

**Beyond managerial rhetoric: reclaiming what is
practical, personal and implicit in the idea of
educational accountability**

Jane Green

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ABSTRACT

The starting-point of this thesis is a wide spectrum of concerns relating to the detrimental effects which 'new public management' (NPM) and the *managerialism* it creates have had on education, its organization, its conduct and its content. Pursuing these concerns, Part I of the thesis aims: (i) to establish the ideological and coercive nature of managerialism. Drawing on neo-liberalism in order to articulate its own rhetoric, managerialism has emerged as an ideology in its own right, requiring all who work in the public sector to conform to its own 'managerial' ends; (ii) to demonstrate the philosophical unpersuasiveness of the idea that *explicitness*—transmitted through a rhetoric of 'transparency'—is the *sine qua non* for public accountability.

Part II explores why the ideology of managerialism is inimical to moral agency. A neo-Aristotelian model of practical rationality is introduced to show how an agent's decision-making, if it is to aim at virtuous ends in the public interest, depends on (i) a structure of reasoning analogous to that which *phronesis* suggests and on (ii) the practical, personal and implicit knowledge drawn from the agent's 'formation' (*ethismos*, *Bildung*). The Aristotelian perspective provides insights for policy-makers concerned with *educational accountability*: a public rationality that offers a more robust concept of professional and civic responsibility—*responsibleness*—than any that managerialism promotes.

Part III attends to the objection that no intrinsic value attaches to the idea of implicit ('tacit') knowledge: far better to codify it. An argument, resonating with this idea, to show that practical knowledge—'know-how'—can be reduced without residue to explicit propositional knowledge is rejected. The thesis draws to its conclusion by arguing that managerialism, with its emphasis on explicit, pre-specified objectives designed to gauge agent-accountability, undermines (paradoxically) the pre-conditions under which trustworthiness and public spirit may play their part in organizational life.

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Statement of originality

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Some of the arguments in this thesis draw on articles I have written in the last few years and which have appeared in the following journals:-

'What are we up against?', *Prospero* (2003), 9 (4), 18-26

'Managerial modes of accountability and practical knowledge: reclaiming the practical', *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (2004), Special Issue: Work-based Learning, 36 (5), 549-562

'Critique, contextualism and consensus', *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2004), Special Issue: Conformism and Critique in Liberal Society, 38 (3), 511-525

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Miss Margaret Motley, a teacher from many years ago, whose mode of teaching inspired me to study philosophy as an undergraduate.

Lastly, my children, Matthew and Rachel, who have put up with years of "I must go and work now". I would like to thank them both for the moral support they have given me throughout.

Introduction

...Vague and insignificant Forms of Speech, and Abuse of Language, have so long passed for Mysteries of Science; And hard or misapply'd Words, with little or no meaning, have, by Prescription, such a Right to be mistaken for deep Learning...that it will not be easie to persuade, either those who speak, or those who hear them, that they are Covers of Ignorance...

John Locke (1689) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

I Why write this thesis?

As a result of the *marketisation* of the public sector, a 'corporate' form of governance (Shattock, 2006, p. 35)¹—most visible in the universities, but applying also to other educational establishments—has become the predominant model for educational practices. Its rationale, dictating its mode of operation, grounds the idea of what now counts as *public accountability*:

to set clear targets, to develop performance indicators, to measure the achievement of those targets, and to single out, by means of merit awards, promotion or other rewards, those individuals who get "results".²

Aptly described as a 'market-inspired managerialism' by Pádraig Hogan (1995, p. 226), this kind of accountability is also referred to in the literature as 'new public management' (usually abbreviated to NPM: see section IV, below).

I question here the widely accepted assumption that this NPM, 'managerial' model of accountability provides the best *practical* or *public* rationality for achieving *educational accountability*. I argue that any careful scrutiny of the underlying rationale of this model will show how and why it

¹ The term, *governance* is used to capture 'various aspects of new public management (NPM), such as deregulation, contracting-out, agentification and privatisation' (Bache, 2003, p. 301). It must not be taken as a synonym for *government*: see Bache (ibid) and Rhodes (1997), pp. 15, 49-51

² Pollitt, cited in Bottery (2004), p. 87

may be expected, paradoxically, to make practices *less accountable* as well as less educative.

In the literature there exist many critiques of managerialism (and in subsequent chapters it will be clear to the reader just how indebted I am to some of them).³ The story I want to tell seeks to get beneath the evidence we see around us of wasted effort, wasted resources and wasted ideals. I try to understand better the relationship between the three ideas I set out as follows: we are in search of a *practical rationality* that will translate into a *public rationality* which, in its turn, secures a form of *public accountability* that deserves our confidence.

With that end in view, we shall explore the constraints that are now placed on the practical reasoning of agents who work within the field of education and have to comply with the kind of strategic planning that we discover in ‘guidelines’ such as the following (from Ofsted):

- there is more effective linkage between the performance management of teachers and schools’ other planning cycles
- objectives are specific with clear and robust success criteria⁴

Further on, I shall explore the way in which a quite different kind of practical rationality, one I associate with the work of Aristotle (to be referred to as the ‘Aristotelian model’, in contrast to the ‘managerial model’), might be deployed by agents in their own *praxis*. This is a form of practical rationality that does not demand of agents that they prove their sense of *accountableness* by demonstrating that some explicit, pre-specified ‘success criteria’ have been met. I shall argue that it is precisely the emphasis now placed on *explicitness*—in the name of transparency and accountability—that is so problematic.

The dialectical tension that plays out all the time in a public accountability system—between, on the one hand, that which needs to be articulated or made explicit in order for others to be able to assess or judge the

³ See [Appendix 3](#), note 3

⁴ Extract from Ofsted (June 2003) *Leadership and Management*, p. 30

worth of our actions and, on the other, the ordinary things in organizational practices which lie beyond complete articulation in the life of educational institutions—is most evident when we try to understand what a practice (such as a teaching practice) is concerned with. We might think of a practice as defined by, and as having a specific *telos*. But this does not mean that *everything* about it which makes it intelligible as practice *x* and different from practice *y* can be made explicit. Much of what gives a practice its sense and its integrity—its internal standards of excellence and its worthwhileness in the eyes of those who practise within it—will be uncodifiable and lie beyond explicit speech or words. As Christopher Winch says ‘practices may make full sense only when seen as part of a larger whole’, and by seeing how they fit into a broad pattern of human needs (Winch, 2006b, p. 43). It is in this sense that I make appeal in my title to the idea of *reclaiming*: we need to recover our concern for some of the educational needs that have been weighed down by the workings of the managerial machinery and its accompanying rhetoric. In opposition to such rhetoric, I want to give voice again to these needs.

The idea of ‘reclamation’, as Ronald Barnett (2004, p. 198) says, carries an ambiguity because it implies a loss of some kind. It can seem to point us in a negative, ‘backward’ direction, by which I assume he means: regressive, luddite, overly conservative, unable to come to terms with ‘changing cultural circumstances and new economic conditions’ (Carr and Hartnett, 1996, p.25). But the idea of reclamation may also suggest something positive, a ‘movement onwards and outwards, as we seek to reclaim for new purposes that which is not currently available’ (Barnett, *ibid*). It is in this latter spirit that I make the suggestion that we need to restore the practical, the personal and the implicit (by which I shall mean the non-explicit, not fully articulable) to their place among our ideas of educational accountability.

A luddite polemic directed against change, modernisation, or management *per se*, therefore, has never been my intention. The motivation for writing this thesis started with the philosophical quest to understand how we have ended up with the accountability system we have. Nor should my critique of the managerial model be interpreted as repetition of an old grouse

about the 'indifference' (Herzfeld, 1992) of bureaucracy. Those who rail against 'red tape' miss the point. It is not bureaucracy *simpliciter* that is the problem. It is something new that we are up against, something so ideologically powerful that managerialism remains as yet, in spite of numerous criticisms directed at it, invincible (Green, 2003; 2004; see also Held, 2004). Some critics use the adjective 'totalising' to describe the status quo— precisely because it is so difficult to find any space beyond the managerial technologies of audit or of 'market dependency' to 'activate an alternative vision' (Elliott, 2001, p. 207); see also Hartnett and Naish (1986, pp. 4, 184); and Hogan (1995, p. 228):

The preoccupation with efficiency and effectiveness, with performativity... is...a malaise with deep causes in ...totalising ways of thinking... The vocabulary of contemporary... educational ... policy and practice... makes it difficult...to think differently... (Standish, 2001, p. 514).

One of my main purposes, then, in drawing on Aristotle's insights and in referring sometimes to that which might have been exemplary in pre-managerial times, is to present an alternative—an antidote, one might say—to the kind of public rationality that now characterises all industrialised, 'advanced' (Rose, 1996) liberal democracies. But it might still be asked: what relevance has Aristotle to the 21st century?

First, one of the many complex things that Aristotle invites us to consider in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) is what it is to make a responsible, practical judgement. This is surely a timeless, philosophical question that cannot be irrelevant to the kinds of questions we may want to raise *now* about the nature of decision-making in policy and political arenas, or about what it means to say someone 'acts professionally'.

So the way of proceeding which I propose depends on a philosophical hypothesis about an *ideal of public rationality*, drawn mainly from the work of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. But the *Politics* serves as an inspiration too (once we have extracted those elements which, from a modern perspective, we find offensive, e.g. slavery, the non-emancipation of women,

etc.). In the *Politics* (1331b 30-32), for instance, we find the following thought:

...Sometimes the right end is set before men, but in practice they fail to attain it...

Aristotle is interested in an agent's making a right decision and keeping to it (NE 1151a 32-b4) and in why it is that some men 'act contrary to right reason' (NE 1151a 21) or 'go wrong' (NE 1104b 30-34)—that is, 'fail'—simply by not acting in the *public interest*.⁵ These questions, too, are as pertinent now as they were in Aristotle's day. In Aristotle, therefore, I suggest we find a model of practical reason that is entirely appropriate for studying matters that relate to public rationality and accountability.

Aristotelian conceptions of practical rationality and agency also offer us an *ideal of a kind of living*, a way of being congruent with our ordinary lives. In Charles Taylor's phrase, we might characterise the Aristotelian approach as an 'affirmation of ordinary life' (1989, pp.14ff). We shall see how far the model of practical rationality that managerialism offers has diverged from the 'ordinary' way in which human beings tend to deliberate, make choices and demonstrate that they are responsible agents.

I shall also attempt to show what we may lose by this divergence—*practical intelligence* and *responsibleness*, for instance. According to Aristotle, knowledge of how to act and the goals to pursue in a particular context cannot be acquired by the internalisation of 'guidelines' found in a training management manual, recommending approved principles of 'good practice'.⁶ For knowledge of how to act and what to pursue emerges out of a person's *formation* (Lovibond, 2000) (to be explained in Chapters 5 and 6) and cannot be separated from the complex processes through which that person develops as a human being, living and working with others. The

⁵ 'Public interest' is not being used here in a narrow economic sense: see [Appendix 3](#), note 5.

⁶ See [Appendix 3](#), note 6, for problems relating to decontextualised conceptions of 'good practice'.

question will not normally arise of an agent's alienation from practices of work. For her purposes arise from what John McDowell (1996, pp.24-28) would say is her 'second nature'—her *Bildung*—which becomes integrated in her own sense of self.

In the case of a managerial concept of responsibility, as it applies to the work of a teacher in *praxis*, the question of an integration such as this is highly problematic. For nowadays it is the job of a teacher to bring about ends that are *already* decided upon (Pring, 2004a, pp.123, 204). These are the ends, to be discussed in Chapter 2, which are exported into our public sector from the dominant discourses of management theory and neo-liberalism.⁷ An agent's 'accountability' now, it seems, ultimately lies in fulfilling the audit and funding requirements which secure an institution's survival (Nixon, 2005)—the conditions of which are set by politicians and their policy-makers.

Stephen Ball (2003a) wonders, in this connection, how a teacher's 'soul' is to be saved from the 'terrors' of performativity. For the discourse that flows from managerialism:

...is a professional, professionalizing discourse which allows its speakers and its incumbents to lay exclusive claims to certain sorts of expertise—organizational leadership and decision-making—and *to a set of procedures that cast others... as objects of that discourse and the recipients of those procedures, whether they wish to be or not* (Ball, 1990a, p. 156) (my italics).

So teachers may find themselves 'struggling with authenticity' (Ball, 2003b, p.33) as a result of the '*values schizophrenia*' (ibid) which they experience—a potential 'splitting' between the teachers' own judgements about their students' 'needs', on the one hand, and the demands for 'performance', on the other. This 'schizophrenia' occurs 'when commitment and experience within a practice' are 'sacrificed for impression and performance' (ibid). Ball's analysis of the status quo needs to be taken seriously. How is a fractured agency to nurture a robust sense of moral and personal responsibility?

⁷ Ball, discussed in Olsen *et al* (2004), p. 70.

One may gain the impression that in the managerial model questions of ethical import are marginalised. However, judging from the emphasis its rhetoric puts on such things as the promotion of ‘good practice’, or ‘excellence in teaching’—by its use of *words* that evoke ideas of virtue—the managerial model will claim to have virtue on its side. Here, though, as Richard Pring (2004b, p.164) warns, we should beware of ‘the danger of the bewitchment of the intelligence by the use of language’—a language which can so easily separate ‘means’ and ‘ends’, simply through stipulating a ‘statement of aims, broken down with a finite range of measurable objectives or targets’ (ibid), as the means to the achievement of those aims. In such a system we should ask: what relation is there between those stipulated aims and the educational aims of those who do the work? The worry (from an Aristotelian perspective) is that such ‘system imperatives’ (as we see in the managerial model) tend to ‘drive moral-practical elements’ from occupational roles and practices (Habermas, 1987, p. 325).

Alasdair MacIntyre (1999, p. 314) raises a question that bears on this Habermasian point, about the limits and limitations of ‘role-responsibility’:

...might there be types of social structure that seriously threaten the possibility of understanding oneself as a moral agent and so of acting as a moral agent?

