

transform a domain as my primary outcome, then what information I get about the domain is secondary to what actions I perform within it.

After trying it both ways, and some ambiguous ways, I now believe we get deeper information about the nature of our realities when our prime concern is to develop practical skills which change these realities, than when our prime concern is to get information about them through the exercise of appropriate skills. Information about our realities, like happiness, is something which is better realized when it is not pursued directly, and is a consequence of an anterior choice to transform them.

I don't think this rules out the validity of direct information-gathering, which is a complementary approach; and there are clearly occasions when this is the method of choice. It's just that there is a deeper and more satisfying way to go: into the action paradox that we learn more profoundly about our worlds when we are more interested in enhancing them with excellence of action than in learning about them.

This action paradox is linked with the old adage that 'he who doeth the will shall know of the doctrine', which could be construed to mean that realities reveal themselves more fully to those who have a prior commitment to excellence of action. Since our realities are subjective-objective, the point about true excellence of action is that it is reality-transformative for the person who acquires that excellence. And the transformation brings into conscious relief both what that reality was and what it has become.

A subtle, though limited, form of the paradox asserts that we find out more about our worlds when we seek to develop our skills in finding out more about them, than when we seek simply to find out more about them.

An unreported inquiry into altered states of consciousness which I initiated in New Zealand in 1994 focused on the *knacks* involved in entering such states, rather than attending directly to a mapping of the states themselves. This seemed to develop a more fruitful, but incidental, phenomenology about the states, than if it had been pursued head-on.

7

Radical Memory and Inquiry Skills

In this chapter I take a look at two kinds of radical memory which are the seat of data generation in co-operative inquiry, and then elaborate these as a range of skills for conducting informative and transformative inquiries. At the end I relate the extraordinary consciousness involved in the exercise of these skills to a revised account of multi-level mind.

These skills, together with the several procedures I review in Chapter 8, have a direct bearing on the validity of the inquiry process and its outcomes. They are the skills which engage human subjectivity with the experiential focus of the inquiry, and at the same time enable it to become more open and more critical.

May I suggest to the reader who gets well into the heart of this chapter and starts to find the account of all these skills daunting and disheartening, that the discipline of engaging in a co-operative inquiry and its cyclic process is itself a means of developing them. Furthermore, while the description of them can appear immaculate, the occurrence of them is maculate, fractal, earthy, irregular and granular. We are all beginners.

Informative memory and paying heed

Since the inquirers are their own subjects, their data about their own perceptions and actions is necessarily recorded retrospectively, anything from minutes to hours to a day or more after the event. Hence any record is actually a secondary form of data generation. The primary form, which indeed is at the very point of generation, is memory.

Perception and memory are born together: to perceive is to remember, at least for a bit. The critical bridge between the two is noticing, or, to use the old English term, *paying heed* to. 'Heed' means careful attention. To perceive anything, in everyday understanding, is simply to register its presence as a certain kind of thing: it is basic acquaintance and identification. It is not the same as paying heed to it, giving it careful attention, noticing something about it. This involves an extra, intentional directing of awareness.

By and large, we don't remember well or for long what we don't pay heed to. But there is paying heed to in an ordinary way, and there is paying heed to in an extraordinary way. To clarify this I need to go more deeply into the nature of perception.

In terms of the relativist ontology presented in this book, reality is a

subjective-objective transaction, the fruit of the active participation and construing of the mind in what is given. In terms of perceiving, the perceiver is inseparable from, but not identical with, the perceptual process of imaging in visual, auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic terms. This imaging process is inseparable from, but not identical with, the given which it images and enacts. Thus through perceptual imaging, the perceiver participates in the given, or, to put it crudely, in the world ('crudely' because strictly speaking the world is not the given but how the perceiver participates in the given).

The routinization of perception

But while a person participates in the world through perceiving it and this participation is an active construing process, its nature gets marred by a combination of two things. Firstly, the use of language – the ascription of class names such as 'house', 'tree', 'cat' – has the strong tendency to obscure the unitive, participatory nature of the subject-object transaction. It is prone to create the illusion that subject and object are separate, the object being out there quite independent of the subject in here. Instead of the image being part and parcel of the active process of the perceiver's imaging, it becomes reified as a named thing, separated from the perceiver who is looking at it. Secondly, and consequently, the perceiving process becomes routinized by language. Its active participation sleep-walks inside the clothing of linguistic categories. Then people do not really pay heed to what is going on in the perceiving process.

