage Can Theory; from Karl Weick's concept of loose coupling as a way of describing organisations; from Emery and Trist's work on organisations and their environment and from concepts of organisation that considered the informal organisation, unions and the individual as basic facts of organisations (pp103-106). In conclusion, Griffiths noted eight dominant ideas that could well be influential in the development of the new paradigm. These were that:

- * theories need to encompass the essence of modern life;
- * and develop new concepts of authority for a people who do not want to be governed;
- * bargaining, collective and individual, will become a key administrative process;
- * theory will be specific and focussed on particular types of organisation;
- * theorists will try to build theories using ideology and values as axioms;
- * situations and situational variables will be used as axioms;
- * emerging theories will be much more complex, methodologically
- * completely new completely different, concepts will be used in theory building (p107).

Griffiths's final word reminded his readers of the intrinsic connection between theory and research "theorizing actually going on in and through research" (Griffiths, quoting Trow's review of Halpin's 1959 volume, p108). Theoretically guided research was one of the corner stones of the Theory Movement and Griffiths would not waver in his support of this concept.

The British Symposium

Until Autumn 1976, the *UCEA Review* and *Educational Administration Quarterly* provided the forums for continuing discussion on what had begun with Greenfield's IIP74 paper and what, by 1976, had expanded into a search for a new paradigm in both theory and research. With the publication in the British journal, *Educational Administration* (Autumn 1976) of *Barr Greenfield and Organisational Theory: A Symposium*, the discussion moved to a different cultural context. Professor Meredydd Hughes was editor of the journal at the time and the symposium was his brainchild. According to Hughes very few people in the UK knew about Greenfield's paper at IIP74 and consequently there was very little discussion. He quite deliberately wanted to stir things up and provide a forum for discussion across the Atlantic (Hughes, 1976: ii). Greenfield was "really rather pleased with the idea" (Hughes interview, 23.1.91). To provide a context for what Hughes hoped would be a continuing discussion and "to give people a flavour of what was in it" (Hughes interview, 23.1.91) he decided to include substantial quotes from the official version of Greenfield's paper (the Athlone Press edition which he had edited). He already had Michael Harrison's paper, which was a review of the Athlone Press publication; Doctor Tom Bone was present at the conference so Hughes was confident that he would respond; and then he said, "I pressganged people who I thought would give different viewpoints on it,

and that proved very successful" (Hughes interview, 23.1.91).

There were five contributors in all. Besides Harrison and Bone, the other contributors to the symposium were Professor Eric Hoyle from the University of Bristol; Pat and John White from the Department of Philosophy of Education, University of London Institute of Education and T.J. Russell of the Further Education Staff College, Coombe Lodge. In the editorial, Hughes commented upon the use and advantages of systems analysis in the study of organisations and some of the limitations in this approach. He introduced Greenfield's IIP74 paper as being "strongly critical of the general acceptance of a systems approach in the study of educational organisation" (Hughes, 1976:i) and as mounting an attack, from a phenomenological viewpoint, not only on the limitations of systems analysis but also and "more radically, on the systems perspective *per se*, on the tendency to see structural change as an unfailing cure for organisational ills and on the associated imagery of the organisation as an adaptive, self-maintaining organism with many human characteristics" (pi). He mentioned too, "the remarkable interest and controversy" (pi) evoked by the paper in USA and Canada; the inclusion of the paper in the Open University Third Level Course, "Management in Education", the translation into German and publication in two German journals of Greenfield's 1973b paper.

Harrison believed that "Greenfield should be required reading for all educational administrators in Britain" (in Hughes, 1976:4) because his paper explained so much of the "current unease with corporatism in management" since it stressed the two basic ways of looking at organisation either "as though it had an objective reality of its own" or as if "organisation is a technology designed by men for human and social purposes" (p3). Without an understanding of the "basic philosophy inspiring the machinery of management in organisations", Harrison declared that people are working "naively in self-imposed darkness" (p4) unaware of the direction in which their efforts are taking them.

Eric Hoyle's comment was more critical than Harrison's. He thought Greenfield's view was too extreme and polarised. For Hoyle, both the systems view and the phenomenological perspective have strengths and weaknesses, and "both are valuable and complementary" (in Hughes, 1976:6). He agreed with Greenfield that "there are two sociologies which represent mutually exclusive ways of making sense of the social world" (p4) but Greenfield is too dismissive of the systems view and does not fully accept "the logic of the phenomenological approach" (p4), because, in Hoyle's view, Greenfield continued to accept "the generalising role of sociology" (p5) as Hoyle himself did. For Hoyle, Greenfield was not a thoroughgoing phenomenologist but was "closer to Weber than to Garfinkel"

(p5); his position more sociological than phenomenological.