This question has haunted my thoughts throughout the writing of this thesis, whenever I have questioned the way in which micro-management structures human activity or the extent to which pre-specified target-setting now governs the way in which public accountability is conceived (see ‘**Postscript**’ to this **Introduction**). In the course of worrying about these matters, I have learned to adopt a wary stance towards managerial rhetoric. For although the rhetoric may speak of ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ practice it *de-personalises* the notion of responsibility by framing the arena of public accountability around private sector idealizations of ‘good’ management: goal definition, efficient resource allocation, financial performance and competition (Power, 1994a, p. 302).

II Some points of clarification

(i) First, the philosophical doubts I raise here about the place of responsibility in managerial cultures are not to be taken as veiled criticisms, to the effect that those who work in managerial cultures (and I include myself in this category) are acting *irresponsibly*. The opposite of a non-robust sense of personal responsibility is not: *no* responsibility at all. The claims that I make about the constraints placed upon individual personal responsibility are *conceptual* points that turn on wider, complex philosophical problems having to do with how we understand the nature of *agency* and how we view the relation between *personal freedom* and *personal responsibility*. When a teacher has to make a decision in those ‘now, just-this-minute’ (Loukes, 1976) moments, her practical reasoning may be compromised by the decisions made for her by others who cannot know what is going on in those ‘moments’. This problem I highlight is not simply one of ‘teacher autonomy’. It goes to the heart of the nature of practical judgement.

(ii) Secondly, I am not saying that managers set out deliberately to diminish the responsibility of all those whom they manage. On the contrary, the rationale that grounds the idea of, say, performance management is based on the idea, quite sincerely held, that this form of management will make practitioners *more* responsible and *more* professional:

In keeping with the rationality of entrepreneurial governance, performance management and related techniques function as forms of ‘responsibilization’ which are held to be...personally empowering (Clarke et al, 2000, p. 66).

As Alan Cribb points out, the notion of professional responsibility is now ‘taken very seriously’ (Cribb, 1998, p.19). The problem is rather that the notion has become ‘ethically empty’ (ibid, 23). In educational organizational cultures the predominant values are now the instrumental goals of demonstrating ‘institutional’ success, or ‘getting things done effectively’ (ibid, pp. 21-23). Without the benefit of other ‘substantial’ educational goals, the notion of responsibility ‘collapses into the ability to do things’ (ibid, p. 21-23).

So my point, like Cribb's, is conceptual and institutional. It is not, in the words of Zipin and Brennan (2004, p.30), to be taken as an 'indictment' of the *sincerity* of individual people. Rather, it is an indictment of 'ethically suppressive governmentalities' which people are compelled to acquire and enact (ibid).

(iii) Thirdly, I need to make clear how I see the relationship between educational accountability and public accountability. The problems of *educational accountability* that I identify may be understood as a microcosm of the problems thrown up by the more general idea of *public accountability*. Education, we shall see, is only one among several public services for which managerial practical reasoning and the practices of NPM are inappropriate and destructive of the *telos* of the service itself. These practices are especially problematic for the long-term future for education, if it is to survive as a public institution fit for a democratic society, because they have helped cement the thought in public consciousness that *acquiring certification* is the same as *education*.

(iv) A note about the concept *accountability*, itself. As we shall discover in Chapters 4 and 9, the concept of accountability is resistant to precise definition. Winch (1997, p. 61), however, helpfully demarcates two distinct but related aspects to accountability: (i) 'constitutive accountability', 'concerned with whether or not goods or services that should be provided actually are provided and to what level' and (ii) 'qualitative accountability', 'concerned with seeking ways in which what is provided can be provided in a better form'. The issues I raise will range over both these aspects. It is the form in which education is now provided that hampers teachers in finding the pedagogical space and time to teach in ways that will provide rich educational experiences for their pupils/students.

III Outline of thesis

Chapter 1 sets the scene by looking at the nature of the dispute between the critic of, and the apologist for, managerialism and tries to understand what justifies the feelings of concern that the critic has about the management which defines our present public accountability system.

Chapter 2 traces the rise of managerialism and the political ideological pressures which have forced older forms of administration to give way to 'new public' management (NPM) ones. We also explore the emergence of a new idea: the declared need—in the name of 'better management'—to make the work of institutions and those who work in them more explicit than they used to be, as exemplified in the idea of 'management-by-objectives'.

Chapter 3 analyses the worth of the ideal of transparency as it is deployed by managerial modes of accountability and shows what is problematical with micro-management, 'rationalizing' practices.

Chapter 4 looks at the complex relation that exists between responsibility and accountability and shows, via the notion of *answerability*, how these two concepts may be held together in order to preserve a robust notion of individual personal responsibility.

Chapter 5 builds on the conclusions of the previous chapter and sketches a model of practical rationality to rival the managerial one, an alternative founded on Aristotelian tenets of deliberation, practical reasoning and judgement. The proposal I make concerning the need to respect the role of the implicit in the practical judgement that manifests an agent's responsibility, is arrived at by trying to bring together two quite distinct, but closely related ideas to explain the way in which *implicit knowledge* is formed.

Implicit knowledge in the sense I shall expound it, is seen, firstly, as the fruit of ethical formation (*ethismos*), or of the process of the German idea,

Bildung, and, secondly, of the Aristotelian idea, grasping *the that-for-the-sake-of-which* ('*to hou heneka*')⁸ where this is seen as the *arche*, the starting point of action. In this way, I shall try to carry further a remark of Miles Burnyeat (1980, p. 73): 'practice has cognitive powers'.

Chapter 6 draws on Aristotle's account of *phronesis* to provide a praxeological justification for a non-managerial model of practical rationality and public accountability. I show how the implicit ('tacit', 'non-articulate') knowledge of someone who has developed ethical formation (*ethismos*) enables that person to find the locally and immediately relevant end and the appropriate act in the name of that end, simultaneously. The neo-Aristotelian model of practical rationality I advocate points to *the structure* of practical reasoning necessary if ends are (i) to be conducive to the well-being of the *polis* and (ii) to uphold the virtue of professional responsibility. In such a model, civic virtue grounds the notion of public accountability. The analogy between ethical formation and the occupational formation of a teacher is then considered. I end by considering how an Aristotelian understanding of practical reason may become the chosen instrument of people working together, attending to a common goal, and how such a public rationality provides the foundation for a model of public accountability.

Chapter 7 attends to what the apologist for managerialism might say in response to the Aristotelian understanding of practical rationality and public accountability. I show the problems to be expected when attempts are made to codify practical knowledge, according to the universal principle of *making the implicit explicit*.

Chapter 8 continues the theme of Chapter 7 by analysing further the logic of the principle of *making the implicit explicit*. Recent attempts to propositionalise practical knowledge—according to the slogan *knowing how* is one species of *knowing that*—are criticised.

⁸ '...the fundamental starting-point...in action...is that for the sake of which, just as in mathematical arguments the initial posits are starting points'... *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1151a 15- 19 (trans: Broadie and Rowe (2002)).

Chapter 9 answers the managerial assertion, that it is only by institutionalising mechanisms of distrust within institutions and requiring individuals to meet precise and explicit performance criteria, indicators or targets, that we shall achieve a public accountability that is trusted. Against that, I argue that faith in any public accountability system, however sophisticated it is, rests ultimately on the ordinary formational, personal virtues of professional responsibility and trustworthiness.

IV A note on two technical terms

Our present public accountability system generates a plethora of acronyms and terms of art. In advance of everything else it is necessary to review, briefly, two terms, (i) 'managerialism' and (ii) 'New Public Management' (NPM).⁹

The fact that one name, 'NPM', is used must not lead to oversimplification. The same thing needs to be said about the term, 'managerialism'. We can see why this is so, straightaway, when we learn that there are *two* strands to NPM: *managerialism* and *new institutional economics* (Rhodes, 1997, p. 48). The former:

stresses: hands-on, professional management; explicit standards and measures of performance; managing by results; value for money...the '3E's' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The latter:

introduce[s] incentive structures (such as market competition) into public service provision. It stresses...greater competition through contracting out and quasi-markets; and consumer choice.

⁹ Managerialism and NPM are discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3 and also in Appendix 1.

Because these two ‘strands’ are so inextricably interconnected¹⁰ it is, therefore, not uncommon to find that in the literature one of the terms is used to help explain the other:

Many governments are promoting managerialist policies in the public sector and education. Managerialism is a complex concept... [the trend is for an] increased ...control of managers over professionals in several professions, especially health, social services, and education. This new approach is known as *new public management* (NPM) (Coleman and Earley, 2005, p.189).

In so far as one can simply its meaning, however, ‘NPM’, is usually taken to refer to the application of market mechanisms¹¹ to key aspects of organizing the public sector—including public welfare, the civil service, education, transport, housing, health, prisons, social care, etc.

At this point we need to return to the term, ‘managerialism’. For it is only on the strength of the on-going process of ‘managerialisation’ (Clarke *et al*, 2000, pp. 8-9) that principles of NPM can continue to be implemented in public sector organizations. The ‘managerial mode of coordination’ (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.21), typical of any public sector organization, will now show itself in the organization’s adoption of principles of NPM. I list some of the key ones below:

- explicit standards and measures of performance;
- greater emphasis on output controls;
- the break-up of monolithic into smaller, manageable units;
- shifts to greater competition in the public sector;
- the stress on private sector styles of management practice;¹²

The last two bullet points represent some of the most visible changes that have taken place within the public sector since the advent of NPM. It was the ‘managerial’ practices to be found in private industry which helped shape the model upon which a new form of public accountability was to be based. It is from *that* use of ‘managerial’ that we have the idea of *managerialism*.

¹⁰ See Ferlie *et al* (1996) on this.

¹¹ See Appendix 1, for more detail.

¹² Hood, cited in Bottery (1998), p. 6, who gives a more complete list.

For our purposes what more do we need to know at this introductory stage about NPM and its relation to managerialism? Perhaps we should ask: what is meant to be so *new* in NPM? The mission of those who sought, in the early 1980s (Langan, 2000, p. 158), to introduce NPM into the public sector was to replace the presumed inefficiency of the older, pre-managerial forms of administration—often referred to as ‘bureau-professionalism’ (see Clarke and Newman 1997, p.66; Richards, 1992)—with the presumed efficiency of the market and methods of management used in private business. This process of introducing ‘market’ and ‘private’ forms of management into the public sector was driven by criticisms that the emphasis in ‘bureau-professionalism’ was solely on ‘uniformity, close supervision and...standard operating procedures’ (Lawton, 1992, p. 145).

Dunleavy and Hood (1994) helpfully distinguish ‘New Public Management’ from the ‘Old Public Administration’ it replaced. The ‘Old Public Administration’ model was said to stifle individual and corporate initiative, to encourage a culture of dependency, and to interfere with the free market (Newman and Clarke, 1994, pp.16-19). So NPM’s ‘newness’ partly consists in the fact that NPM techniques were purposely devised to dismantle and ‘unlock the bastions of bureaucratic and professional power’ (Common 1995), associated with Old Public Administration:

The term ‘new public management’ (NPM) ...is used mainly as a handy shorthand, a summary description of a way of reorganising public sector bodies to bring their management, reporting and accounting approaches closer to ...business methods...making the public sector less distinctive as a unit from the private sector...By contrast, traditional public administration...was built on the idea of a highly distinct public sector ‘group’ and ...general ...rules governing ...conduct... (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, p.9).

Nothing stands still, though, in the world that NPM and managerialism, together, have created.¹³ Since Dunleavy and Hood wrote in 1994 there have been changes. In 2000, Janet Newman, for instance, considers whether what is referred to as the ‘modernization’ of the public services now represents:

¹³ See Charlton and Andras (2003) who discuss the ‘modernization imperative’, which demands ‘continual change’.

a new form of managerialism which takes us beyond the reform programmes of the New Public Management and its ideological roots in the New Right...the negative consequences of organizational fragmentation are being recognized in the discourse of 'joined-up government'... modern business practices ...emphasize the idea of collaboration between strategic partners... (Newman, 2000, p.59).

But how promising is this 'new form of managerialism' likely to be for meeting expectations of public accountability? How honest are its new discourses and rhetoric?

Post script

Days before I submitted this thesis, *The Guardian* reported: 'Public targets to be scrapped', followed by a pledge from the chief secretary to the Treasury, Andy Burnham, of 'a new chapter' opening up:

We want to give out a message of more trust in public bodies...We will avoid... the crude approach of setting a one size fits-all target that is dropped down from on high...The direction of travel is for public services ...to face downwards and outwards, having a dialogue with their local communities rather than with the centre'.¹⁴

I have three remarks to make:-

(i) In general terms, this pledge could be seen as a vindication of the critique I offer of the managerial model of accountability which has shown little trust in professionals—especially teachers. At last there is an acknowledgment of the problems which micro-management causes (these problems to be outlined in the thesis). But can we be sure that the same model, grounded on the same managerial rationality that existed in the 'old chapter' has not just been shifted further down the line—'downwards and outwards'? Decentralisation in itself will not guarantee a change in the model of practical rationality that gave rise to micro-management in the first place.

¹⁴ *The Guardian*, 18th July, 2007, p.1

(ii) We are told that the ‘new targets’ will be written in ‘plain language’.¹⁵ But has anything really been learned?— ‘Attached to each new target will be a number of “indicators” ’¹⁶ Another minister, following on the next day, announced that ‘school league tables and tests are here to stay’. This ‘is the only way to make schools accountable’: they ‘enabl[e] us to be able to see...who is not performing well’.¹⁷ The same rhetoric still appears to be operative.

(iii) There is no sign that Burnham has renounced the mode of practical reasoning which has given targets such mandatory power. He has not gone to the root of the matter. If he had, he would not declare, as he does, that ‘the role of targets was absolutely crucial’ in the early days of public service reform (at one time, 600 targets, micromanaging every aspect of service delivery):¹⁸ ‘I’d defend to the hilt that they were right...But, over time, they implied a lack of trust’, he says.¹⁹ When we come to Chapter 9, we shall see why it is that the task of ‘bringing back trust’ is not just a matter of shedding a few targets.

¹⁵ *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Society Guardian*, 18th July, p.2.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 19th Jul, 2007, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Society Guardian*, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ *op.cit.*

PART I

STARTING-POINTS: IDEAS, IDEALS AND IDEOLOGIES

Chapter 1

From concern to doubt, from doubt to critique

...in philosophy, the first difficulty is to see the problem is difficult...[W]hen our inquiry is finished...we shall have come to see a complicated structure where we thought everything was simple...we shall have become aware of the penumbra of uncertainty surrounding the situations which inspire no doubt... we shall find doubt more frequently justified than we supposed...