There are, in fact, two levels at which people can pay perceptual heed. Within sleep-walking, routinized perception, they can pay heed, in terms of linguistic categories, to objects out there and their features. They are simply noticing more about an external object in terms of already existing classifications. This is the ordinary, everyday sense of paying heed. It is elaborated in terms of physical science and technology. It is certainly not to be underrated.

Extraordinary perceptual heed

At another level they can wake up from the categorial dream of language and pay heed, in an extraordinary way, to the participative process of perceiving itself. They can notice how the mind through perceptual imaging is engaged in creative enactment and shaping of the world and its beings. They can sense how this is inseparable from empathic communion with these beings: this means a felt harmonic resonance with their inner presence, with their mode of consciousness, the way they are affected by their world. And thus people can discern features of their subjective-objective reality which the use of language has not so far accommodated, or which lurk obscurely amidst the ambiguities of everyday speech, or which language uses as its base while regarding it as insignificant. What this kind of paying heed can do, together with the memory which it generates,

is to intuit something about the patterning of the different entities in our world, the significant form of their interconnections, and about their modes of awareness. Thus it can extend the range of the basic phenomenal categories in terms of which we describe our realities.

The public use of language itself presupposes a mutual awareness, a tacit shared understanding and immersion in meaning of unknown depth, which is not itself mediated by language, and which is the context for agreement about the use of language. This tacit intersubjective realm of primary meaning, inherent in our participative transaction with our world, is both prelinguistic, and also currently extralinguistic. The conceptual meanings of language are a continuous transformation of it, however fixed, rigid and distorting this transformation becomes. This primary meaning is a profound nonlinguistic substrate, the unnoticed context, of all secondary meaning conveyed by dialogue and exchange within a culture. And it is this we can bring to the fore and access through the process of extraordinary heed.

For co-subjects in an informative inquiry the prime way of generating data is through memory, by paying heed moment by moment to our continuous participatory, creative, ever-changing empathic and unrestricted perceptual transaction with the world. This is the most fundamental kind of data generation which inquirers can get ready for when thinking ahead to the first, and every subsequent, action phase.

Sometimes, when we perceive the world, we perceive without language. We perceive spontaneously, with a pre-language system. But sometimes when we view the world, first we think a word and then we perceive. In other words, the first instance is directly feeling or perceiving the universe; the second is talking ourselves into seeing our universe. So you either look and see beyond language – as first perception – or you see the world through the filter of your thoughts, by talking to yourself. (Trumpa, 1986: 30)

The notion of extraordinary heed is another way of talking about mindfulness, wakefulness, or self-remembering. These are basic disciplines of enhanced high-quality awareness commended in many ancient and modern schools of spiritual practice. Their purpose is to arouse us from the trance of ordinary consciousness, in which we are so hypnotized by the content of experience, that we lose deep awareness of how we generate it. Both Torbert (1983) and Reason (1988d) have drawn attention to the relevance of these teachings for valid inquiry. They relate also to the classical phenomenologist's notion of the second epoché, in which we contemplate how phenomena are coming into being within our consciousness (Husserl, 1964).

Varela et al. propose an enactive paradigm of perception in which perceiving 'is not simply embedded within and constrained by the surrounding world; it also contributes to the enactment of this surrounding world' (1993: 174). They then commend mindfulness and awareness training as a way of directly paying heed to enactive experience.

Transformative memory and paying heed

This radical perceptual memory generates data for *informative* statements about an inquiry domain. There is a complementary and interrelated kind of memory that generates data on *transformative* practice within a domain. For action and memory are also born together. To act is to remember, at least for a bit. And again, the critical bridge between the two is noticing, paying heed to. Many ordinary, everyday actions are unreflective, born of habit, convention and expediency. We do not pay much heed to them, they are part of routinized behaviour. We can't recall readily or at all actions that we don't pay heed to. They are difficult to remember, even at the end of their day.

As with perceiving, there is paying heed to actions in an ordinary way, and there is paying heed to them in an extraordinary way. Paying the everyday sort of heed to an action means executing it carefully, attending to what one is doing, and using negative feedback efficiently. The last of these means immediately spotting when the action deviates from its 'line' and rapidly getting it back on line.

Extraordinary practical heed

Paying heed to an action in an extraordinary way is at a more visionary and inclusive level of awareness. It involves comprehending the action as a whole, noticing the total configuration of the meaning of what one is doing while one is doing it.