Hoyle wondered about "phenomenological sociology" (p5) and the role of the sociologist as "the interpreter of other men's constructions of reality" if denied the "use of his generalising concepts" (p6). He firmly believed that "the social sciences ought to have a generalising and comparative function" (p5). He could see value in "training that is wholly particularistic to one organisation" and in "some rather more universal principles" (p6). Neither position, he believed, was "free from ideological taint; the system approach informed by a concern with order, the phenomenological approach with change" (p6). Nevertheless, Greenfield's paper was, for Hoyle, "an excellent paper" (p4).

Pat and John White agreed with Greenfield's doubt that a general theory of administration was possible but they had difficulty pinning down Greenfield's "alternative view" because "on different readings, it seems to bear different interpretations" (in Hughes, 1976:7). They distinguished clearly between the Weberian view and the phenomenological view. The latter was a "form of idealism". The "method of understanding" was realist. This was scarcely a "new perspective" either, since "it has been well known for generations in social science, psychology and philosophy" (p7). The Whites asserted that what must be "new" was the association of the Weberian and

the phenomenological approaches. But they wondered how useful would this innovation be. They declared that Greenfield was not "a thoroughgoing subjectivist" (p8) because he admitted that the facts of organisation must also be taken into account and "on a pure phenomenological account there can be no such things as facts" (p8). For the Whites, Greenfield's "shifting stance" (p8) weakened his arguments. They preferred a pure Weberian approach to understanding reality, one that was "not entangled with the trendy nonsense of phenomenology" (p8).

Finally, the Whites addressed the images of schools proposed by Greenfield, namely that we should reject "a production model of school and adopt the model of a public utility" (p9). Greenfield's remark that the production model should be rejected because society does not know what is the school's product, was for them, "the most explosive remark in the whole paper" (p9). If the effects which the school has on pupils could not be seen, "a whole large area of educational administration is blown sky high". As for the public utility model, they found this "grotesquely inadequate" and wondered why have a model at all. Why not simply study "the organisation of schools as schools?" (p10).

Russell's short comment expressed difficulty in imagining Greenfield's purposes in attributing "all forms of methodological individualism, phenomenology and

ethnomethodology as being of a single order" (in Hughes, 1976:10). His second and more serious criticism, was that "by failing to take his own methods seriously, [Greenfield] lost the chance to ask wider and deeper questions" (p10) which focused on the myriad of "ideological struggles" (p11) intrinsic to the "perception by individuals of the situation in which they find themselves" (p10).

Interestingly, in the light of Griffiths's comments about "academic political intrigue" at IIP74 (Griffiths, 1975:12), Doctor Tom Bone's symposium piece noted a political purpose in Greenfield's paper - "he was warning those from the less well-developed countries of what he regarded as a blind alley that they might unwittingly be setting out to follow" (in Hughes, 1976:12) and that IIP74 might prove to be "an occasion for the further propagation of received ideas in the field of organisation theory as applied to education" (p12). Bone saw similarities between Greenfield's ideas and those of the early deschoolers - "they turn searchlights on to the many ways in which the established system is failing to achieve what it has claimed it would achieve" (p12). But the difficulty with the deschoolers and perhaps with the phenomenologists, was that "their critical drive has been much stronger than their constructive one and that they have (perhaps rightly) destroyed faith in traditional practices without putting forward anything very convincing

or practicable to take their place" (p12). Bone wondered how useful would "the study of the interactions of specific people in specific situations" (p13) be for education as a whole. But perhaps there was something to be learned from the phenomenologists with their emphasis on organisation as "the stuff of human action and intention" (p13). Perhaps knowledge was not a case of either/or, especially for British scholars who had come later to the study of educational administration "and who are not totally committed to any particular viewpoint". Perhaps they could learn something from " both Griffiths and Greenfield, from the old school and from the new" (p13).

In summary, the British contributors to the symposium welcomed Greenfield's paper for the impetus thus given to scholarly discussion on substantial issues. In general, they appreciated the exposition of the two views for interpreting reality and tended to underline the complementarity of the views rather than their polarisation. Their difficulties with Greenfield's ideas centred on theory generalisation as against the particularistic application to specific situations; on Greenfield's seeming grouping together of the method of understanding of Weber and phenomenology; and on his shifting understanding of phenomenology and its application to educational organisations and research and the "thingness" (p12) and humanness of organisation - are they complementary or opposite?