Bertrand Russell *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*¹

1.1 Preliminaries: introducing *the critic* of the status quo and *the apologist* for the status quo

How might expressions of concern about the way in which present public accountability policies are seen to play out in practice—in particular, those which impinge on matters that relate to education—acquire the necessary ‘normative grip’² to be recognised as well-founded criticisms of the status quo?

I ask this question because an apologist for the status quo (henceforth: ‘the apologist’) will dismiss the criticisms offered by a critic of the status quo (henceforth: ‘the critic’) as simply ‘personal dissatisfaction’ (Ball, 1990a, p.158) or as ‘retrospective disgruntlement’ (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, p.460). In the absence of an independent, neutral, epistemological vantage point from which the perspectives of critic or apologist may be judged, how do we distinguish a mere complaint or grumble from justified criticism of the status quo?

¹ Russell, B. [1950](1980), p.11

² I owe the idea of ‘normative grip’ to Anderson (2003)

Consider the following utterances, sourced from a wide cross-section of people³ who express real disquiet about the well-being of education as they experience it:

- (i) “I went in to teaching for the same reason as I [once] joined the police—community service. I enjoy working with young people, and still do, but...[i]n the past seven years I haven’t seen anything get better. I have seen funding cut, my school struggling from one financial crisis to the next, and the Government spending millions of pounds on this or that strategy...” (secondary teacher)
- (ii) “The demand, especially the paperwork is taking too much time...unnecessary amount of recording and processing...everything relating to assessments distracts my focus from other things...” (primary teacher)
- (iii) “Too much pressure...changes in procedure which in reality change nothing. For example KS trials for SATS say we should be using teacher assessments but then they ask you to test to prove your judgements.” (primary teacher)
- (iv) “...so much about teaching is about relationships, and there’s something pathological about managing relationships; I think there is anyway. And what sorts of things can you measure? By and large, things that don’t matter.” (special needs teacher)
- (v) “[Institutional] Autonomy brings you freedom on the one hand, but you could end up losing it on the other, because the government starts throwing targets at you.” (college principal)
- (vi) “...excessive bureaucracy, ridiculous deadlines and unconvincing consultation processes keep duplicating with each new initiative...Heads are asked to do far too much where the interest of the child is not the primary motive...[E]xperience has taught me...radical change can only occur when everyone is on board and believes the gains will outweigh the losses...Alas... [w]e must accelerate the pace of “radical change”...with more and more targets...the DfES does not need heads like me. They need a...compliant...group of heads who will... think within the parameters they are allowed.” (headteacher)
- (vii) “Something is clearly going wrong when many deputies with more than five years’ experience simply don’t want to apply for headship.” (governor of a primary school)
- (viii) “I feel the role of the head... is too vast, too pressurised... emotionally and professionally...Too much is about Sats, ticking boxes, finding evidence and the endless, often pointless, paperwork. That conflicts with doing what is right for the children.” (deputy headteacher)
- (ix) “I have a vice-principal whose main duty is to prepare for inspections, and another teacher who spends four days out of five collecting data for quality assurance, and therefore only teaches the equivalent of one day a week. That is two people away from where they should be, supporting students and teachers. Yet quality comes from teachers

³ The sources for these quotations are given in [Appendix 3](#), note 3, listed (i)-(xii)

- in classrooms ... When I came into the job I was involved with students every day. Now I spend most of my time dealing with documents and spreadsheets.” (college principal)
- (x) “It is an illusion to suppose that parents choose schools, fee-paying or other, because of who owns them or for what their governing bodies are doing. Parents choose schools for the quality of their teaching or for other factors unrelated to the nature of their governance.” (member of the public)
- (xi) “We as parents want to know our children are improving but we would like less emphasis on targets. There is concern among parents that we are spending too much time [on] tests... and education is suffering as a result.” (spokesperson for the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations)
- (xii) “... to cultivate enthusiasm for literature... that does need time. Reading is more than a skill, it’s a companion for life. If there is too much targeting and testing, you kill the purpose of exercise...the people who want to test subjects like English... don’t really understand them...so there’s an attempt to turn them into something that can be measured.” (author)

These are not voices of the academy, offering well-researched, scholarly *critique* of the status quo. They are voices of those actively engaged in schooling or in everyday living. The overall impression one receives from reading these quotations is that the present system of public accountability marginalizes or deforms important aims and ideals of education. Such views, let us say, represent the concerns of *the critic* of the status quo.

In confrontation with the critic stands *the apologist* for the status quo. The apologist sees the practices of ‘new public management’ (NPM) (see Introduction, Section IV), and the ‘managerial’ practices of private business now imported into the public sector as having successfully reformed the way in which public accountability is understood.

What is the philosophically interesting story that spans these two viewpoints—*deformation* on the one hand, and *reformation* on the other? How do we decide between these two opposing positions?

The apologist has management theory. The critic has anxieties. One of our tasks will be to transform the critic’s concerns into a justifiable stance of critique—concerning the worth or legitimacy of our present public

accountability system, the appropriateness of applying managerially-inspired policies within the sphere of education, and the effect such policies are having on our educational cultures.

It is the critic's opinion that the whole system of accountability we now have not only compromises teaching practice but also worsens the educational experience of pupils or students. We should take it seriously how many of those whom I quote express the thought that some of the things which 'matter' in teaching cannot be *measured* or *set as targets*. Above all, the critic is at odds with an educational culture where:

In the hard logic of a performance culture, an organization will only spend money where measurable returns are likely to be achieved (Cribb and Ball, 2005, p.123).

In the critical concerns I listed (on pages 25-26), we may detect demoralization, puzzlement, exasperation, resignation, alienation—but mostly, I suggest, frustration—frustration that nothing at all countervails against the dominant canon of educational rationality. The critic who seeks to fight the presumptions of the present educational culture has a daunting task. To criticise managerial accountability is to question the legitimacy of the political, as well as the educational, status quo.

As Hugh Sockett says, there is now no 'professional sub-culture' (Sockett, 1990, p. 248) of educational practice that stands apart from managerial rationality, whether in the domains of administration, research, admissions, assessment, teaching, or student learning. Values drawn from business and management theory now permeate the rational planning of education, as determiners of standards, pedagogy and curricula (Marshall, 1999, p. 152). They also determine the kind of *outlook* or *mentality* now promoted—the outlook of instrumental or 'economistic' practical rationality (Cribb and Ball, 2005, p.122). Having subdued all other forms of rationality, 'economistic' rationality attempts to instil within those who work in the public sector a distinctive motivational mix of 'goals, obligations and dispositions'

(ibid). The dominant paradigm of *practical rationality* that defines managerialism now also defines *public rationality*.

Take any teacher subject to ‘performance management’ regimes or who is part of a managerial initiative for a ‘self-improving’ school⁴; any head teacher whose ‘leadership’ role involves her working with ‘external change managers’⁵; take any lecturer who has a ‘transparency review’ to complete for an ‘audit exercise’, and is encouraged, as Richard Pring (2001a, p. 285) says, to ‘think in business terms’. All such people now have to engage with ‘the language of inputs and outputs, of value added, of performance indicators ... of products and productivity’ (Pring, ibid). The critic wants to appeal to something beyond this culture.

What does the apologist want to say here? Are the concerns we hear in the critical voices, presented above (see pages 25-26), to be dismissed as *mere complaints*? Will the apologist say the critic harbours unreasonable fears about modernization and change, or even a nostalgic desire to return to an imagined ‘golden age’ status quo *ante*?

Well, how much luddism or nostalgia can one detect in those voices? I do not detect either of these things, myself. But suppose that I am wrong and the apologist is right. Then the apologist, *being* an apologist, ought to be able to provide positive evidence to support the status quo. What is this evidence? ‘Criterial’ indicators of ‘performance’ will be offered as acceptable government ‘benchmarks’ for standards and quality in education.⁶ But don’t these beg the question?

So we arrive at an impasse. Where the critic sees present education accountability policies as impeding educational practices and narrowing the educational experience of pupils/students, as a result,⁷ the apologist, in

⁴ General Secretary of the National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants, in *Times Educational Supplement*, March 26th 2004, p.21

⁵ *op. cit.*

⁶ See Pring (1992); Winch (1996); Winch and Gingell (2004).

⁷ There is a body of critique directed at the ‘narrowing’ of education: see [Appendix 3](#), note 7.

contrast, sees them as providing a sound public accountability framework in which 'good teachers'⁸ are rewarded and incompetent ones identified as 'failing' teachers. Note the 'elation' reported by Woods *et al* (1997, p.133) of one head teacher, interviewed after a 'successful' Ofsted inspection:

"I'm thrilled! ... what a sense of relief it was to know we're all going in the right direction... I am doing my job... I feel I can manage it..."

Here is evidence of a head teacher who responds well to the performative culture. As Gerald Grace (1995, p.23) notes, there exist many head teachers who:

are drawn by the image of managing director, or skilful player of the education market place [and] will experience the excitement of new roles to be practised...

One thing is clear. Two different value-frameworks are now at war with one another, each working to a different conception of public accountability, of rationality and of what counts as education. The dialectical difference between the two positions has been summed up in the following way (Ferlie *et al*, 1996, p.9):

The new public management has been seen by critics as a market-based ideology invading public sector organizations... But it has also been seen by others... as a management hybrid with a continuing emphasis on core public service values, albeit expressed in a new way.

In later chapters we shall see that there is much more than this at stake. The argument between the critic and apologist touches other matters besides the role which the market plays in the organization of public service institutions. The critic's real concerns have to do with *the institutionalization of a questionable practical rationality within educational practices*. If it is in the nature of a managerial rationality to adopt corporate structures of 'governance', then this must mean that budget, audit and productivity considerations are prioritised in strategic decision-making. How much room

⁸ Managerial discourses 'reconstruct' the idea of *the good teacher*: see [Appendix 3](#), note, 8

will remain for ethical and educational values to shape choices? Such values will become invisible—or so the critic fears.

Here I take an Aristotelian stand, and in that role I challenge anyone to deny that the capacity for making practically wise and responsible choices in specific contexts rests on practical and moral discernment. I cannot help siding with the critic in asking: is it possible within a managerial framework for a practitioner to arrive at practical judgements of her own?

The thing we begin to see here is a conflict—which, in one way and another, will occupy us over many chapters—between two completely different outlooks:

(A) *It is of over-riding importance, within the present conception of public accountability, for managers to have the decisional power over all those who work in organizational practices.*

(B) *If one is to function as a moral and cognitive agent in practical contexts one does not abdicate or delegate to others one's judgemental and decision-making powers.⁹*

It is somewhat artificial, I know, to reduce all the possible kinds of criticisms which could be made of the status quo to one position and ascribe it to 'the critic'; and it is equally artificial to pit 'the critic's' views against those of 'the apologist'—as if there were no points of agreement between them.¹⁰ But my purpose here is to concentrate on broad general questions. My focus will be the idea of *educational accountability*. In what follows 'the critic' will give the *anti-managerial* viewpoint whereas 'the apologist' will give the *managerialist's* in a version that embraces the principles of NPM.

⁹ In the use of words, I am drawing on the work of Govier (1993).

¹⁰ See [Appendix 3](#), note 10, for the many differently nuanced positions which apologetics can take.

According to the apologist, the main task will be to explain why, within educational practices organizations and institutions, the operation of managerial modes of accountability is vital for securing public trust in a publicly funded educational system.

For critics, on the other hand, ‘the growing preponderance of a free market economy and corporate culture’ has been an ‘assault’ on the very notion of ‘the public’—of ‘the state as guardian of the public good’—as well as upon a ‘vision of schooling that supports democratic forms of political agency and a substantive democratic order’ (Giroux, 2003, p. 9). The critic wonders how the ‘public-private hybrid forms’ (Ferlie *et al*, 1996, p. 244) which have evolved through NPM can respect the idea of *public* accountability or, indeed, the idea of education as a *public institution* now that the idea of state has been ‘hollowed’ out (Rhodes 1997)¹¹ as a consequence of the ‘managerialization’ process (Clarke *et al*, 1994, p.4).¹² How can ‘private worries’ translate into ‘public concerns’, Henry Giroux (2004) asks.

The apologist, in response, may then accuse the critic of holding on to a highly suspect, ‘self-serving’ ‘ideology’ of ‘professionalism’ (see Burbules and Densmore, 1991 on this) propped up with a rhetoric of a ‘public service ethos’. The critic just wants to hang on to an outdated model of public accountability. So speaks the apologist.

How to advance from here? First, surely we need to say some more about the very thing that lies at the heart of the dispute between the critic and the apologist —*the status quo*. Let me try to show now, with the minimum of detail, just how complex its nature is. At this point the reader may first wish to refer to the **Introduction** (Section **IV**) and the brief discussion we had there of the terms *managerialism* and *New Public Management* (NPM).

¹¹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 11, for elucidation of the idea of ‘hollowing out’.

¹² See [Appendix 3](#), note 12, for an explanation of ‘managerialization’.

1.2 The complex nature of our status quo

It is widely agreed by political commentators that the development of a *performative* culture is no accident. It is an integral part of the (on-going) neo-liberal, 'modernizing' project¹³ which seeks to re-construct existing society along free market lines for goods and services (Elliott, 2001, p. 203). The 'late capitalism' that has evolved, as a result of this project and which is characteristic of 'advanced liberal' democracies (Rose, 1996),¹⁴ is to be sharply distinguished from the social democratic political settlement that preceded it.¹⁵ For market (or quasi-market), neo-liberal economies are used for the distribution of welfare and the public secure services. But the rhetoric of modernization has again shifted. In the early phases of the reforms there was an emphasis on 'competitive tendering' or the 'marketisation' of the institutions of state welfare. Now the emphasis is on 'responsibilization' (sic) of all citizens through 'democratic inclusion', 'collaboration', 'partnerships' and 'stakeholder' relations (Newman, 2000, pp. 46-7).