An action as a whole is not just a set of physical movements, nor a set of movements classified by a simple verb such as walks, signals, talks. It is a transactional manifold of meaning, relating a person intentionally to their world. This intentionality includes being aware, while acting, of the motives of the action, the end of the action and its values, the strategy adopted and its norms, the actual behaviour, the context of action and beliefs about it, and the effects of the action.

Paying heed to an action as a whole is also a dynamic process. It not only attends to all these aspects of the manifold, it also notices whether they are compatible. It modifies any one or more of them where there is incongruence between them. This is what Torbert (1991) has called action inquiry. It is an integral part of the action phase of any transformative inquiry.

For those involved in such an inquiry, where the focus is on practice, the data of memory generated by this paying heed holistically to actions will be primary. It will be more fundamental than the data of memory generated simply by executing actions carefully and effectively.

Informative inquiry skills

In this section I outline four main inquiry skills pertinent to informative inquiries: being present, imaginal openness, bracketing of several kinds and

reframing. In the section after this one, I discuss four further skills required in transformative inquiries, where the focus is on practice. However, since informative research is supported by information-gathering practice, and transformative research by information about the context of practice, any inquiry is going to involve all eight to a greater or lesser degree, quite apart from other skills I haven't identified here.

Radical perception: being present and imaginally open

Radical perception means paying heed in an extraordinary way to the process of perceiving as described above. It is the ability to open up fully to our participation in reality through our empathic communion with it, and our unrestricted perceptual patterning of it. It means owning our creative transaction with what is given. We find this behind the screen of language in the immediacy of felt attunement and unrestricted perception (Wahl, 1953). This immediacy takes us into the lived world of primary meaning: the deep tacit experiential pre-understanding that is beneath language, and of which the conceptual meaning of language is a continuous, partial and limited transformation.

This kind of holistic awareness of how our world is being and how it is patterned through our creative minding of it, is a central inquiry skill. It involves the two complementary components of radical perception: being present and imaginal openness.

- *Being present* Through empathic communion, harmonic resonance, attunement, I feel the presence of people and other entities. I participate in their inner experience, their modes of awareness, their ways of giving meaning and being affected. I indwell the unique inner declaration of the being of the other.

We cannot claim valid inquiry unless we can be fully present with the persons and things with whom we inquire. (Reason, 1988d: 218)

- *Imaginal openness* Through being open to the total process of enacting the forms of people and other entities by imagining them, I participate in their manifest patterns and intuit their meaning. This is unrestricted perceiving simultaneously on all levels, sensory and subtle.

Together, being present and imaginal openness involve feeling attuned to the inner awareness of a presence while finding meaning in shaping its sensory and subtle perceptual form. This is radical meeting and unrestricted perception: participative empathy as the foundation of the creative shaping of a world in all its modalities and states.

This combination practises the radical empiricism which phenomenologists have long since commended: a pristine acquaintance with phenomena unadulterated by preconceptions (Spiegelberg, 1960). It attends to the pre-objective, pre-predicative world presupposed by all language and prepositional knowledge, and which is their continuous nonlinguistic substrate.

This world of primary meaning is unrestricted perception, consciousness-world union, which is anterior to every distinction including that of consciousness and nature (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). It is apprehended by a fearlessness which

means being able to respond accurately to the phenomenal world altogether. It simply means being accurate and absolutely direct in relating with the phenomenal world by means of your sense perceptions, your mind and your sense of vision. (Trungpa, 1986: 31)

Attunement with the other, empathy, harmonic resonance, is the way of communion, of participating in the interior world of the other. It grounds and complements and is inseparable from everything I have to say about imaginal openness.

Imaginal openness attends to the processes of what I have called presentational construing in perception, Trungpa's 'first perception'. It involves seeing the world with a system of meaning that is inherent in perceptual, and other kinds of, imagery as such, and is the ground of all explicit predication and language-use. I call this primary meaning, or empathic-imaginal meaning, or just imaginal meaning, and distinguish it from secondary meaning, or conceptual meaning, which is born with language and the use of class names. Primary meaning is inherent in the patterning of our perceptual imaging of being in a world, and in the harmonic resonance with which we indwell the presences of our world.

I explore more fully this primary meaning inherent in perceiving a world in Chapter 10. It is important to note that opening to this first perception is not a backward-turning attempt to be in the world like a prelinguistic child. Even if one could do it, this would yield primitive and undifferentiated participation. Rather, it is owning the current, tacit worldspace of understanding, the deep intersubjective nonlinguistic meaning, which language presupposes, and of which language right now is a continuous transformation.