Continuing the British Symposium

Hughes noted at the end of the symposium that Greenfield had been invited to reply (the reply was published a year later) and welcomed other reactions. Two further reactions were published in *Educational Administration*, Spring 1977. Ribbins, Best and Jarvis of the Chelmer Institute of Higher Education and Beryl Tipton, from the University of London Institute of Education responded.

The Ribbins et al. article was entitled *A Phenomenological Critique of Pastoral Care Concepts* (1977). It placed attention on two recent accounts that dealt with pastoral care structures in secondary schools and thus illustrated Greenfield's contention that there is no objective reality; that to understand how people construe their activities, particular experiences in specific institutions must be studied. It is a practical example of the subjectivity of knowledge. The article concluded that "generalisations are possible, but the existence of the regularities they describe must always be regarded as provisional" (Ribbins et al. 1977:45).

Beryl Tipton, in her article, *The Tense Relationship of Sociology and Educational Administration* (1977) identified five tensions that flowed from the connection of sociology and educational administration. The tensions revolved around research, knowledge content,

the relationship between sociologists as teachers of educational administration and administrators as students; the relationship of administrator and researcher and the "problem for sociologists and administrators of the management and use of research" (Tipton, 1977:55). With sociology "full of internal debate" (p46) and "in a peculiarly tumultuous stage at the moment" (p47) and with educational administration lacking definition, tensions in the relationship were to be expected. Tipton remarked that Greenfield's paper and the subsequent symposium had left the issue "tantalisingly in the air" (p46). Her own position vacillated "between regarding the relationship as one of hopeless muddle and one of exciting intellectual and practical possibilities" (p46). Tipton firstly addressed the question of the nature of educational administration. For some, it was "a discipline in its own right"; for others, "a field of application" (pp46-47). She preferred the latter definition and so was urged to ask "What does research in the field of educational administration look like (p47)?" Tipton then proceeded to discuss four tensions which the relationship between sociology and educational administration raised for her. Tensions could not be solved but had to be lived through.

Tension one revolved around the uncertainty about the nature of research in educational administration. She believed that the nature of sociology was equally complex, equally fluid, with an "array of theoretical standpoints

available ... standpoints often only marginally distinguishable from one another" (p48). Given lack of certainty about the nature of educational administration, and the variety of theoretical perspectives in sociology, Tipton raised tension two "is it really possible 'to squeeze the disciplines' for educational administration?" (p48). The focus here was epistemological - wherein lay the knowledge base of educational administration? And what was the role of sociology? The ensuing discussion raised issues of the objectivity of knowledge, scientific neutrality and the influence of personal values. One solution to the dilemma of the "neutrality definition of the academic role" (p52) and the influence of personal values, which Tipton called "commitment" (p51), in the collection and analysis of data, seemed to lie with "reflexive sociology" - the habit of perpetual intellectual self-examination or viewing one's own beliefs as we now view those held by others" (p50). Neither position, Tipton declared was "promising for the teaching of educational administration" (p51).

Therein lay tension three, "the clash between the main orientations of sociology today and the attitudes, social positions and course expectations of students of educational administration" (p51). Many of these were or would be people in positions of some power who expected their courses to support their careers and make the job of administration more manageable. Most did not want "to be

challenged to rethink their attitudes to social structure" (p51). The fourth tension lay in the different messages of sociologists and other educational administration staff. Tipton proceeded to consider the different expectations of social researcher and administrator. Tension five mentioned differences in the management and use of research of these two groups of people. For Tipton, the relationship between sociologist and educational administrator illustrated some "contradictory theoretical themes" (p55) that are commonplace in modern society. The debate between positivism and phenomenology also focused on contradictory themes. For her, as for Greenfield, the value lay in the debate, in the search for knowledge and wisdom and not necessarily in one fixed solution.

One Year Later

Two other comments on Greenfield's work appeared in *Educational Administration*, Winter 1977/78 in a section called, *The Phenomenology Debate*. Greenfield's reply to the symposium appeared in the same edition. Richard Hobbs of Preston Polytechnic wrote a short, sharp reflection in which he summarised the previous contributions as exhibiting:

an alarming degree of efficiency on the behalf of established educationalists and scholars regarding their ability to juggle with and then absorb "trendy nonsense" into the enclaves of the dominant ideology (Hobbs, 1977/78:112).