So NPM has not disappeared with these changes. It has been 'updated':

... in education, as in other spheres...most of the premises of neo-liberalism, many of its objectives, and almost all... methods of delivering them [still stand]. Competition, choice and performance indicators remain the unchallenged totems of policy... Markets and managerialism hold sway. Structures and methods remain largely unaltered. Only the rhetoric of what schools and colleges can and should produce changes... (Fergusson, 2000, p. 203).

There is thus no relaxation of the managerial regime. On the contrary, the process of managerialization has been *intensified*. Commentators of the 'Third Way' and of 'New Welfarism'¹⁶ (associated with 'New Labour') appear unanimous on this point. This agenda is deliberately 'interventionist, and considerably even more managerialist' (Fergusson, *ibid*, p.208) than the New Right model it supplanted:

¹³ See [Appendix 3](#), note 13, for the key features of neo-liberalism.

¹⁴ For more information on 'advanced liberalism', see [Appendix 3](#), note 14.

¹⁵ The period that existed between the post-war years, dating approximately from 1945 to the 1970s: see Grace (1995); Gewirtz (2002); Clarke, Gewirtz, and McLaughlin (2000); Clarke and Newman (2001); see also [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁶ For more information on the 'Third Way' or 'New Welfarism' see [Appendix 3](#), note 16.

...the modernization process...takes the pursuit of improved performance much further than the marketised version. In schools and colleges, this is manifest in the target-setting, goal-oriented approach.... the pursuit of performance-related pay rewarding teachers whose pupils achieve targets... ..a range of measures ...to provide deterrents to, or removal for, underperformance. Fast-track dismissal of 'failing' teachers... formalized staff appraisal... OFSTED inspection...threats of closure... become the sharpest end of responsabilization (Fergusson, *ibid*, p.211).

So where have we got to? Even if 'managerialism', defies precise definition and even if its features mutate under the influence of political and economic pressures, there are constancies. The term does unify a recognizable sequence of efforts to implant *three key organizational ideals* (already highlighted in the Introduction, Section IV)—the '3E's'—namely, *economy*, *efficiency* and *effectiveness* (Rhodes, 1997, p. 48).

The cult of 'economy, efficiency and effectiveness', in their modern forms hark back to Frederick Taylor. Taylor, working in industrial settings, thought that if workers' tasks were defined and controlled and their rewards were linked to output then the 'most efficient ways of working could be structured by the manager' (Bennett *et al*, 2003, p. 64). In recent decades, neo-Taylorism¹⁷ has taken the form of a drive to convert the public sector to the cost-accounting methods that are associated with private industry. It is from this deliberate aping of private business methods that *management-by-objectives* has emerged as a predominant feature of organizational life. (We return to this in the next chapter when we shall be tracing the way in which managerialism gained ground.)

The idea behind management-by-objectives is that, if there are clearly defined targets to which people work then 'outcome productivity' ('effectiveness') and 'value-for-money' ('economy') will be achieved ('efficiency'). The effect tends to be always the same. In the original Taylor-inspired factories, then in the schools that were forced to adopt Taylorist methods in the 19th century, and now, in organizations and social practices that

¹⁷ The *New English Dictionary* defines 'Taylorism' as follows: 'The principles or practice of scientific management. Origin. mid 19th cent.: from the name of Frederick W. Taylor (1856-1915), the American engineer who expounded the system.' For a full account of the impact of Taylorism on education in the USA, see Callahan (1964, pp. 81-82).

are run in accordance with neo-Taylorist principles, the first thing that happens is an incessant demand for production of *records*. Teachers, for instance are constantly asked to write policy statements or reports about their activities (Callahan, 1964). Pressure is put on agents to be explicit about all their activities. How else can they prove their sense of accountability? This is how the *ideal of transparency* has now come to have a very special meaning. What managers now think of as 'good management' means that: 'Efficiency ha[s] not only to be done, but it ha[s] to be seen to be done' (Olssen *et al*, 2004, p. 191).

In some organizations, neo-Taylorist approaches, driven by the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement and its inbuilt logic of 'continuous improvement' (Morley and Rassool, 1999, pp. 49-50; Oakland, 1993), appear to have given way to more 'humanistic' forms of management, as advocated by Human Resource Management (HRM)¹⁸. HRM was a reaction against the hierarchical, 'line-management' of neo-Taylorist bureaucratic practices. But the change is not as clear-cut as one might think.

At the juncture where these two forms of management theory overlap there are tensions which managerial rhetoric masks. For the tight 'line-management' and hierarchical structures of bureaucratic authority so characteristic of Taylorism can still be found within organizations that ostensibly promote 'flexibility', 'networking', 'horizontal' lines of authority, and 'distributed' leadership (see Hatcher (2005) on this). So in spite of a rhetoric of 'empowerment' 'ownership', 'creativity', 'innovation' and 'collaboration',¹⁹ which HRM advocates, many school organizations still follow a style of management based on non-democratic forms and styles of management and control. There is one clear over-arching aim (of the management team) which shapes the school ethos: to secure 'value-for-money'. It will become clearer soon what is meant by 'value'.

¹⁸ Sometimes referred to as: 'Strategic Human Resource Management'. See Thrupp and Willmott (2003), Ch. 7, who situate this aspect of managerial theory and practice in the context of 'school development planning' (SDP).

¹⁹ See Fielding (1996; 1999); Gunter (1997); Hatcher (2005); Smith (2002).

Allied to this aim is the necessity now for institutions to prove their institutional efficiency.²⁰ Institutions need to be made *auditable*. Individual agents who work in them must therefore be prepared to be monitored. *Audit*, according to Michael Power is to be understood as an umbrella term for the ever-expanding practices and ‘technologies’ of managerial accountability. No longer the prerogative of financial audit, audit now functions as a constitutive rationalizing principle of social and economic organization (Power, 1994a).

1.3 Concern hardens into doubt: complexity masquerading as simplicity

To say that the picture I have just described is complex is an understatement. Consider all the different models of management that may be at work at any point in time—among them the performance management machinery which measures agents’ achievements together with the complex structure of corporate-market forms of governance which now define the formal accountability relationships in educational institutions. Consider, next, the pressures on institutions to pursue ‘quality assurance’ which create even more managerial goals: to formalize, disseminate and inculcate the practices of performance management, feedback, measurement and comparison.²¹ Consider, lastly, the ascendancy of ‘school effectiveness’ as a dominant discourse. The ‘school effectiveness movement’ —a ‘crystallization...of belief systems, policy interventions and ideologies that have floated through education since at least the 1960s’ (Morley and Rassool, *ibid*, p. 1)—tries to ‘identify the levers which need to be operated in order to make a school more effective’ (Barber and White, 1997, p.3). Together with its related discourse, ‘school improvement’, schools are now required constantly to evaluate, research, analyse and measure their needs and their results: *effectiveness* has to be managed ‘in order for schools to maintain their positions in competitive market economies’ (Morley and Rassool, *ibid*, p. 73). The rationale given for this kind of managerial monitoring within schools is to ‘ascertain whether differential resources, processes and organizational arrangements affect student outcomes and if so, how’ (Stoll and Mortimore, 1997, p. 9). To all

²⁰ ‘Efficiency to Deliver’, HM Government Departmental Report (2006), p. 95

²¹ Gewirtz *et al*, cited in Willmott (2002), p.224

these things now add the entrepreneurial activities which institutions are urged to pursue as they extend their 'stakeholder' accountability relations and devolve work through 'outsourced' agencies or Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs). Such things all owe their existence to the influence of the managerial-market-inspired principles and ideals embodied in NPM.

Are there any valued ideals—ideals not allied to NPM practices—that have been marginalised in the face of the sheer weight of this system? If pressed to answer this question then a common reaction of apologists is to say:

“Look, *what matters is what works*. We set standards. We make people accountable. Everything is transparent. We can see when standards and objectives have not been attained or reached. What more do you want?”

Well, what *does* the critic want? The critic wants an outside reference point—to understand and then to explain why, *in spite* of 'reassurances' and in spite of the elaborate techniques and practices of auditing, accounting and performance management designed to secure public accountability—the *concerns just do not go away*. In fact, disquiet increases.

Russell, in the citation which heads this chapter, suggests that the unphilosophical stance is to rest content with what seems 'simple' to the eye. The philosophical route which he recommends is to seek out a 'complicated structure where we thought everything was simple' and not to become complacent about what appears to 'inspire no doubt'.

In a similar vein, the critic could say that the mantra-maxim 'what matters is what works' may look innocuous—or 'simple', in Russell's sense—and it may seem ideology free,²² but it hides precisely what the critic seeks to know:

²² See Plant (2001), pp. 555-6

“We need to know more about the ends to which the work is being put and who is deciding on what counts as ‘what works’, and, lastly: what does it mean if we are blocked from asking questions such as these kinds of questions?”

To the critic, it is not clear that commerce, which requires market-business strategies, and education are sufficiently similar or comparable with respect to the ends which each aims at; nor is it self-evident that modes or procedures deployed for assuring accountability in a business context can be sensibly transferred to educational practices.²³

So speaks the critic. The doubt remains. But perhaps the critic overlooks the sincerity of the apologist—who is sure that there is *nothing* to doubt. As Helen Gunter (1997, pp. 3-5, 48) points out, the whole tone of the ‘Management Industry’ (as she calls it), which is ‘concerned with the identification, marketing and selling of products such as books and folders, courses, videos and multimedia packages’:

evinces confidence...you are exhorted into trusting... systematic processes...
proformas to fill in, checklists, key questions for action, do's and don'ts,
simple diagrams showing clear relationships...Very rarely do you see
education management writers expressing doubt...

1.4 The confidence of the managers: out with the old, in with the new

The critic wants the apologist to appreciate the complexity which lies behind the ubiquitous rhetoric and bland mantras of the ‘Management Industry’ and then to re-assess and question the worth of the rationale upon which the ‘Industry’ is grounded. So we could put the apologist through some Russellian paces: can the apologist’s confidence be shaken by being made to see a ‘complicated structure’ where ‘everything was [at first] thought simple’? Let us hear the views of Sir Michael Barber, one of the chief architects of the re-structuring of the educational system, and at one time the Head of the Delivery Unit in the British Government, a post which gave him a direct line

²³ See Wagner (1989), p. 19.

of accountability to the Prime Minister. What would he say in reply to criticisms of ‘management-by-ringbinder’?²⁴

We are on the way to achieving a ‘world-class’ education system Barber (2001) says. Over the many decades of educational reform, according to Barber, the teaching profession has evolved through four main teaching eras. It now occupies its optimal place, at the fourth or culminating stage. The excesses of government interference have been curbed.²⁵

In his analysis, Barber cross-tabulates two axes—(i.) *knowledge-poor versus knowledge-rich strategies* and (ii.) *‘external’ prescription versus professional judgment*. These are the four stages of ‘evolution’:

- (1) Uninformed professional judgment (knowledge-poor/professional judgment)
- (2) Uninformed prescription (knowledge-poor/external prescription)
- (3) Informed prescription (knowledge-rich/external prescription)
- (4) Informed professional judgment (knowledge-rich/professional judgment)²⁶

Here, however, the critic will say there is a gap between rhetoric and reality. For there is no mention in Barber’s vision of what Andy Hargreaves (1994a, p.xiv) calls the ‘elusive aspects of teachers’ work... the personal, moral, cultural and political dimensions of teaching’. Knowledge is presented in simplistic, formulaic terms, which equate to no more than ‘being informed’. Barber’s confidence rests on his own special understanding of ‘professional’ and ‘judgment’. Anyone who rejects Barber’s interpretation of what *counts* as knowledge will say that his argument begs the question. What Barber means by ‘knowledge-rich’ is ‘knowledge’ that passes the tests and rigours of performance management, informed by standards set by *managerial criteria* of what *counts* as ‘knowledge-rich. By whose criteria was it decided that all the teachers in (1) were ‘knowledge poor’? It is only Barber’s overwhelming

²⁴ Halpin, cited in Gunter (1997), p.4.

²⁵ Barber, reported in Bottery and Wright (2000), p. 129.

²⁶ Barber, cited in Fullan (2003), p.6.

faith in his own world view that supports his concept of a 'world-class' education.

In *Making Sense of Education Policy*, written in 2002, Geoff Whitty, predicting the direction in which the teaching 'profession' might develop, thought it reasonable to expect that 'new teachers would be given a rather restricted version of professionalism/professionality' (Whitty, 2002, p.71), even if, at the same time, 'opportunities' were opening up for new teachers:

One reading of the dominant tendency in England is that the government is preparing...leading cadres of the profession for leadership in the new marketised culture of schooling, while...others [will] have to be prevented from perpetuating an outmoded social service version of professionalism, even if they can not be won to the new agenda (Whitty, *ibid*).

Some years later, we are in a position to see the accuracy of his prediction. More and more, the machinery of performance management accountability, along with the regimes of performance-related-pay review and appraisal,²⁷ now aligns itself with initiatives for 'leadership-management'.²⁸ It is no wonder, as Grace (1995, p. 23) once commented, that those who had doubts about these new ways of understanding *headship* as *leadership-management* had to 'face the challenge of adjustment or flight from the field'.

'New' forms of professionalism have ousted 'old' ones. Where Barber sees 'new' professionalism as re-professionalisation, the critic, on the other hand, wonders whether teachers are being duped into a 'false' professionalism or 'collaborating in their own de-professionalisation' (Bottery and Wright, 2000, pp.124,128).

The debate about *re-professionalisation* and *de-professionalisation* is not just a matter of academic interest. These divergent views pose fundamental questions regarding the nature of teachers' work (Hargreaves (*ibid*, pp.14-15): (i) has the pursuit of 'professionalisation' been achieved at the cost of making a teacher's job more routinized and deskilled? (ii) does the

²⁷ Ofsted (2003) *Leadership and Management: What inspection tells us*

²⁸ For references to 'leadership-management' in policy texts, see [Appendix 3](#), note 28.

intensification of work which accompanies teacher professionalisation (in Barber's sense) mean that teachers have less discretion to exercise their professional judgement? How can the apologist fail to see there is a paradox?