It is an opening to what Skolimowski calls Mind II, more extensive than the logical, discursive, co-ordinating Mind I. Mind II includes 'all the sensitivities that evolution has developed in us . . . the countless windows through which we commune with reality' (Skolimowski, 1994: 9). This opening launches a forward movement to a postconceptual world, where the perceiver by means of the skills I shall now describe, revisions the world in depth and regenerates the way language is used to reveal it.

Varieties of bracketing

A skill necessary to support radical perception is the ability to bracket off the ever-present tacit conceptualization of the world, the unspoken verbal transformation of imaginal meaning, that comes from language-use. This means disidentifying from the belief-system that is built into perception and derived from the common language and worldview of our culture. This implicit belief-system conditions us to see and hear things as trees, houses,

fields and cars, interrelated in terms of simple causal laws and embedded in a mechanical universe. We see and hear people in terms of the beliefs, norms, values and social structures of our culture. So we need to bring these implicit everyday epistemic frameworks into clear relief and become fully aware of them. Then we can become relatively independent of them, peer over the edge of them, and regenerate our vision.

A related skill is the ability to divest these conventional belief-systems of the effects of early childhood trauma, which may distort and fixate them with dark emotional loading and projected pathology. When this takes place, the conceptual frameworks of everyday perception become charged with threat, negative expectation and disempowerment. This kind of ingrained doom-laden colouring needs to be cleansed from the human instrument, if self-reflective inquiry is to proceed with any grace.

Thirdly, there is the ability to bracket off the framework made explicit in the launching statement that guides the inquiry. This framework is a revisionary belief-system, present in outline only, which may challenge conventional views, and which characterizes in a special way the domain you are going to inquire into. So this skill means two things. First, you wear innovative lenses to enable you to enter and see the domain in a special light. Second, at the same time you wear them lightly, and are able to take them off and put them back on every once in a while. This is so you can participate in the subtlety of experience and pay heed to how it does and does not conform to the lens-view.

Reframing

These three bracketing skills are consummated by the skill of reframing. This is the ability while busy with experience not only to bracket off conventional, pathological and launching frameworks and so be imaginally open to radical perception. It also means conjuring up alternative frameworks, different ones again, and trying them on and off for imaginal size and fit.

The skills of bracketing and reframing combine in what Torbert calls 'a reframing mind' which 'continually overcomes itself, divesting itself of its own presuppositions', a process which he likens to an 'ongoing jousting, at one and the same time, with one's attention and with the outside world' (Torbert, 1987: 211-13). It is the competence of Bateson's Learning III, in which the mind can choose its premises of understanding and action: it can detach itself from any framework, and peer beyond and reflect upon its presuppositions. It can move with agility between different conceptual structures (Bateson, 1972). It is the skill of the 'self-reflective' mind which has learnt 'to attend to its own processes' and is no longer trapped in its own frames (Reason, 1994a: 37).

It is also the outlook of Gebser's integral-aperspectival mind. The aperspectival mind grasps that no perspective is final. It is transparent to the context of its own operation, is open to the context of that context and no

proposed
revised
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on. Gebser sees this as a newly emerging structure of consciousness, and with it there are emerging the 'aperspective world' and a rising global or planetary culture (Gebser, 1985; Feuerstein, 1987). Wilber (1995) endorses this with his notion of vision-logic, an integral awareness that is grounded in the transparent body-mind, in feeling through the lived body.

The relevance of Buddhist practices

There is an analogy in all this with the Tibetan Buddhist practice of the 'turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness' of *manas*, intuitive mind (Govinda, 1960: 77). On Govinda's account of Tibetan doctrine, *manas* is an emanation of and continuous with universal mind, *alaya-vijnana*, also called store-consciousness, in which the archetypes of all things are stored. *Manas* also takes part in everyday thought-consciousness, *mano-vijnana*, which co-ordinates perception. So *manas* mediates between the everyday mind and universal mind. In doing so it becomes a source of error if its power feeds the egoic splitting of subject from object in everyday mind. It becomes a source of liberation if it turns about to attend to the universal store-consciousness whence it emanates and which is the archetypal, unitive ground of the perceptual process.

Reason also points out the relevance of mainline Buddhist teaching and practice for developing 'a reflective, reframing mind'. Behind the attachment of the everyday mind to its constricting perspectives, there is 'a mind which is able to see through this attachment and is open to the ways in which we create ourselves and our world moment to moment' and which is available through meditation (Reason, 1994a: 34; Rimpoché, 1992). Co-operative inquiry calls for these meditative skills to be operative in the midst of doing research; and it is itself a discipline which develops these skills.