While his comments firmly underlined his preference for the

systems perspective, he asserted that the discussion had remained on "the hazy periphery", while "the meat of his [Barr Greenfield's] argument has been largely ignored" (p114) and "comments regarding the ideological stance of the paper serve merely to shroud the implications of Barr Greenfield's theory" (p114). Following Hobbs' bias towards the systems perspective, the second article focused on a phenomenological view of organisation.

Dennis Bruce from St. Gerard's Secondary School, Glasgow presented his own ideas about interpretations of reality and picked up some of Beryl Tipton's thinking about the relationships between sociologists and administrators in comments such as:

In a pluralistic society, understanding, no matter how imperfect, is at a premium. This throws the burden upon those who hold the keys to the door of power, to alter their stance as leaders and controllers to become listeners and counsellors, not for the purpose of persuasive manipulation, but to enable themselves to translate the meanings of these not in their positions, into a viable mode of living (Bruce, 1977/78:114).

Bruce clearly favoured the perspective of phenomenology whose purpose was to:

enable the individual to distance himself as far as he can from his beliefs so that he can examine what it is that motivates him, what meanings he has imposed on his own experiences (p115).

He stressed the importance of distinguishing what had been imposed from without "and the meanings which we bring from within", in order to be able to "circumnavigate our culture

without any blind reaction to externally imposed and unconscious taboos" (p115). Bruce introduced two new terms into the debate - "allocentricity" and "autocentricity" (p115). The former designated the state, in a common culture, where the centre of belief was seen to be outside the individual. The latter pointed to the case in a pluralist society where the belief centre was within the individual. In an allocentric society, the code of beliefs was absolute and binding "and any challenge thereto is seen as heretical" (p116), for example, the state of educational administration. The allocentric society valued permanence and certainty which came from "sacrosanct, external authority" and abhorred "radical, reflective thinking" (p116). He identified some of the viewpoints expressed in the symposium as originating from an allocentric view, "which allows nothing to shake its invincible belief in itself" (p116). His critique of the Whites' view was particularly strong:

The Whites employed a massive discrediting technique by developing a framework of ridicule, thereby hoping to defuse any danger of serious consideration of this radical approach ... (p116).

Bruce supported Greenfield's radical approach and his wish "to break free from the supposedly scientific modes of verification imposed ... by the social sciences" and wished that research be used "as an aid, not as a prescription" (p116). His contribution ended the symposium comment. Hughes' purpose had been achieved. The symposium

had stirred up interest. The variety of the issues and the stances taken by contributors verified this. This interest would continue and grow. American interest in the discussion had by no means waned and the study now moves back to the USA to track the changing direction of published comment.

THE UCEA REVIEW: 1977

Scientific Humanism

By 1977 in the USA, "contentious exchanges had given way to more tolerant expressions" (Culbertson, 1995:158). For a while yet, the *UCEA Review* continued to publish response and counter argument and other scholars, in touch with the flow of thinking in educational administration added their ideas to the discussion.

Oliver Gibson, from the State University of New York, Buffalo, was the first to support both Griffiths's and Greenfield's views. As an undergraduate he had read the writings of Edward Husserl and these ideas had given him "a fresh perspective on the central importance of consciousness" (Gibson, 1977:36). Gibson's paper entitled *Reflections on a Dialogue* was printed in the *UCEA Review* (January, 1977). He had been present at IIP74 and commented on the extensive interest sparked by Greenfield's presentation. He noted the progression of articles in the *Review* that continued the initial interest, summarised the main positions taken by Griffiths and Greenfield and

remarked that:

They seem to differ largely on the "how" and the "what" of theorizing about educational administration. To the extent that these positions differ on the intra-subjective process of theorizing and the out-there-in-life phenomena that are theorised about, they centre upon the subjectivity/objectivity distinction (Gibson, 1977:36).

Gibson believed that "the views are more usefully seen as complementary than conflictual" (p36); that "the binary opposition of naturalistic and phenomenological approaches is wrong-minded (p39); and that both approaches are necessary in order to fully understand the phenomena in question. He noted that neither side of the debate questioned the need for theory:

in both objective explanation and inner interpretative understanding. The differences are over issues of substantive and methodological validity of theoretic formulations about the intellectual underpinning of theoretic structures or ideal forms (p36).