Suppose that in a discussion of the new meanings that now attach to 'professional knowledge', it is conceded by the apologist that there is indeed more complexity than was at first apparent. Is the apologist then getting into the spirit of the Russellian idea that a first step towards deeper understanding is to see that something that appears 'simple' may in fact be complex? At last, the critic may think, a small concession has been won! No. The apologist has not gone by the right route to seeing the complexity. Russell meant that the right kind of questioning about what presents itself for inquiry should start in doubt. In the same spirit, Charles Sanders Peirce (1887, p.67), whose views we shall discuss soon, appeals to the idea of 'irritation' to explain how inquiry is driven forward.²⁹ The trouble is that the apologist experiences no 'irritation'. In Russellian terms the apologist is still at a stage of seeing only the 'simple'.

1.5 Is 'being concerned' sufficient justification for grounding a critique of the status quo?

Does the critic overstate the case and protest too much? After all, as Grace says (1995, p.43), the 'new entrepreneurs',³⁰ and 'leader-managers' themselves are attracted positively to the new forms of professional development and '*see no necessary opposition*' (my emphasis) between their own sense of professional integrity and the effort to promote educative and pedagogical values in the new market 'trading conditions for schools'. Just the reverse. Perhaps, then, we should side with the apologist here? Let us see.

Education is moving on, the new leaders say. Here is a description of the process in which one new paradigm of teaching displaces another:

²⁹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 29.

³⁰ Troman, cited in Whitty (2002), p.71

Long established conceptions of roles...and responsibilities are deconstructed in the face of [possible] resentment, resistance, low morale and scepticism... As sceptical teachers ...comply ..., as reluctant heads sit on sub committees of governing bodies to apportion the schools budgets etc., they come gradually to live and be imbued by the logic of new roles, new tasks, new functions and, in the end, to absorb partial redefinitions of their professional selves... As re-definition takes hold, though, it is likely to be deep-seated and long-lived. The greatest sources of resistance will have departed, redefinitions will not be easily undone, *and as young recruits who never knew any different move up the hierarchy, the consolidation of the new regime can bed in* (Fergusson, 1994, p. 113, my emphasis).

What is implied here, fatalistically, is that time itself will sort out the argument between the critic and the apologist. Resignation, retirement or death will sort it out. Once critical voices are subdued, Barber's dream of his 'world-class' education system will come true, under the direction of the 'leading cadres', well-trained in the ways of new professionalism. There is evidence that this process has already started.³¹

What the managerial 'revolution' in education will have achieved is much more than a change in the meaning of a few words, such as 'professional'. It will have changed the idea of *accountability*. All that will remain is a teacher's sense of what it means to be educationally accountable according to the precepts of a managerial model. But, as of now, the concerns of the critic are still felt³² too widely and too strongly to be ignored. So the question to press now is this: how *seriously* should we take the deeply felt concerns of someone?

Very seriously, Bernard Williams suggests (1995, p.239).³³ What is felt to be wrong should never be ignored. It is not the feelings as such that matter. It is *the values that they embody* and which are 'likely to be pervasively connected to things we value, to what gives life the kinds of significance it has'. It is only by finding the objects of our concern that we can locate the

³¹ See: "Cowed' teachers lack confidence', *Times Educational Supplement*, July 23rd, 2004; and 'Young guns ditch old values', *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, December 15th, 2006, pp.1, 12.

³² The notion of 'feeling' appealed to here must not be equated simply with having *emotions or sensations*. See [Appendix 3](#), note 32.

³³ Cp. Harry Frankfurt (1987a; 1987b) and Charles Taylor (1989): see [Appendix 3](#), note 33.

reasons for our deeply felt beliefs. Such beliefs give good reason, and thereby justify (according to Williams) our feelings of concern, 'in terms of our sense of what it is worthwhile in human life, to preserve, and to follow'.³⁴ Here Reason and Sentiment, as David Hume always told us, work in synergy. If we are interested in criticising the status quo then the role of reason is to articulate our felt concerns and drive them in the direction of a critical doubt *about* the status quo.

So doubt needs to go 'to work' on something. Genuine concern nourishes it, helping to provide the 'proper material' for 'the intellectual side of judgement' to 'work upon' (Dewey, 1909, p.52). Concern, through a laborious route via serious doubt, harnesses the sincere motivation to criticise. It furnishes the precondition of serious inquiry and critique.

1.6 The pedagogical element in doubt: *wanting to understand better*

We have been trying to understand how it is possible to move from feelings of concern to what might be genuine reasons for questioning the legitimacy of the status quo. Maybe the link between these two things is not obvious. Doubt, I have suggested, plays an intermediary role. Doubt provides the normative element needed to provoke one from a state of complacency when it is felt that *something is not right*. One of the roles doubt plays then, is to understand the status quo (whatever that may be) better. In this way, doubt acts as an educational tool to enhance further understanding.³⁵

The Method of Doubt served Descartes on his route back from scepticism to knowledge and certainty (Williams, 1978, p.62). But, as Russell suggests, doubt can also serve us in non-Cartesian ways, in much the same way as it serves a scientist whose working hypothesis is based upon doubt

³⁴ Of course, such deeply 'felt concerns' need not lead to an irrevocable commitment: see [Appendix 3](#), note 34.

³⁵ Nicholas Burbules (2003, p.170) explores this idea when he discusses Socrates' efforts (in the *Meno*) to help the slave come to see a particular geometrical truth: see [Appendix 3](#), note 35.

about some current orthodoxy. Then, the methodological role for doubt will be to lead to a questioning of taken-for-granted aspects of the status quo. In this role, doubt helps to disrupt complacency of thought but may not guarantee certain knowledge. Peirce, as we mentioned earlier, anticipates Russell here by calling on the critical (contrast: sceptical) potential that lies latent in the idea of doubt—namely, the notion of *inquiry*. Dewey, like Peirce, thought that inquiry should proceed from doubt to the resolution of doubt.³⁶

1.7 How doubt justifies critique

So now, stepping into the shoes of the critic and departing from the largely spectatorial position I have tried to maintain let me assert that doubt concerning the status quo is the kind that Peirce, in *The Fixation Of Belief* called a ‘living doubt’, a doubt which he refused to equate with Cartesian doubt.³⁷

A ‘living doubt’ is a doubt to take seriously, not one that initiates an idle or arbitrary scepticism of our sense-perceptions. Perhaps, now, we have found the ‘normative grip’ which we were seeking at the beginning of the chapter. The normative argument of the critic grows from this ‘living’ doubt. But if it is not to be blocked from the start, or crowded out by doubts that are not living doubts, courage will be needed. The critic must resist bureaucratic demands for ‘intellectual subjugation’ (Amit, 2000, p.232) to the instrumentality of political and economic interests.

So where does the critic start? With what Barnett calls the ‘performative lurch’ (2000, pp.40-43) which anyone involved in education will have had to make; with the cult of the explicit, of that which now must be demonstrated, whether appropriate or not; with the practices of ‘performance management’ and their emphasis on the need for pre-specified, explicit, targets and objectives to be ‘delivered’.

³⁶ Schön, in Scott (2003), discusses Deweyan doubt: see [Appendix 3](#), note 36.

³⁷ See [Appendix 3](#), note 37.

There is nothing wrong with having objectives—and nothing wrong with demonstrating that a particular task or a duty one is responsible for has been done. To that extent, the idea of ‘competent performance’ will feature importantly in any public accountability system. But, as we shall see in the Chapter 3, when we look at the effects of managerialism in more detail, ‘objectives’ now have an altogether new function. All too easily they can undermine practical knowledge and distort practical judgement.

With the help of Russell, acting at times as a stern ghost in the background to guide the argument, we have now reached the end of the journey that I undertook to describe (in 1.1). We have moved from a stance of *concern* or disquiet to a stance of *critique* and must now see where our doubt takes us in inquiry. Anticipating Russell, Peirce refers to ‘the first rule of reason’. In order to learn ‘you must desire to learn and in so desiring not to be satisfied with what you already incline to think.’ From this, ‘there follows one corollary which itself deserves to be inscribed upon every wall of the city of philosophy’:

Do not block the way of inquiry.³⁸

³⁸ Peirce’s own emphasis, in bold. See Ketner (1992), p. 178

Chapter 2

Ideology and ideologies: elective affinities¹

...leaders...often propose ...to new-model the constitution...The great body of the party are commonly intoxicated with the imaginary beauty of this ideal system...[T]hose leaders...become...in time the dupes of their own sophistry...The man of system...is often so enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan of government...[h]e goes on to establish it...without any regard either to the great interests or to the strong prejudices which may oppose it...But to insist ...in spite of all opposition ...must ...be the highest degree of arrogance. It is to erect his own judgement into the supreme standard of right and wrong.

Adam Smith (1759), *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*²

2.1 Managers, management and managerialism

I promised that when we came to this chapter I would provide more detail about the nature of managerialism. One of the most important things to say at the start is that managerialism cannot be equated with the kind of work done in the early days of the welfare state by those who, among other things, were seen as 'administrators, facilitators and wise counsels on the purposes of education' (Bottery, 2000, p. 62).

Those we now call *managers* are expected to play a 'directive' rather than a simply administrative or negotiating role (Richards, 1992; Bottery, 2000):

Managerialism, in contrast to the traditional bureaucratic ideal of 'administration'... developed in the public sector [as result of] an increased concern with 'results', 'performance' and 'outcomes'...[H]igher priority is

¹ The term, 'elective affinities' derives from chemistry, to describe the attraction between particular substances.

² See: 'Of the Character of Virtue', vi.ii.2.15-2.18, in Raphael and MacFie (1976)

given to the 'management' of people...compared to the administration of activities, procedures and regulations'.³

Thus *managerialism* differs generically from the *administration* once practised by the 'archetypal professional-bureaucrat' (Pollitt, 1990, p.49; Gewirtz, 2002, p. 6), a figure in the social democratic, post-war years. This shift came about at roughly the same time as the eclipse of Keynesian economics. Throughout the 1970s, neo-liberal 'public choice' economic theory (to be discussed in Chapter 9) infiltrated most Anglophone governments' policy thinking:⁴

Neo-liberalism and management theory are both ideological currents that... infused ...educational...policy in the 1980s and 1990s in Britain, Australia and New Zealand...[C]hanges have taken place within the very discourses that shape our understanding of education as a field of social practice (Olssen *et al*, 2004, p70).

So although we shall be focusing in this chapter on how the 'new public management' (NPM) affected public accountability policies in the UK, the issues we shall be discussing could apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to any state in which neo-liberal policies ousted social democratic forms of governance in the 1970s. As Stephen Ball says, what we need to understand here is a 'paradigm convergence'—'the invocation of policies with common underlying principles' in an 'international context' (Ball, 2001b, pp. 46-48). (See [Appendix 1](#) for further discussion.) Wherever they were implemented, NPM reforms, advocated by the 'public choice' economic theorists, were seen as an opportunity for any government:

to restructure the public services, changing the nature of their organization and management. These reform programmes contain[ed] multiple strands with effects at system, group and individual role levels alike (Ferlie *et al* (1996, p.224).

In this chapter we therefore come to the symbiotic relationship that holds between *neo-liberalism* and *managerialism*. We need to understand better just why anyone involved with education, whether in a teaching or a non-teaching capacity, has no option but to be recruited into managerial

³ Aucoin, cited in Pollitt (1990), p.49

⁴ The key elements of neo-liberalism are given in note 13, for **Chapter 1**, in [Appendix 3](#)

principles and practices. What is the nature of this kind of compliance? (See 2.6, below).

Education is just one of many public institutions now dominated by a discourse of 'managerial professionalism' (Sacks, 2003, p. 25). So dominant has the ethos of managerialism become throughout the public sector that hospitals, medical centres, social service offices, police stations, fire stations, prisons—all those institutions we refer to as *public institutions*—now comply with managerial modes of accountability. Acting as 'conduits of implementation' (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.60) these 'modes' disseminate national policies universally across the whole public sector.

Institutional economics explains these things in terms of *structural isomorphism*: organizations 'take on more and more of the rationalized aspects of their environment', and 'are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing concepts of what is rational'.⁵ So ubiquitous have managerial regimes now become in public sector practices, that it would be difficult to find any policy reform which:

has not drawn on and contributed to the installation of a managerial mode of coordination... around market relations...[T]he managerialisation of welfare ... provides the...legitimizing framework for a politically driven project of state transformation (Clarke and Newman, 1997, pp. 60-61)

There are two points being made here about the 'managerialisation of welfare'. The phenomenon we call 'managerialism', as it applies in the UK, cannot be understood without an appreciation of the two-fold aim which lay behind the political desire of the 1960s to reform the public services (starting with the civil service) and which has since developed into a sustained, on-going political project of 'modernizing' or rationalizing⁶ the public sector. These mutually inextricable aims form the backdrop for any discussion about the notion of *public accountability*:

⁵ Meyer and Rowan, cited in Hopwood and Miller (1994), p.10

⁶ For a longer note on managerial 'rationalization', see [Appendix 3](#), note 6.

- (i) The restructuring of the state
- (ii) The reforming of the public sector

In what way have (i) and (ii) affected our understandings of *educational accountability*? Here is one answer:

In practice, educational restructuring ...is associated with notions such as school-site management, school-based management, school-based budgeting and the local management of schools. After restructuring, the central authority... retain[s] control of the ends of education, but individuals at the school site are...responsible for the means of education and for demonstrating success at achieving goals set both locally and centrally (Lawton, 1992, p.139).

How are we to understand the notion of *responsibility* in a system that is to accommodate both 'decentralised' production and 'central' regulation? ⁷

The answer to this is complex:

[Although] [r]esponsibility is devolved and increased responsiveness to clients/customers is alleged... [t]he creation of quasi markets and structural decentralization ...has taken place at a time when the powers of central government have been substantially increased in education...There is the appearance of relative autonomy, but this is screened by the gaze of authoritarian central controls (Morely and Rassool, 1999, p.62).

Next, the corollary—no less complex. The concept of *autonomy*, suggested in the idea of a *self-managing* school, is *conditional*—conditional upon whether the required 'headline' targets ('upper performance limits') are reached.⁸ There can only be 'earned' autonomy.⁹ A massive bureaucracy of audit and accountability is needed to do the necessary checks if the full amount of funding is to be granted.

Managerial bureaucracy is nowhere so evident as in *educational management*¹⁰ which has evolved as a result of 'global rationalizing processes' (Bottery, 2004, p. 84):

⁷ See Martin (1994).