Transformative inquiry skills

The four skills so far considered are all to do with informative inquiry, which seeks to be descriptive and explanatory of our realities. There are also four complementary skills to do with researching practice, in transformative inquiry. As I have already suggested, because of the interdependence of the two forms of inquiry, all eight skills will have relevance, with differing emphasis, in either kind.

Radical practice: dynamic congruence

Radical practice is the skill of paying heed in an extraordinary way to the process of action, as described earlier in this chapter. It attends to the following aspects of action and their compatibility, and reorganizes them to correct dissonance among them. It is the same as action inquiry (Torbert, 1991).

- The motives involved in the action.
- The guiding end of the action and its underlying values.
- The current strategy adopted to realize that end and its guiding norms.
- The actual behaviour that implements the strategy, its style and competence.
- The context of action and beliefs about that context.
- The effects of the behaviour on the context and beyond it.

To illustrate these various aspects of action, suppose I am a practitioner inquiring into power-sharing with a client, then:

- My motives are some admixture of the self-regarding, the other-regarding, and the overdetermined.
- The overall end or purpose is power-sharing as part of a wider model of whole person practice, the underlying intrinsic values being those of enhanced human well-being, autonomy and co-operation.
- The strategy is role-reversal, inviting the client to become the practitioner for a while, the guiding norm being that of truth-telling within the reversed role.
- The actual behaviour is proposing, explaining and seeking assent to the role-reversal, and moving out of my practitioner chair to make it possible; with some fittingness, sensitivity and clarity.
- The context includes the nature of our role-relationship and our contract, the current issue for the client, the state of mind of the client, our previous history, the arrangement of furniture in the room, and the time available.
- The effects are how the client reacts and participates.

Of all these several components, most of them are variable: I may modify many of them, some being more alterable than others. But my underlying intrinsic values are at any given time in my life non-negotiable. They define the ground on which I stand up to be counted. They provide the principles which determine how I evaluate the other components, an evaluation which may lead to some of them being changed. They give rise to the norms that guide the use of strategies, and to criteria for the actual behaviour such as elegance, appropriateness, sensitivity and executive efficiency.

The purpose of paying heed to action at the ordinary level is to keep it on line by noticing how it deviates off its line. This is simply attending to doing it well, to excellence of execution. Ordinary paying heed looks at the actual behaviour, how it is being put together, and what its effects are. It corrects behaviour by noting how it deviates from standards of elegance and efficiency internal to it and by taking account of its immediate outcomes. So it has a close-up executive focus on the relation between strategy, behaviour and outcomes.

The purpose of paying heed at the extraordinary level is to notice a much more inclusive congruence. It attends to all the components of an action, to the fittingness of their patterning as a whole, their practical compatibility;

and it reshapes them to enhance congruence and reduce dissonance. It is a dynamic process with a wide focus, comprehensive view.

Does the purpose of power-sharing seem, in the doing of it, to be a valid part of whole person practice? Does it seem, in action, to have been well-conceived? Does it seem, in action, to need integration with some other part? Is the purpose of power-sharing at ease with this particular strategy for realizing it? Is this particular strategy suited to this kind of client? Is the underlying motive congruent with the overall purpose? Does the purpose, or the strategy or the behaviour exemplify the guiding values? These are some of the wider issues that now become relevant, as well as the ordinary close-up focus on the relation between strategy, behaviour and outcomes.

This kind of radical paying heed to action is at the interface between the conceptual, reflective mind and the intuitive, imaginal mind. It is more than reflection-within-action, it is reflection-within-action itself subsumed and enlivened by an intuitive, imaginal grasp of the whole pattern of the action in its intentional, behavioural, social and environmental dimensions. This grasp is not some strenuous labour of the ordinary mind. It does require some preparation and training of the ordinary mind to lay hold of the conceptual geography of holistic action. Thereafter, it falls as radical grace from the dynamic powers of a pre-existent, extraordinary level of mind. I discuss this idea in a later section in this chapter.

Emotional competence

Emotional competence is a term I have used for several years (Heron, 1982a, 1990, 1992) to cover the field recently labelled emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). It means the ability to identify and manage emotions. In an emotionally repressive culture such as ours, the first challenge is for people to recognize what they are feeling. This is the skill of so-called meta-mood, being aware of one's current emotional state. Identifying, owning and accepting a state, through self-awareness, is the basis for managing it – by expression, control, transmutation, catharsis.