Gibson added some of his own thinking about "the dialectical relationship of theory and fact" (p36); individual and collective meaning; the naturalistic and phenomenological approaches to reality and suggested another approach which he called, "scientific humanism" (p38), which required the "interaction of science and humanism as planned components of administrative preparation". Conceptualised in this way, Gibson believed that:

humanism will contribute to depth of insight into

individual and collective human interests while science will add a component of clarity of explanation of how those wholesome human states of affairs may be anticipated and realised in educational institutions ... the naturalistic approach will help to keep school administration objectively honest; the phenomenological approach will help to keep it humanly relevant (p38).

Then the question was "not which but how both" (p36), not opposition but synthesis. Gibson's 1977 article followed a new and different format of response to the issues raised in Greenfield's IIP74 paper. Three years after the actual presentation the nature of response had changed subtly. Critics of Greenfield's perspective were spending more time and space outlining their own particular thinking of the moment, which might have no direct reference to anything Greenfield said or wrote. Gibson's contribution to the extension of thought beyond the naturalistic or phenomenological perspectives was the concept of "scientific humanism" (p 38). The *UCEA Review*, October 1977 published two more articles that followed the same format, that is they made some mention of Greenfield's work but the prime focus was on other ideas.

A Perspective on Perspectives

Hills's article, *A Perspective on Perspectives* (1977) did not mention either Greenfield or Griffiths but talked about "alternative perspectives, the two principal alternatives being seen as the naturalistic and the phenomenological (Hills, 1977:1). Hills was invited to comment "informally" on the "series of exchanges" between

Greenfield (1975c, 1976f), Griffiths (1975, 1976), Crane and Walker (1976) and Gibson (1977), and his purpose, quite clearly, was to:

outline the manner in which I have come to think about such matters as a consequence of having spent a number of years thinking, reading, writing and talking about such subjects as knowledge, theories organisations, societies and human beings (Hills, 1977:1).

For him, the conceptual distinction in thinking about "epistemology and the philosophy and methodology of science" on the one hand, and "organisations and societies and the people who populate them" on the other, had collapsed. All his thinking now shared the same foundation, based on his view of the nature of man, of reality and of the interpretation of experience. The important fact to emerge from this kind of thinking was that "two observers having identical experiences could easily abstract differently from them" (p2) and that "two observers possessing different concepts could see different things in identical experiences" (p3). Hills concluded that this kind of thinking was probably closer to a phenomenological than to a naturalistic perspective but that was not a distinction that mattered. Individuals used "whatever concepts seem useful ... for the purpose at hand" (p5). However, "in the name of science" (p5), he insisted on "the dual criterion of logical and empirical validity" because "what we can most usefully mean by knowledge seems to be the communicable mapping of some

aspect of experienced reality in symbolic terms". Hills was attempting a synthesis of the naturalistic and phenomenological viewpoints which were generally considered polarised positions. His conclusion picked up the map analogy. He wondered if different views of organisations were the same as different kinds of maps that represent different aspects of the same landscape like precipitation, and demographic patterns. The choice of map depended on one's purpose. Hills suggested that one's purpose at any particular time influenced one's perception of the organisation. One particular purpose might necessitate a naturalistic view; another purpose, another view.

Thinking about the Debate

The second article in the *UCEA Review* (October, 1977) was Kendell and Byrne's *Thinking about the Greenfield-Griffiths Debate*. The sections in the original which focussed on Greenfield's work were reproduced in the British journal, *Educational Administration* (Summer, 1978) by instigation of the editor, Professor Meredydd Hughes intending to maintain the high level of interest already generated in these issues in previous editions of the journal. Kendell and Byrne were both from the Graduate School of Educational Administration at the University of Utah and, while analysing the debate and critiquing Greenfield's phenomenological perspective, they focused on what they called "a more basic issue" (Kendell and Byrne, 1977:12) the need to prohibit "the politicalisation of

substantive debate and critique" (p16) in the field of educational administration.

Kendell and Byrne described the Greenfield-Griffiths debate (this was the only article to reverse the names) as "an extended political campaign" (p6) with Greenfield "the challenger" who "marks the failures of the theory based movement and calls for its rejection in favor of phenomenology", and Griffiths as "the seasoned establishment man" who "defends the movement as victimised by social vagaries and unscrupulous entrepreneurs" (p6). Griffiths, they wrote, "patronises and chides the challenger for misguided naivete" (p6). Both participants "make a point of intellectual disdain for the view held by the other". They believed that when the nature of the debate is political, such behavior is understandable but "such exchanges offer little academically" (p6). The authors forcefully suggest that the field would be considerably helped by distinguishing when the nature of a debate is academic and when it is political. Byrne noted the distinctive characteristics of political debate thus:

At the political level the intent of argumentation is to persuade the field that a particular point of view should hold sway in establishing the norms and criteria of scholarship for the field. Winning at this level promises rewards for the victorious. Among the political prizes the following seem obvious: control of publication and publishing opportunities, leadership in the policy making bodies and associations, access to the resources necessary for research and scholarly work, and the prestige and status incumbent to acknowledged leadership in a professional field. The high attractiveness of such rewards, in part, explains

the intensity of the debate (pp2-5).