⁸ 'Good news for the DfES', *Times Educational Supplement*, June 6th, 2003, p. 32

⁹ *The Times*, October, 31st, 2002, p.11: Minister will promote 'earned autonomy for schools that... demonstrated they were well run'.

¹⁰ Bush, cited in Gunter (1997), p.3: 'a field of study concerned with the practice and operation of educational organisations'.

the movement towards the standardization of frameworks of pupil testing, precise definitions of curriculum standards, highstakes processes for inspecting, monitoring and intervening in school performance.

Within such a 'framework', aimed at 'standardization', 'precise definitions', 'monitoring' and 'intervening', it is no wonder that the idea of *transparency* features so importantly in managerial rhetoric. For in a managerial culture the emphasis is always on having to provide 'explicit standards and measures of performance' (Rhodes, 1997, p. 48).

But how did the idea of *explicitness* come to gain such prominence? Why have we all had to become 'visible in [our] judgement' (Hoskin, 1996, p.279) and 'calculators' in a world of '*management* accounting' (McSweeney, 1996, pp. 202, 210, original emphasis)? Why must the concept of accountability be shaped now 'by the realm of the visible' (Hopwood, 1984, p.179)?

2.2 The emergence of managerialism

To address these questions we shall focus on the crucial period in history in which a new idea was promoted—that a more *managerial* approach to organizing the public sector (than had hitherto existed) held the key to raising standards of public accountability. The recommendations (to which 2.5 will return) of the Fulton Committee in 1968, for reforming the civil service, were grounded on just such an idea:

The development of a new managerial style is, we believe, essential for the Civil Service of the future...Great emphasis should be given to the development of managerial skills in staff... (*Fulton Report, 1966-68*) Vol.2, p. 98)

'Managerial effectiveness' in 'pursuit of efficiency' (Hopwood, 1984)—the 'new managerial style'—were the recurring *motifs* for the restructuring process. Almost immediately, the notion of *explicitness* became



crucial to the reform programme. With 'Rayner's Scrutinies',¹¹ for instance, which were initiated in order to eradicate 'waste and inefficiency' (Laughlin, 1996, p. 236-8), words such as 'transparency' and 'scrutiny', suddenly took on new import—'the key to better governance' (Hood and Heald, 2006). Explicitness was seen as essential to 'clear relationships between inputs, outputs and performance measures.'¹² For if 'relationships [are] ...precise, explicit and transparent... [this] helps to make them more amenable to competition and choice' (Mather, 1991, p. 77).

Out of these 'Scrutinies', a policy emerged which came to be known as the Financial Management Initiative (FMI). The emphasis of the FMI was on what defines 'good management'. Launched in 1982, it was later described as being 'at the heart of a change of management style in the public sector'.¹³ The two processes I mentioned earlier, (i) the reforming of the public sector and (ii), the restructuring of the state, were already under way and by then *accountability* had become synonymous with 'management accounting'. This, in turn, came to be understood in terms of the best way to achieve *economic rationalization*.¹⁴ The FMI, for example:

sought to radically alter the structure and management of the UK's Civil Service departments...Objectives would be assigned to 'responsibility centres' within which costs would be systematically identified (McSweeney, 1996, pp. 201, 202).

From the White Paper, 'Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Civil Service',¹⁵ we learn that the 'main objective' of FMI was:

...to promote...a system in which managers at all levels have:

- i. a clear view of their objectives... assess and wherever possible measure outputs or performance in relation to these objectives...
- ii. ...well-defined responsibility for making the best use of ... resources including a critical scrutiny of output and value for money

¹¹ Sir Derek Rayner's 'scrutiny' programmes: see Common (1995, p.142); Metcalfe and Richards (1984)

¹² Hood, cited in Laughlin (1996), p.238

¹³ Ibbs Report (1984), p.108, cited in McSweeney, 1996, p. 201

¹⁴ The 'reorganization of production in the interests of efficiency or profits', *Oxford Dictionary of Economics*, Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ Cmnd. 8616, reported in Laughlin (ibid), p. 238

As the 1980s progressed, the original emphasis of the FMI changed. A revival of the old 'Wilsonian dichotomy' (Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman, 1981; Common, 1995, pp. 136, 139) that advocated a separation of *policy* and *execution* helped towards this end. 'Principal-agent' theories from the field of institutional economics (Arrow 1985; Levacic, 2001; Pratt and Zaeckhauser, 1985) provided the rationale for developing more explicit forms of bureaucratic management based on this idea of separation. The 'Next Steps' initiative was able to recommend the creation of *agencies* to be set up within the public sector.¹⁶ Reporting in 1991 on the progress which the 'Executive Agencies' had made (agencies set up under the 'Next Steps' policy initiative), the (then) Prime Minister's Adviser on Efficiency remarked approvingly of the new form of 'contractorisation' (a principle of competitive, 'tendering-out') that had come into being:

There are already signs of...a growing pattern of ...responsibility for discrete and substantial blocks of work, devolved budgeting and explicit agreement over performance targets.¹⁷

In Chapter 3 we shall see the way in which, paradoxically, 'responsibility for discrete...blocks of work' may undermine personal responsibility. In the meantime, we can ask: why did these early 1980's reforms have such a transformative effect on the way in which education, conceived as public institution, was organized— and why do they continue to do so? Here we come to one thing that is really clear in the story of the rise of managerialism and its relation to education: the continuing role of economics, not only in reforming the management of the State, but in influencing priorities in policy determination and decision making (Hopwood, *ibid*, p.171):

...neo-liberal discourses of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness are derived from neoclassical economics and it is this kind of economic theory which has had real effects in shaping the ways in which educational resources are ensured and allocated (Olssen *et al*, 2004, p.70).

¹⁶ Source: Mather (1991), p. 77

¹⁷ Source: Lord Hunt of Tanworth, in Haseler *et al* (1991), pp. 96-7

Stewart Ranson (2003), in describing the evolution of economic neo-liberal thought from the early 1970s to the late 1990s, suggests that, even though it is possible to identify different 'dimensions' of neo-liberalism, these different phases can be seen as, 'over time, extending and intensifying into a coherent regime of regulation': a 'regime of neo-liberal corporate accountability has dominated the governance of education.'

It is clear that the 'regulation' of which Ranson speaks could not have happened unless managerialism had dovetailed so well with ideas and ideals which paid court to neo-liberal economic thought. Shattock (2006, p.124) appeals to the idea of 'ambiguity' to describe the close relation between 'governance and management structures'. But we can see that it is much more than that. Managerialism, as much as neo-liberalism, sits astride the status quo. Their ideals are barely distinguishable. Hence the title I have given this chapter, 'Ideology and ideologies: elective affinities'. The relationship between managerialism and neo-liberalism is a marriage not of convenience but of ideological attraction.

To say this is not to deny that many different political and economic forces came together to challenge social democracy and make the case for a new conception of public accountability.¹⁸ It is also not to deny the importance of changing perceptions of the role which democracy should play in the public sector. We can agree, therefore, with Christopher Winch (1996, p. 146) that the demand for accountability cannot be viewed as a phenomenon driven *solely* by neo-liberal ideology. My claim is that, once this demand *was* addressed in the political arena, neo-liberalism's ability to adapt itself to different political priorities allowed it to sustain its own powerful momentum. The demand translated readily into the regulation of the 'regimes of neo-liberal corporate accountability' which Ranson speaks of. Managers ensure the necessary 'regulation'.

¹⁸ See [Appendix 1](#).

2.3 Managers as agents of change

The new management practices we have been discussing in the last section which eclipsed the older forms of administration were understood as ways to ‘reinvent’ the government’s running of the public sector, to bring about ‘radicalism’ and ‘transformation’, and to combat resistance to change (Clarke and Newman, 1997, pp.44-47; Richards, 1992). Through ‘the installation of a managerial mode of coordination’ (Clarke and Newman (*ibid*), p. 21) managers were given *carte blanche* to act as agents of change (Fergusson, 1994, p.95)

What kind of change? In time, after the civil service reforms came demand for reform of education. The idea that education had to become ‘more’ accountable—that there was a ‘crisis’ and ‘something needed to be done’ to bring about *change* (Morley and Rassool, 1999, p. 24)—was given an airing in the first of the Black Papers (1969) (Ball, 1990; Maclure, 1987). Then it was planted as a seed to grow in public consciousness by James Callaghan, Labour Prime Minister, when he gave his (now) famous ‘*Ruskin*’ speech, in 1976, urging a public ‘Great Debate’, regarding the way education might be better harnessed to the needs of the economy.¹⁹ That speech ushered in a new sociological, cultural and economic climate for educational change. With a new (Conservative) government,²⁰ the on-going demand for ‘more accountability’ in education found its political expression in the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and later in the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) (see Phillips and Furlong (2001) for further details relating to this period).

The new legislation had the intended effect of reducing the ‘discretionary areas of professional practice within educational institutions...whilst strengthening market and managerial controls’ (Esland *et al*, 1999, p.1). But ERA was the culmination of a trend that pre-existed the Conservatives gaining power. According to Gerald Grace, it was the

¹⁹ Political controversy surrounds the timing of Callaghan’s speech. See [Appendix 3](#), note 19.

²⁰ More historical detail relating to this period given in [Appendix 1](#).

development of *large* comprehensive schools (as part of the new structural and organizational changes being brought to secondary schooling in the 1960s and 1970s) that helped encourage the idea that a *managerial* ethos was appropriate for the running of a school. It was the sheer size and organizational complexity of such schools which 'gave impetus to the development of a management culture in schooling' (Grace, 1995, p.16). The head teacher of a large comprehensive now had to have *managerial* capacities and not just professional-administrative capacities (ibid). Gradually, it became *de rigueur* for a head teacher not to be thought of as a head *teacher* (Gunter, 2001, p.96) but rather, as a 'school *leader-manager* of a school (Gold, 2004; Reeves *et al*, 2003, p.133), one who furthers the overall programme of modernizing the public services.

What about higher education? Colin Bundy (2004, p. 166) pin-points the years 1981-85 as the high point for managerialism to establish itself within higher education policy: 'from the first Thatcher cuts to the Jarrett Report on efficiency'. The influence of Jarrett, he argues, 'still persists' today in the claim that:

universities have an endemic lack of external accountability...managerial effectiveness and operational efficiency.²¹

What about the 1990s? Turning our attention once again to secondary education, we find that these, too, were years of high managerial activity. A new political impetus for managerial modes of accountability was the 1992 Education Act, which grew out of John Major's 'Citizen Charter'. This helped usher in a 'consumer-based' approach to education and the beginning of the deliberate blurring of the line between *public* and *private*, as these terms had always been used in education. A DFEE booklet, *Education Means Business* (1994)—intended to publicize Private Finance Initiative (PFI) launched in 1992—aimed to inform the private sector about investment opportunities in educational institutions (Gunter, 1997, p.7).

²¹ Reed, cited in Bundy, (2004), p.166

The metamorphosis of one concept of educational accountability into another was nearly complete. Ofsted, a non-ministerial government department, established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992, replaced the old HMI and the LEA inspectorates which were seen as symbols of an older, defunct form of educational accountability. Then, soon after, with the publication of 'performance' ('league') tables of examination results, there finally emerged a concept of educational accountability, attuned to the new 'quasi' market culture. In line with neo-liberal thinking, parents were to make their 'choices' based on 'informed choice'. As the 'marketisation' of education gained ground, parents were conceived as proxy clients acting on behalf of their children—the new 'consumers'.²²

The New Labour government of 1997 saw no reason to dismantle the main public accountability framework set up by the Conservatives. It felt no disquiet about the displacement of older professional values by managerial values. Numerous new national 'attainment' targets were set for schools concerning examination and test results, exclusions and truancy rates. A raft of White Papers issued by HM Government in the 1990s had a significant effect on the reporting of issues relating to *standards*—standards by which government itself could be held to account. The 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act, for instance, set the framework within which government was able to determine the standards by which schools and teachers were to be judged—through the processes of 'performance-related pay' and 'continuing professional development' (see Pring, 2001a, p. 280 on this). We take such ideas for granted now but, at the time, these were *new controls* to be exercised and authorized by managers.

2.4 The triumph of managerialism

From the account I have just given above, which ranges over a period of roughly forty years, we see how—incrementally, through the decades of

²² See [Appendix 1](#) where the notion of 'quasi' markets is discussed; see also [Appendix 3](#), longer note 3(c), under **Introduction**, for a brief résumé of types of critique (found in the literature) of 'markets in education'.

reform—new conceptions of both public and educational accountability evolved. Riding on the back of the generally accepted idea that transparency is the *democratic* way to be accountable, managerialism has sought to maintain its title to legitimacy by insisting upon its *own specific form* of transparency, which it is claimed all government policy requires (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.66). (To be discussed further in the next chapter.) The promise was that there would now be an ‘objective’ public accountability system, neutral between all the competing ‘vested’ interests in education. Thus managerialism was able to enter into contexts that previously functioned without any managerial regulation. A seamless consensus position, reflecting this new understanding of public accountability, established itself as the *Zeitgeist* of (what Philip Bobbitt (2002) calls) our new ‘Market State’. The new consensus gave managers the *legitimizing authority* they needed, as well as the confident belief in their right to manage the process of change itself. Managerialism thus became acceptable to government as an instrument of policy. It continues to mirror, isomorphically, the functions, structures and aims of government.

As a result, the distinction is now blurred between ‘*management within government*’, and ‘*governance within management*’—and with it, the distinction between *managerial* and *public accountability*. In this way, the language of managerialism mirrors the kind of structural, institutional and cultural features that policy-makers wish to see promoted within educational institutions.²³ This language very subtly structures practical reasoning towards managerial ends: productivity and ‘efficiency gains’.²⁴

Another kind of mirroring takes place. To its advantage, the language of managerialism shares the language of democracy. It pursues ‘transparency’ through ‘openness’, ‘scrutiny’, and ‘disclosure’. Managerialism capitalizes on the rhetoric of democracy but without ever signing up to a robust form of democracy. It is true that ideas such as ‘deregulation’, ‘devolution’

²³ Student recruitment policies to comply with ‘government priorities’: see [Appendix 3](#), note 23.