• The expression of love, regard, affection, delight, to other people is a central skill. More generally every authentic choice is a form of emotional expression. It proceeds from a personal preference, and a preference is an option to which an emotional value is assigned (Damasio, 1995). Autonomous action presupposes the agent is in touch with the emotional value of his or her preference among the options available.

• Aware emotional control is free of self-assault: it honours what it deals with. It means choosing not to act on certain emotions, and does this by switching attention off them without at the same time repressing them. This may be done by changing the arousal level. You can switch out of low arousal states of being sad or depressed by triggering high arousal through going for a run; or out of high arousal states of anger

and anxiety by lowering arousal through deep relaxation. Or it can be done by cognitive restructuring, that is, seeing the situation in a different light, so that this changed appraisal generates a different emotion.

• Transmutation and catharsis are complementary ways of managing cumulative distress emotions of grief, fear and anger. Transmutation involves restructuring consciousness at deep levels thereby transforming emotional pain into calmness; whereas catharsis means releasing and unloading distress from the psychosomatic system (Heron, 1990).

Radical practice presupposes the agent is not fixated on performance, driven by pathological motives. Distress-driven, maladaptive conduct blots out the possibility of acting with awareness and intentionality. The very process of inquiring into the human condition may stir up in the researchers defensive behaviour which can distort the inquiry process and the radical practice at its focus. This defensiveness is about aspects of themselves which they have had to repress and deny in order to survive and be accepted when growing up in an emotionally alienated society.

To take charge of this, the inquiring person and group need the skills of identifying and managing the emotions involved. These skills include being able:

- To process the painful emotion repressed in earlier years as a consequence of hurtful events. This healing of the memories involves recovering them and restructuring them with liberating insight, a process which may also entail the cathartic release of the distress – the anger, fear or grief – that is congealed within them.
- To spot and interrupt the tendency of residual painful emotion to distort current behaviour with a symbolic re-enactment of old traumas.
- To maintain or regenerate creative, intentional action when this kind of distorting tendency is activated by events.
- To spot this kind of tendency at work in others, and confront it supportively, in ways that are enabling to them.

Less radically, emotional competence also means the ability to identify in oneself and others the effects of social conditioning of a nontraumatic kind. This is at times when unreflective, purely conventional norms take over behaviour and obscure what could have been its deeper purpose and more telling strategy.

To these several components, Reason (1988d) adds an awareness of the existential choices and perspectives we bring to our work, and of the archetypal, mythic patterns which are expressed through our lives.

Non-attachment

Another skill within radical practice is analogous to bracketing in radical perception. It involves intentionality that is clear in line, but is not over-identified with the situation of action. This means one can be fully open to

what is going on in the situation without being too caught up in one's current view of it. It also requires an ability to wear lightly and without fixation the purpose, strategy, behaviour and motive which have been chosen as the form of the action. This is the knack of not being attached to the main parameters of an action, of not investing one's emotional identity in it, while remaining fully committed to it. Non-attachment means flexibility of intent, so that the agent allows the situation to breathe freely and suggest other options.

Self-transcending intentionality

Alongside non-attachment is the ability to have in mind, during action, a range of alternative purposes, strategies, forms of behaviour, motives; to consider their possible relevance and applicability to the situation; and to have an adaptive willingness to adopt any of these to reshape the action as circumstances and one's overall principles suggest.

While dynamic congruence operates within the current parameters of action, self-transcending intentionality is the concurrent ability to entertain different sets of parameters, to envisage comprehensive practical substitutes. This is analogous to reframing in radical perception.

Skill in articulating values

Axiology is the study of value in general, embracing ethics, but also aesthetics, economics and other fields. In ethics, value is about what is good in itself, what is desirable as an end in itself. The basic question relates to what states of affairs, for human beings, are intrinsically worthwhile, not as a means to anything else. Such states are the ultimate ends of action. I suggested earlier that each person's intrinsic values are the non-negotiable ground on which they stand up to be counted.

Intrinsic values provide the ultimate *human* ratio, or guiding reason, of action. They are autonomous; they stand on their own epistemological ground, not to be justified by theological assertion or statements of fact. They are also subjective-objective, relative-universal in their formulations. On the one hand they are relative to the personal and cultural context out of which they have emerged. On the other hand they have reference to the needs and interest of our common humanity within shared features of the human condition. No statement about what is good in itself is ever final, but every such statement that is thoughtfully put together claims general relevance.