Some elements of the Greenfield-Griffiths discussion exemplified the political nature of argumentation and presented the field with certain choices. Kendell and Byrne asked:

Should the cause celebre of a disciplined elite and their students continue to dominate decisions on the legitimacy of research and scholarship? If not, should the field adopt phenomenology as the new ruling view? If so, shall the phenomenologists be cast in the role of speculators and dreamers? (1977:7)

, The problem was that such choices were made on the basis of either/or propositions. While this "political polarisation" (p7) was common place in "other academic territories", the authors believed that rigid dichotomies, such as presented by the current debate and by such distinctions as hard versus soft, quantifiers versus describers, qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology hindered and obscured "efforts to know and understand" (p7). They preferred that new ideas be considered for what they offered the field rather than be destroyed "for not complying with other ideas" (p7) and that "more established views" be critiqued for "what they have done and can continue to do" rather than that they be "castigated" for not accomplishing "what they never pretended to accomplish" (p7). Kendell and Byrne advised against the then-emerging trend of choosing "an organising paradigm" so that "normal science can proceed in the Kuhnian sense" because of the "lack of epistemological

clarity in the field". They believed that the fixation with one view to the exclusion of others impoverished the field and considered the Greenfield-Griffiths debate as one example of impoverishment because it illustrated "the developmental dysfunction of 'talking through' each other" (p16). This is a Kuhnian term (Kuhn, 1974:109) and although the authors expressed an awareness of the "current fashion of citing Thomas Kuhn and of using his explanation of the conduct of science to clarify discussion in our field" (p12) they made this issue the explanatory base of their comments on the academic side of the Greenfield-Griffiths debate.

"Talking through each other", they explained, is the kind of discussion that does little to extend or clarify current knowledge or to promote understanding because the debaters use "different sets of meanings" for concepts such as science, theory and knowledge (p12) and so, in a sense, the debaters never talk to each other. Griffiths represented the theory-based movement with its roots in European positivism and "the identification of science with knowledge of fact and ... the restriction of such knowledge to conclusions obtained and verified empirically" (Hutchins, 1971:682). Greenfield rejected the notion of theory, "as the word is understood by physical and social scientists" (p8) and advocated the subjective understanding of one's experience as a way of coming to know. He used concepts "with other meanings -meanings

which differed from what Griffiths says they should be" (p8). Rigid viewpoints promoted polarisation and debate became a kind of endless "talking through each other" characterised by repetitive argumentation and defence of one's position.

Having thus characterised the Greenfield-Griffiths debate, Kendell and Byrne proceeded to analyse Greenfield's challenge. They believed that Greenfield was justified in asserting that "existing theories of administration are inadequate" because "human behavior and the functioning of organisations are vastly more complicated than statistical descriptions and/or predictions may indicate" (p10). They concurred with Greenfield's criticism of the theory movement, that it had not been "highly productive in terms of interpreting and explaining the phenomena of administration" and had been of little use to the field "by insisting on a theoretical and research mode without a sound basis for training administrators or for dealing with practical educational questions" (p10). These arguments represented the political side of the debate. Greenfield was challenging the domination of the field by advocates of a narrowly conceived, theory-based research and scholarship.

However, Kendell and Byrne (pp10-11) believed that Greenfield's thinking was seriously flawed. Briefly stated, Greenfield did not make "proper allowance for the positive

contributions of empirically based research". He advocated the replacement of one grand ideology for another. He did not show what phenomenology is nor its utility in the study of organisations. He did not distinguish between natural systems and the phenomenological perspectives in his characterisation of research as "the search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action". He did not show that the "system view of order and the phenomenological view of control are conceptually unrelated" (p11). In short, the authors asserted that:

' the phenomenological perspective has not emerged through the Greenfield critique as an approach that is well defined or defended ... the distinctions made between the systems view and the phenomenological view rest in part on a misunderstanding of the former and an inadequate explanation of the latter (p11).