²⁴ See [Appendix 3](#), note 24.

'distributed leadership' 'local management', 'partnerships', 'empowerment'—language common to both managerialism and democracy—will suggest a 'bottom-up', consultative model of management. But even though the rhetoric tells us that autonomy of decisional power and responsibility will reside in the local management of organisational institutions, contracts, targets, performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation systems continue *to govern* these subjects in their places of 'decisional power' ('governing-at-a-distance'), in order that they might 'enterprise themselves' (Rose, 1996, p.57).²⁵

NPM managers have been able to capitalize on the legitimacy which the rhetoric of democracy bestows on their own discourse, As 'executives', 'experts', 'advisors' or 'consultants', they are, to quote Adam Smith (see the citation that heads this chapter), the 'leaders' who now 'new-model the constitution'.

2.5 'Better management': The need for clear and explicit objectives

For reasons already manifest we see how a new political will—a will that is still in the ascendant—was able to come into existence and bring about the 'economic rationalization' of all public institutions. Those who are in positions of responsibility and make strategic planning decisions now have to orient themselves to prioritise economic, rather than social, personal or educational ideals (Hopwood, 1984, p. 171). The presumption is that 'management accounting'—that is, *managerial* accountability—will secure *public* accountability. For all intents and purposes, they are now seen as one and the same.

Is this equation right? Public accountability, it might be argued, should be neither reduced to managerial accountability nor equated with it. For public accountability involves much broader, more complex relationships than anything managerial. It involves relations between the electorate and

²⁵ See Wallace (1992, p. 167): accountability can devolve 'onto a small management group or team, who may operate a technocratic, hierarchical system of control in the name of local management.'

government, or even between Parliament and government (Stewart, 1984, p.30). But rather than pursue this point further here, it is more urgent for our purposes to revisit the time of the early public service reforms, and look once again at the confident claims made then, by the reformers: that NPM would bring about a 'better' form of management than previously existed.

The announced aim of *Next Steps* (mentioned briefly in 2.2), a publication from the government Efficiency Unit, set up in 1979, was:

to improve the quality and efficiency of government services through better management.²⁶

What did 'better management' mean here? *Better* management had by then become synonymous with 'management-by-objectives'. A key characteristic of management-by-objectives is to focus on 'the notion of... explicit, monitored, and optimized input-output relations' (McSweeney, 1996, p.215) designed to specify organizational objectives (Metcalf and Richards, 1984).

In order to understand more fully what was meant by 'management-by-objectives' we need to go back to the 1968 Report of the Fulton Committee. Its remit was to provide recommendations for Civil Service reform. Anticipating the FMI, fourteen years later, the Fulton Committee's notion of 'accountable' management entailed that 'management by accounting' became a constitutive component of an ideal of 'best management' (McSweeney, *ibid*). The Committee regarded its own recommendations for 'accountable management' both as an extension of management-by-objectives and superior to it. Wherever 'measurement of performance' was not possible, however, the committee urged the use of the principle of management-by-objectives (McSweeney, *ibid*, p.216). It was the adoption of this principle (see Recommendation No. 156, cited, below) that finally destroyed the traditional 'bureau-professional' model (Clarke and Newman, 1997) within the Civil Service (as described in Section IV, Introduction).

²⁶ *Next Steps*, Efficiency Unit, cited and discussed in Common (1995)

I set out, below, some key points in the Report which show the framework upon which the ideas of 'managerial control' and 'management by accounting' (see No. 153, below, in particular) were erected.

Extracts from: *The Civil Service Vol. 1, Report of the Committee 1966-68*²⁷

ACCOUNTABLE AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

...150. Accountable Management means holding individuals and units responsible for performance measured as objectively as possible...units where output can be measured against costs or other criteria...

151. ...Accountable management requires the identification of ...those parts of the organisation that form convenient groupings (or "centres"), to which costs can be precisely allocated...We regard this as essential to systematic management control.

152. ... standards of achievement by which their performance can be judged...

153. Wherever measures of achievement can be established in quantitative or financial terms, and individuals held responsible for output and costs, accountable units should be set up ... information...could be used to measure the comparative efficiency of different units... units [such as these] have been widely developed as an instrument of managerial control in progressive industry.

...154. ...The manager of each command ...should be held accountable for performance against budgets, standards of achievement and other tests...should set up sub-systems of responsibility and delegated authority on similar lines.

...156. It is still, however, important that those engaged ... should know what their objectives are and that their performance should be judged by their results. The principle to be applied here is management-by-objectives.

THE DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES UNIT

...163. ... the maintenance of the highest standards of management...[the] need to devise the tight machinery for ensuring that each department ...conducts a regular audit of its efficiency... The use of outside consultants could help...

In spite of all the fashions and styles²⁸ which managerialism has gone through in the subsequent decades since the Committee met, everything we experience now, decades later, bears the marks of these early recommendations. Witness, for example: the need to work to explicit objectives (No. 156); the need to measure 'performance' (No. 150); the demand for audit and efficiency assessment exercises (No.163); the

²⁷ HMSO Cmnd 3638. Chairman, Lord Fulton

²⁸ See: 'The yin and yang of management', *Financial Times* p.10, August 1st 2005

expectation that 'systematic management control' and 'quantitative measurement' (Nos.151,153) will provide accountability; the value placed on 'outside' management consultants (No. 163).

Well, that was in the 1960s. What about now? Even though new theories and discourses of management keep replacing older ones (the promise is always that *now* real 'excellence' or real 'quality' is within sight), the 'wheel', as many commentators remark, is constantly re-invented. For instance, in a book called *Performance Management: The New Realities*, we read the following:

Performance management arrived in the late 1980s partly as a reaction to the negative aspects of merit-rating and management by objectives...it at first incorporated many of the elements of earlier approaches; for example, rating, objective-setting and review, performance pay...Conceptually... performance management is significantly different from previous approaches, although in practice the term has often simply replaced 'performance appraisal', just as 'human resource management' has frequently been substituted for 'personnel management' without any discernible change in approach—lots of distinctions, not many differences. Performance management may often be no more than new wine in old bottles... (Armstrong and Baron, 1999, p. 47)

Here we are told that the idea of 'performance management' is *meant* to have superseded that of 'management-by-objectives', but 'in practice' there are many overlaps between the two modes of management models—'lots of distinctions, not many differences'. Let us see if we can make sense of this.

There are a number of ways of defining 'performance management'. It can be defined (a) as a *set of practices* implemented by managers aimed at influencing the behaviours and outcomes of individuals and organizations, or (b) as a *range of managerial techniques* to influence individuals and groups at the organizational level, or (c) as an *approach to improving professional practice* (Reeves *et al*, 2002, p.3). But, parallel to these three options there are two other ways to understand performance management. The first approach concentrates on the *outcomes* and the second on the *behaviours* that a practitioner will need to display as 'performance indicators'. Thus we have:

- setting goals and targets defined in quantifiable terms which the individual and or group must achieve;
- delineating specific sets of behaviours to be displayed.

The next step is to combine these two measures by specifying the behaviours that lead to ‘positive outcomes’. In this way a means is created both for assessing performance and for arriving at a basis for improving it (ibid, p.5):

- express performance targets in terms of measurable outputs, accountabilities and training/learning targets;
- use formal appraisal procedures as ways of communicating performance requirements which are set on a regular basis;

What is remarkable about the prescriptions above is that exactly the same kind of language is at work here as that which we found expressed in the Fulton Committee Report, decades earlier. There is still a need for *explicitness*—in the form of clearly defined ‘outputs’, targets, measuring performance, etc. We still have evidence of a language with its own specialised meanings (see Ball, 1990a, p.156, on this).

According to some commentators, it also seems to make little difference which theory of management presents itself at any moment. *Whichever* particular theory of management is in fashion:

NPM as managerialism is obsessed with objectives; it resurrects management-by-objectives... Rhodes (1997, p.55).

The conclusion Rhodes reaches here—that managerialism is *still* ‘obsessed’ with ‘objectives’—throws light on something that Thrupp and Willmott (2003, p.120) say: when one starts investigating education management literature, ‘it does not divide up into neat areas’. Does it divide at all? No, there is an ‘inter-relatedness’ close to convergence, between:

strategic management, self-management, leadership, vision, organizational theory, effectiveness, improvement, TQM...strategic planning, and development planning (Thrupp and Willmott ibid, p. 57).

What conclusions can be drawn to round up our discussion here? Despite a gap of approximately forty years, that which remains intact throughout the whole managerial revolution is the ideal of ‘performativity’ (Lyotard, 1984) to which all must aspire—an ideal against which agents will be measured and judged (Elliott, 2001). This is how agents are expected to show they are acting rationally and publicly accountable. Take away the idea of explicitness, and the whole system of public accountability would cave in.

In the chapters which follow, we shall have an opportunity to decide whether *explicitness* is really as essential to the idea of *public rationality* as the apologist for managerialism claims it is.

2.6 Managerialism: does it function as an ideology?

Stewart Ranson (2003, p. 469) asks how the ‘intensifying regime of performativity’ is to be explained. ‘Organizational’ theorists provide an explanation, he says, why there is a tendency for institutions to develop a ‘design type’, as if a ‘gravitational pull’ were at work:

Institutions...find it difficult to move out of a dominant design mould. They become captured by the capacity of a system to institutionalize prevailing assumptions and ‘myths’ and culturally entrenched rules.

Similarly, institutional economics, concerned mainly with agency at the ‘meso’ level of institutional life, explicates the relation between authority relations (management) and goal-oriented activity (of individual agents) by showing how patterns of incentives tend to shape social action and contribute to agents constructing meanings and establishing norms.²⁹ This is fine as far as it goes. But the thing we want to know is how, at a certain juncture, the ‘meso’, the ‘macro’ and the ‘micro’ levels of social life are all ‘serially related’ (Ball, 1990b).

²⁹ See Clarke and Newman (1997), p.86; Powell and DiMaggio (1991); Tsoukas (1994)

So Ranson's question still remains: how do we explain the 'intensifying' regimes of performativity? Teachers submit to a '*force majeure*', it has been suggested (Fergusson, 1994, p.113), a force which holds one to the demands of, say, 'a 'transparency' or an 'audit' review, a 'research assessment exercise' 'development plan', etc. 'The force' is not so much all the extra work the bureaucratic demands bring as the pressure *to comply* with the demands. In the act of compliance is felt 'the force'.

But what is the nature of this *force*? Some critics of the present educational status quo, in answer to this question, will claim that managerialism functions as an ideology—that it is an *ideological* force. Is there an argument, though, to back up this claim? Let us see.

Bottery (2000, p. 63) urges us to 'note...the ideological...orientation' of managerialism:

It is economic, it is directive, it is controlling, it sees human beings as resources for its defined ends...it uses the language and ideas of private business organization, and in so doing facilitates their assimilation of public and educational sector concepts.

Habermas, like Bottery, makes a connection between *language* and *ideology*: language always has the potential (he says) to be 'a medium of domination and social force, the medium of ideology *par excellence*'.³⁰ Habermas's point gains force when we consider that managerial discourse, according to Ball, has the potential to function and *to influence*— on three levels:

[the first discourse], 'professional management'...relates ...to the production of school management plans...it is...context-free...it concentrates upon the business of *education* rather than education as a *business*...It divorces management practices from values...It is technically oriented...The second discourse... 'financial management'... begins with a concern with balancing the books...with doing educationally what can be afforded...There is a close relationship ... [with] the third discourse, which I call 'entrepreneurial management'. Here the market is to the fore; image, hype and PR, and competition, diversification and income generation are prominent in the managers' lexicon (Ball, 1994, pp. 67-8).

³⁰ Habermas, cited in Thompson and Held (1982), p. 287; see also Fairclough (1991).

For some critics such as Ball, it is precisely the way in which managerial discourse monopolises so many different levels of organizational life that is so educationally offensive. It is 'imperialistic' (Ball, 1990a, p.157); it has established a 'new discursive regime... with ...new forms of authority' (Ball, 1990b, p.18). Its ideological influence, when linked to notions like 'accountability', school 'effectiveness' or 'improvement' should not be underestimated (Ball, 1990a, p. 162).

2.7 But what is an ideology?

So there are those who *say* that managerialism is ideological in nature, but it is still not clear what is exactly intended by this. Terry Eagleton (1991, pp.1-3), for instance, identifies at least seventeen senses in which ideology can be understood, some of which are not even compatible!³¹ Various interpretations of ideology, in fact, are available and some of them complicate, rather than illuminate.³² But one thing remains relatively uncontroversial: when 'ideology' is understood to have 'pejorative' connotations—defective claims to knowledge (Giddens, 1987, p. 269)—it is usually contrasted with that other, quite different meaning of ideology which is often claimed to be 'neutral': simply, a 'system of ideas'.³³

What we are mainly interested in then, presumably, when people criticise managerialism as an ideology, is ideology in the pejorative sense of the term, the sense usually associated with Marx's own use of the term.³⁴ But even that is not without complications. For the Marxian idea of 'false consciousness' would either need to be scrapped or re-worked. One who uses managerial discourse is not necessarily being duped by the reified social relations that are constructed—as is the case, supposedly, in false consciousness. But let's not depart altogether from Marx. For his use of the

³¹ See also Williams (1988) for an overview.

³² See Goodwin (1987), p. 22.

³³ as first introduced by Destutt de Tracy in 1796.

³⁴ Marx and Engels (1965) [1846], p. 37.

term helps illuminate why the notion of ideology is so often appealed to as a tool of critique.

Commentators warn about the ambiguity, 'myths' and 'legends' which have arisen around Marx's work relating to ideology,³⁵ but, in so far as we can grasp a sense of what he meant, we know that for him ideology is bound up with the idea that class exploitation can remain unacknowledged by the very ones who are being exploited. So, drawing on Marxian exegesis, ideas such as 'masking', 'distortion', 'illusion' or 'deceptiveness' immediately become relevant. This is the way in which Ronald Barnett (2003) appears to use the concept 'ideology' when he describes the many ideologies (ibid, p. 1) which have entered the life of a university. A 'pernicious' ideology is one which 'distorts the conversations of the university' (ibid. p.73):

...what used to be the normal rhythms of academic life allowing due consideration to matters that came before it, are now dissolved...the market creeps surreptitiously into the collective subconscious (p. 72).