Axiological skill means that the researchers, whether busy with informative or transformative inquiries, are able to articulate a set of shared values, as a basis for making judgments of relevance about what they are doing and how they are doing it.

Values and principles

For my part, the state of affairs I take to be desirable as an end in itself is human flourishing, which I conceive as a mutually enabling balance between autonomy, co-operation and hierarchy:

- By autonomy I mean a state of being in which each person can in liberty determine and fulfil their own true needs and interests.
- By co-operation I mean mutual aid and support between autonomous persons, including negotiation, participative decision-making and conflict resolution.
- By hierarchy I mean a state of being in which someone appropriately takes responsibility for doing things to or for other persons for the sake of their future autonomy and co-operation. This is part of parenthood, education and many professions. The challenge of hierarchy is to get it right: neither overdo it, nor underdo it.

What follows, at any rate on a teleological view of ethics, from this assertion of what is good as an end in itself, are guiding norms of high generality, moral principles of wide relevance. For me, these are:

- A principle of flourishing, defined as a commitment to provide conditions within which people can in liberty and co-operation, and with appropriate degrees of hierarchy, determine and fulfil their own true needs and interests.
- Included in this is a principle of respect for personal autonomy, which honours the right of every person in any situation to make autonomous choices about what they do or do not do, and to be given adequate information about any proposed activity so as to be able to make an informed choice about it.
- A principle of impartiality, or justice, defined as giving everyone in any situation equality of consideration. This does not mean that each one gets the same treatment. It means that differences of treatment can be justified by relevant differences between the people concerned. It is these relevant differences that get equality of consideration. Each person's special needs and interests are considered equally. As a result everyone is treated appropriately, differently and fairly.

The point about all this is that any inquiry with people about the human condition ideally presupposes they have articulated their shared values and guiding norms. These provide standards for the selection of inquiry topics and the conduct of the research, and, in transformative inquiries, for evaluating the practice which is the focus of the inquiry.

Inquiry skills and critical subjectivity

All the nine skills so far mentioned will have a claim on any inquiry group, with differing emphasis among the first eight, depending on whether it is

more informative or more transformative. This all sounds rather formidable and in one sense it is. The call is to a radical kind of participative awareness in which the researcher is his or her own instrument for inquiring, through perception and action, into the human condition.

This is inquiry not just into what is given, but into how the inquiring human instrument is engaged in shaping the given. Reason and Rowan wrestled with this and said such inquiry is 'objectively subjective' and that to be valid it required 'critical subjectivity', preceded by 'cleansing the instrument', dismantling the warped rigidities of behaviour, belief and emotional response that can infect human subjectivity (Reason and Rowan, 1981b, 1981c). When the instrument is relatively clean, there is this rigorous array of skills to be acquired for keeping its subjectivity critical. Then it can manage with rigour its own consciousness on the hoof, as it shapes its realities in transaction with the given.

I have already suggested that the discipline of co-operative inquiry is a means of developing these skills. To practise its cyclic process is to acquire them.

Extraordinary consciousness and multi-level mind

Furthermore, the array of skills does not have to be heroically erected as a totally new structure of mind. This is where oriental paradigms, such as the Buddhist one mentioned above, are relevant. The classic and prevailing paradigm of mind in Western culture sees it as tripartite, involving thinking, feeling and willing. It also tends to regard mind as a one-storey affair, a bungalow of awareness whose windows look out on the physical world only.

Of course, there is the modern addition of the unconscious mind. But in the popular imagination this is largely a Freudian affair, a basement into which is repressed the seething cauldron of the id. Hence the nine skills I have outlined seem as though they are to be some new construction, laboriously erected as a second storey once the low bungalow roof has been removed.

The oriental paradigm suggests that the mind is already multi-storey. It has no low-level one-storey roof. It is just that the occupant of the ground floor is so busy looking out the windows, he or she has failed to notice the lift installed in the central core of the house. It is not that the nine skills have to be built up as an added second floor. This floor already exists, fully arrayed with the equipment for managing enhanced consciousness. There is, in fact, a tacit, pre-existent level of mind into which we can expand our limited, everyday awareness. Its vantage points already generate the enriched perspectives which provide the framework for the inquiry skills we need.

However, the oriental paradigm of multi-level mind is limited, in my view, in one fundamental respect. In its application to human development

it is basically quietist. The transformation of consciousness it generates through the disciplines of meditation is essentially for those whose being is passive and quiet, withdrawn from concern with the world and social life. It is exclusively an informative inquiry, and one, moreover, that jumps to an absolute level of description.