Using this as one example of "a general condition in the field" (p12) Kendell and Byrne then proceeded to discuss another challenge currently being offered to the "disciplined elites' definition of what constitutes legitimate work in the field" (p12), that of Research and Development versus a theory-based view of education (pp12-16), that is, practical educational inquiry (R&D) and epistemic educational inquiry (theory-based). Kendell and Byrne asserted that both kinds of inquiry were needed in the complex educational environment that pertains today. Either/or polarisations were misplaced and theory continued to play a pivotal role in inquiry of any kind. They then suggested a third kind, that of "philosophic" inquiry which

"presupposes some theory of what should be" (p15). The three kinds of inquiry then create three categories of knowledge, "knowledge of what is; knowledge of what is desirable; and knowledge of how to practise in an immediately practical situation" (p16). Serious inquiry needs an "apolitical environment" that allows scholars to "interact on a basis of relatedness rather than one of difference" (p14). To create this environment, the rigid definitions which people held about theory, knowledge and research needed to be relaxed and a more "relativistic attitude" (p16) toward science, knowledge, theory, research needed to be encouraged. They were careful to guard against the charge of eclecticism and set out what they regarded as a clear and comprehensive definition of "relativistic criticism" (p16). They believed that theory development would progress in an environment where "those who hold differing views make serious attempts to comprehend one another" (p16) and where they are opposed to "the politicisation of substantive debate and critique".

Thinking about the Greenfield-Griffiths Debate is true to the title. It provided the authors with the opportunity to express their own views about the state of the field of educational administration in general and, in particular, to focus on both the political and academic dimensions of discussion and debate that, in their opinion were stifling the growth of knowledge in educational administration. They used the Greenfield-Griffiths debate

as an example to substantiate their own thinking. Their own critique of Greenfield's ideas was a brief digression from the central theme.

Greenfield responded feelingly to some issues of this critique in *Reflections on Organisation Theory and the Truths of Irreconcilable Realities* (1978).

The Phenomenological Appreciation of Theory

Paula Silver, as editor of the *UCEA Review* in the early 1970s and Associate Director of UCEA, "nurtured and helped give early expression to the debate" (Culbertson, 1995:156). By 1977 she had moved to the University of Tulsa and after the 1977 AERA conference in New York where Robert Owens conducted a symposium that featured presentations by Greenfield, Griffiths and Walker, Silver published her response to the symposium in the issue of the *UCEA Review* that followed the Hills - Kendell and Byrne edition. Greenfield presented his *Organisational Theory as Ideology* paper at AERA, 1977.

Silver began by expressing her approval of the kind of dialogue that was occurring as "one of the healthiest developments in the field in a long time" (Silver, 1978:30). Her view contrasted starkly with that of Kendell and Byrne. As the title of the essay suggested, Silver attempted to integrate the naturalistic and phenomenological views by suggesting two levels of organisational reality, "that which is created by the participant and that which is

observable to others" (p30). The first level, she declared, "defies research" because of the subjective, idiosyncratic nature of the creation. The researcher keeps "superimposing" his/her own inventions of reality over the subject's reality; reality is not a "stable, changeless thing" but ephemeral at best" and most importantly:

... reality is not entirely a verbal one. It is full of images, sensations, fragments, and inconsistencies. By my very act of trying to verbalise it, I have abstracted from my experience, put a sound and a grammar and a logic on it that wasn't there before (p30).

The words that one chooses to express one's individual reality such as "values, interests, objectives and ideologies" are all theoretical constructs which the person loads with meaning and uses to articulate his/her perception of reality. Sharing theories and struggling to come to understand another's theories of reality "enrich our own conceptualisations of the world" (p31). This was Silver's "rather phenomenological approach to appreciating theory" (p31) which led her to question the necessity, indeed the desirability, of research. Research is associated with the ability to predict and, for Silver, the ability to predict "is essential for survival as well as for administrative effectiveness" (p31). She continued:

And the only way to predict from one phenomenological instant to the next is to generalise, to abstract from it and generate a logical and consistent pattern, even though the pattern doesn't capture all of any phenomenon (p31).

Positivistic research, by definition, was characterised by the ability to generalise and predict. This was one of the major differences between the two views. Griffiths recommended caution in the tendency to generalise because of the uniqueness of every organisation (Griffiths, 1975:13) and believed that theories could be constructed which have "limited generalizability" (Griffiths, 1985:90). Similarly, Kendell and Byrne (1977:11) wrote that while "every organisation is *sui generis*", one of the functions of theory is predictive (p16). Greenfield did not hold with theory generalisation nor with the predictive function of theory. Silver's conclusion was that Greenfield and the theorists he rejected had been "grappling" with the same question - "why do we behave as we do in social organisations?" (p31). The answer, for her, could only be found in theory-based research.