For the information it yields about the human condition is that beyond the restrictive subject-object dualism of the everyday mind there is the vast, 'open, unconditioned space of mind itself'. This is not your mind or my mind but 'the self-existing wisdom and power of the cosmic mirror that are reflected both in us and in our world of perception' (Trungpa, 1986: 78). A person in touch with this certainly has social impact, the paradigm claims, but it is the impact of one whose presence evokes the same kind of experience in others.

What I am suggesting in this book is a more comprehensive paradigm. It certainly sees extraordinary consciousness as informative at an absolute level of description. But also as informative at a whole range of intermediate extrasensory levels of description that are of interest and relevance to individual and social development. Furthermore, it regards extraordinary consciousness not simply as that which fills the attuned and passive recipient, but also as transformative, as that which moves the agent of change. There are thus pre-existent levels of mind that illumine and empower the enlightened planetary citizen with a commitment to environmental and social transformation.

This view now seems to be espoused by Wilber (1995), in contrast to his previous work. In earlier writings (Wilber, 1983), he strongly asserts a transcendental reduction of the Many to the One: all persons and forms of culture are nothing but a deviation from and an illusory substitute for absolute Spirit, so that meditation on Spirit is the only real moral imperative (1983: 321). While there are still anomalies in his account of Spirit, he now asserts that it is:

not just how to contact the higher Self, but how to see it embraced in culture, embodied in nature and embedded in social institutions. (Wilber, 1995: 497)

Training for inquiry

Reason (1988d) gives an interesting account of the ways he and his colleagues and their postgraduate research group at the University of Bath have been developing high-quality awareness as a preparation for various kinds of participative research.

- They meet as a circle for silent attunement and mutual resonance; and sometimes for circle dancing, intentionally to 'evoke the archetype of the circle, of human equality and presence'.
- They meet as a support group and an encounter group, to attend to their interpersonal relationships.

- They confront their distress, using a variety of experiential psychotherapies to deal with the defensiveness and old hurts that the business of inquiry stirs up.
- They develop mindfulness through disciplines such as T'ai Chi and Buddhist meditation.
- They explore participative knowing by using psychodrama to recreate aspects of the research situation.
- They explore participative knowing using Skolimowski's yoga of participation (Skolimowski, 1994). This involves approaching with reverence some natural phenomenon, such as a tree, rock, water; communing with it in silence; and identifying with its form of consciousness and way of experiencing its world.

This represents a breakthrough in normal postgraduate practice in an English university, and commends itself widely.

8

Validity Procedures

I now describe in more detail a set of interdependent procedures, outlined in Chapter 3, whose effects taken together can enhance the validity of the inquiry process, and thus its outcomes. They are relevant whether the inquiry is primarily concerned with acquiring knowledge about a domain or with transforming it through practice. Each of them needs to be planned, and either wholly or partially applied, within the reflection phases of the inquiry.

They seek to free the various forms of knowing involved from some of the distortions of uncritical subjectivity. These distortions mean there is a lack of soundness with which a form of knowing, whether experiential, presentational, propositional or practical, is being managed. This may relate to its relatively autonomous use and development; or to its interdependence with one or more of the other forms of knowing.

These procedures need supplementing with the inquiry skills, reviewed in Chapter 7, which have particular application at the heart of the action phase of an inquiry. It is the procedures and skills together which may resolve uncritical subjectivity.

Research cycling

As I said in Chapter 3, the assumption of research cycling is that the research outcomes are well-grounded if the focus of the inquiry, both in its parts and as a whole, is taken through as many cycles as possible by as many group members as possible, with as much individual diversity and collective unity of approach as possible. Once the research cycling gets under way, it establishes a feedback loop that has negative and positive gains in both directions, from action to reflection and from reflection to action. This is illustrated in Figure 8.1. In negative feedback, engagement with experience generates data which prunes the research proposals of what is ungrounded, irrelevant, beside the point. And the developing research proposals strip this engagement of want of discrimination, of needless vagueness, ambiguity, illusion and confusion.

In positive feedback, the experiential data amplifies, deepens, diversifies, extends and renders more interdependent, the research proposals. And they in turn alert the inquirers to wider, deeper, more subtle or more obvious, aspects of their experiential commitment.

This notion of two-way negative and positive feedback is not at all to be confused with checking one's ideas against some independent external