A Pompous Polarisation

Professor William Walker's 1977 AERA symposium presentation, entitled *Values, Unorthodoxy and the 'Unscientific' in Educational Administration*, referred to "a pompous polarisation" that emerged over the following two to three years following IIP74 that was:

marked at one extreme by those who claim that organisational behavior can be fully understood only through hard data derived by empirical means from theories based on Feigl's 'purely logico- mathematical procedures and at the other by those who claim that such behavior can only be understood through soft data derived from phenomenological procedures such as the hermeneutic-emancipatory approach of Habermas (Walker, 1977:3).

Walker wrote that this polarisation "though productive of healthy argument also reflected sad naivete regarding the ways in which human knowledge has advanced" (p3). He expressed a need for "careful analysis rather than *argumentum ad hominem*"; for "a little more humility and a good deal less pontification" (p4). Within the "politics of scholarship", Walker noted the influence on theory of powerful groups, the lack of value frameworks, the "miniscule" literature in the field of philosophy and educational administration, the emphasis upon the social sciences in the literature and the many theories in the field emanating from the social sciences, which helped to explain and predict organisational behavior. Walker then asked "where are the theories from religion, ethics, mythology, history, poetry, drama and the novel" (p5)? and proceeded to develop the main argument of the paper, that in order to understand the real organisation, both scientific and non-scientific information must be ascertained and analysed.

Theory, "that much-maligned and ill-defined phenomenon upon which consciously or unconsciously, we base our hypotheses and propositions" (p7) was inescapable. He defined theory as "any set of propositions, logical or illogical, with potential for explaining and predicting events and for producing new knowledge" (p7). Knowledge

could be formed in a variety of ways. Walker referred to a "pluralistic epistemology" (p8) that proposed five formally distinct ways of knowing - the scientific, the humanistic, the philosophical, the mathematical and the theological. This plurality of ways of knowing "opens the door to a massive range of theory bases and hence of research techniques" (p9), without any implication of superiority of one way over another but with the understanding that "the more ways of knowing that are employed the greater the chances of arriving at meaningful explanation" (p10). Many ways of knowing also "permit the use of a wide spectrum of disciplines" (p10).

In an earlier paper (Crane and Walker, 1976) Walker suggested that practically any experience that enriched our appreciation of life was a theory. Silver took issue with this thinking and dubbed it "an anything goes view of theory" (1978:31). She stressed that the predictive function was vital to the nature of theory as theory. Walker concluded that an inevitable criticism of his 1977 AERA address would be that "it does not take sides, - it is a coward's way out of an academic impasse" (Walker, 1977:10). His defence was that he never did and does not see the situation as impasse. A phenomenological defence indeed! Walker's address was the last public comment of this period that had been instigated by Greenfield's work.

Conclusion

In July 1974, "Greenfield fired a shot at the theory movement which reverberated around the world " (Culbertson, 1995:155). His major thesis was that the theory movement's premises about organisations were based on false assumptions about reality. For him, organisations were not objective entities nor like natural systems nor like houses whose "basic structure remains" and in some way shaped the behavior of people within (Greenfield, 1975c:72). Organisations, Greenfield argued, are the subjective creations of diverse individuals, "cultural artefacts dependent upon the specific meaning and intention of people within them" (1975c:74). And yet, although there were, for Greenfield, no fixed ways of interpreting reality, theories of organisations were still possible but theories defined as "sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world" (1975c:75) and not in the positivistic sense of logico mathematical models that need to be empirically validated.

Given the academic climate of the seventies, this kind of thinking immediately evoked opposition - in the beginning, most intensely from Griffiths and then from other scholars in the field of educational administration who perceived the debate to be about the relative merits of the logical positivistic (or scientific) and the phenomenological way of knowing. Till the end of that decade and with decreasing feeling and antagonism as time

passed, scholars from USA, Canada, Britain and Australia contributed to the exchange of views and to the growth of knowledge in the field. Some levelled harsh criticisms at the theory movement. Griffiths defended the theory movement's basic premises. Greenfield suggested an alternative view. Many others focused on the complementarity of both perspectives and developed their own explanatory systems. And Greenfield, in papers and presentations and journal articles kept reiterating and extending the arguments made in his IIP74 address and continued to answer his critics. The study now moves from Greenfield's critics to Greenfield himself and to a series of papers that were presented and/or published in the late 1970s/early 1980s.