Barnett's reference to a 'pernicious' ideology resonates with the work of those writers who make use of the idea of *hegemony* to elucidate the ideological nature of managerialism.³⁶ For Raymond Williams, hegemony is:

a dominant system of meaning and values... not merely abstract but... organized and lived... hegemony is not to be understood at the level of mere opinion or manipulation. It is a whole body of practices and expectations...³⁷

Now we start to understand better what is meant when managerialism is described as a *force majeure*. As conceived in terms of hegemony, the 'force' in question simply *is* the experiencing of a 'whole body of practices and expectations', something difficult to resist. The ideology of managerialism inveigles itself into the lived experiences of agents, their practices and their practical reason. It lays down a normative framework for what is to count as 'valuable knowledge, who knows it, and who is empowered' (Clarke *et al*, 2000, p.9). Within that framework the 'force' can threaten, moreover.

³⁵ See for example Morrison (1995); McCarney (2005)

³⁶ Grace, discussed in Thrupp and Willmott (2003), p.170 *ff*.

³⁷ Williams, cited in Bailey (1984), p.211

Apologists will probably reject the claim made that managerialism is ideological, and maintain that it is 'neutral', citing such things as the 'impartiality' of league tables now available to public scrutiny. That claim is controversial, however. Setting visible targets and measuring teachers' work against standards to demonstrate 'effectiveness' may give 'the scientific aura of neutrality and impersonality' (Bottery, 2000; see also Rizvi, 1990, p.301). But, as MacIntyre (1985, p.77) points out, the value of short term 'effectiveness' depends on the value of the goals it actually pursues or promotes. In this connection, Sharon Gewirtz's remarks are worth noting:

... discourses of post-welfarist education policy, like markets, target-setting, performance monitoring and inspection are not neutral...these discourses have embedded within them a set of values about what education is, and is for... [T]hey function as powerful disciplinary mechanisms for transforming ...teacher subjectivities and the culture and values of schooling (Gewirtz 2002, p. 21).

Fred Inglis (2000, p. 301) observes, cuttingly: 'New Public Management professes itself to be free from ideology', but '[w]hat we have...had better be understood in order to be rationally criticised':

It is... American-influenced, heavily ideological...a doctrine promulgated by the army of... conviction-consultants ...the helots of these systems think in terms of silly slogans to be wastefully scrawled on flipcharts at mind-numbing conferences ...

Inglis's 'conviction-consultants' are in the same business as Adam Smith's 'man of system', enamoured with his 'ideal plan' (see again the citation which heads this chapter). Smith talks about the 'sophistry', manifested by an 'arrogant' government, when leaders set up their own 'supreme' standards of judgement.

2.8 Self-justifying power

Thrupp and Willmott (2003, p.124) comment on the *dirigiste* tone of the managerial texts that endorse the public sector modernizing reform agenda. Under the banner of 'continuous improvement'—'improvement', as

conceived in managerial terms—‘incessant change’ will be urged. To try to absent oneself from the reform agenda would indicate a lack of professionalism—as if one were uninterested in *improvement*. The rhetoric of change leaves no discursive space in which to articulate dissent:

‘We’ are spoken for as ... participants in a process of change: ‘our’ survival success or growth is aligned to that of the nation and the organization (Clarke and Newman 1997, p.53).

In this way, *change* is represented as being ‘in everyone’s interest’. An ‘*apparent* unity of interests against the old ways’ is thereby established (ibid, p.52, original emphasis):

To refuse this identification is difficult, since the narratives do not permit positions of scepticism, uncertainty or doubt (ibid, p. 53).

‘Even to suggest that current policies might not be the best way of doing better, or asking whether we are clear what we mean by doing better [is] too often regarded as treachery’, Whitty (2002, p.137) once wrote, reflecting on how difficult it was to find a space for honest appraisal of educational policy making. A philosopher might suggest that the problem identified here—the unavailability of a ‘normative space’³⁸ for genuine appraisal or criticism—is one that is bound to happen when the distinction collapses between ‘*it is better*’ and ‘*we think it is better*’.³⁹

In this seemingly closed, self-justifying educational world that Whitty reveals, what is at work? There are two bleak alternatives: You’re either with us or you’re against us! What has happened to the ideal of democracy, that different views should be heard? If value-pluralism is to have any purchase in a liberal democracy, then there is bound to be value-conflict. Different policies will represent different choices between values that become rivals for our attention. If this is so, then liberal democracy should make room to discuss them. It should strive to make room for competing accounts of *responsibility* and *accountability*.

³⁸ Scheffler, cited in McLaughlin (2000)

³⁹ Putnam, criticizing ‘cultural relativism’, cited in Heyting (2004) p. 498

2.9 Ideology and the question of legitimation

Eagleton is interested in the process by which an ideology acquires *legitimation* in public consciousness. There are 'strategies', he says, which help mark out an ideology:

...The term ideology ...would seem to make reference not only to belief systems, but to questions of *power*...What kind of reference, though? ...[T]he most common answer is to claim that ideology has to do with legitimating the power of a dominant social group or class...[T]he process of legitimation would seem to involve at least six strategies. A dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself. Such 'mystification'...frequently takes the form of masking or suppressing social conflicts...In any ideological formation, all six of these strategies are likely to interact in complex ways (Eagleton, 1991, p.5).

Within managerialism, all six of these strategies can be detected. Witness: formal criteria or performance indicators for what are to count as, say, the 'effective school', 'good practice' or the 'visionary leader'.... etc., are all designed to be *universally* applicable. These managerial constructs 'downplay'—or, in Eagleton's own words, '*naturalize*' and '*obscure*'—the local, socio-economic contexts in which schools operate (Power and Whitty, 1999, p.539; Thrupp and Willmott, 2003, pp.63,125) and the moral and intellectual initiative of those who serve them. 'Rival forms of thought' are '*excluded*'. Ideas which do not '*promote*' managerialism are '*denigrated*' or 'suppressed'.

On such evidence, we might conclude that managerialism is indeed a pernicious ideology. In truth, managerial modes of accountability which incorporate principles of NPM have to be understood by reference to the particular public rationality upon which they are based. That rationality is suffused with metaphysical, ontological and epistemological assumptions (some of which will be discussed in later chapters) regarding human nature, motivation and knowledge. These assumptions are not above question. But anyone who is forced to conform to the prevailing public rationality is

expected to believe that *nothing else* can compete with managerial expertise.

For a manager is now:

...the guardian of the overall purposes of the organization, and therefore it [will be wrong] that another group of staff should be able to work to a different set of priorities (Pollitt, 1990, p.131)

As 'guardian' of the 'overall purposes of the organization', a manager has 'the right to manage' (Pollitt, *ibid*, pp. 2-3). Adam Smith's 'man of system' will make the same claim.

Michael Power (1994a, p.303) claims that the rationality claim of managerial audit practices, deployed by governments for purposes of quality control, has attained the status of a 'cultural logic' that 'is greater than the sum of the practices it unites'. He points to the difficulties of trying to criticise these practices: 'The force of this 'logic' is such that to be against [the idea of] audit appears to be to support non-accountability' (*ibid*, p.304). It is this 'logic', this particular rationality, now so persistently dominant in education, which has identified itself subtly—and, now we see, ideologically—with that which is unsatisfactory in the political status quo. The place one might have wanted as a public space—the 'breathing space' in which respite from the forces of managerial accountability and the neo-liberal rationalities of government might be found—is entirely inaccessible.

In this chapter, we have seen how it has been possible for the totalizing power of managerial rationality to have gained *legitimacy* in a democracy. Power (1994a) puts it like this: once managerial audit and financial accountability systems were understood as a 'distinctive modality' or 'rationality' of government' (Power, *ibid*, pp.299, 302), a belief was created in the *de jure* legitimacy of managerial modes of accountability. In effect, this has meant that opportunities to base reform of public services on quite *different* models of industrial or organisational practice have been ruled out.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See [Appendix 3](#), note 40.

In section 2.2, I suggested that it was the ‘elective affinities’ between managerialism and neo-liberalism which made it so easy for managerial modes of accountability to acquire this status of legitimacy they now enjoy. And in 2.4, I developed the idea that, because managerialism dovetails so well with present economic neo-liberal economic ideology, this enables it to be nodded in through the democratic process.

Earnest Gellner (1974, p.29) writes in *Legitimation of Belief*:

the issue of legitimacy is not restricted to political institutions, but arises...fundamentally, in other areas...there tends to be an interdependence between legitimations offered in one sphere and another...

What Gellner calls an ‘interdependence between legitimations’ we can observe everyday—in the close relations that exist between the ‘political institutions’ of government and managerialism:

The re-making of the state towards a more dispersed form enlarged the space for management and provided new legitimation for increasing managerial discretion...Managerialism thus developed a tighter ‘fit’ with the changing organisational structures and fields of relationships that characterised the dispersed systems of the new state form. Managerialism...provided the...internal discipline and discretion and...performance audit that were identified as the conditions of accountability to central government (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.60).

Ball (1990a, p.162) also talks about ‘fit’—how the disciplinary powers and language of management are:

...reworked into versions of surveillance and monitoring that ‘fit’ into the preferred teacher discourse of professionalism. In effect, teachers are trapped into taking responsibility for their own ‘disciplining’ through schemes of self-appraisal, school improvement, and institutional development. Indeed, teachers are urged to believe *that their commitment to such processes will make them more professional* (my italics).

Thus the ‘fit’ between managerialism and post-welfarist, neo-liberal ideology is as tight as it can be: state bureaucracy represents the status quo as much as the party in government does.

At first, when it was appropriated from private business management methods and industrial, systems-operational theory, managerialism first stood in the shadow of a neo-liberal political ideology. Now it is confident enough to stand in full sunlight, as an ideology in its own right. It throws its own shadows.⁴¹

Between the *idea* of managerialism and the various *acts* of all those who have to conform to managerial edicts, lies a system of public accountability that can distort, by its own rigid system imperatives and its own ideological pressures, the practical knowledge and judgement of those whom we have to trust to act in the public interest. That will be the topic of the next chapter.

In this chapter we have described the long trajectory from the early public service reforms to the status quo as of now—a trajectory which starts with demands for ‘more accountability’ and ‘better management’ and ends with a formidable, irresistible and ideological ‘*force majeure*’. Could James Callaghan have ever foreseen how the ‘Great Debate’, which he initiated back in 1976—and hoped would generate ideas for education to become ‘more accountable’—would lead to the *industry* which we call ‘Educational Management’ and which, in the 21st century, now stands symbolically for the idea of educational accountability?

⁴¹ T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*: “Between the idea/ And the reality/ Between the motion/ And the act/ Falls the shadow”.

Chapter 3

The lure of the explicit: managerial modes of accountability and the ideal of transparency

...events, processes and experiences in organizations are rarely transparent, self-evident or completely fixed, but are intrinsically ambiguous and therefore open-ended in the interpretations that can be attached to them.

Haridimos Tsoukas¹

3.1 The pursuit of transparency

According to Vattimo (1992), in *The Transparent Society*, 'everything' has the potential to become an object of communication, and we are guided by an ideal of 'self-transparency', both for ourselves, and for society. In his essay, *Exactitude*, the novelist, Calvino (1996) is concerned about the 'loss of form' or 'substance' in the 'post-modern' world and hankers for what he calls 'a cult of exactitude'. Without 'exactitude', he writes—'a well-defined and well-calculated plan for the work in question'—we risk 'diluting meanings' (ibid, pp. 56-57).

When such ideas are conjoined with further, would-be *democratic* demands for 'transparency' it seems that there is no evident limit for the need for precision, clarity and explicitness—in a word—*transparency*. For the democratic demand for transparency is tied to the ability of agents to provide public justifications, 'given the bias that can result when decisions are taken for undisclosed reasons' (Hood, 2006, p. 222). This demand requires:

at a minimum that those in positions of authority own up to or [be] prepared to articulate honest reasons... (Blacker, 2003, p.1).

¹ Tsoukas (1999), p. 10

Through such thoughts as these the link comes to be forged between the ideal of transparency and the idea of accountability, in at least one of its meanings—that of ‘being brought to account’: providing information of what one is doing/has done in relation to goals that have been set or to legitimate expectations that others may have of one. Indeed, the societal pressure to present oneself in as explicit a way as possible has now acquired the status of a public virtue. Only knowledge that is codifiable, ‘statable in explicit propositional form’, and ‘open to sale in the market as ‘expertise’, has the chance of counting as a ‘non-rival good accessible to all’ (O’Neill, 1998, p. 150). Under conditions where the explicit is always valued over the implicit, though, that which is variously referred to as: ‘implicit’, ‘tacit’, ‘inarticulate’ or ‘inexplicit’ knowledge, will appear a less and ‘less likely candidate for a public good’ (O’Neill, *ibid*). Even Michael Polanyi, in his efforts to explicate the idea of ‘tacit’ or ‘personal’ knowledge’,² acknowledges that it lacks what is usually referred to as the ‘objective’ character of explicit knowledge. It is a ‘doing of our own’ (Polanyi, 1958, p.12).

It was precisely the proposal ‘new public’ managers made to introduce ‘objectivity’—a ‘neutral accountability technology’ (Rizvi, 1990, p.301)—within the public services (to monitor ‘quality’ and ‘standards’) that provided the *legitimizing authority* they needed to act as ‘change managers’ (see again, Chapter 2, section 2.3). The promise was that there would now be ‘transparency’ through setting visible targets and measuring them against standards to demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness. This demand for ‘transparent’ forms of *public accountability* was applied in due course to *educational accountability*. Introduced on a small scale in 1992, by 1993, for the first time in British educational history, school inspections were conducted by reference to explicit and public available criteria and performance tables, on which the schools and teachers could be publicly judged (Furlong, 2001, p.130).³ Being ‘transparent’ in accounting terms—that is to say, providing facts about numbers, statistics and league tables for public scrutiny—was the

² For more on Polanyi, see [Appendix 3](#), note 2

³ An inspection regime, OFSTED, replaced the old HMI school inspection system. Quantitative forms of measurement as a means of assessing quality were introduced.

antidote to distrust: having information through ‘measuring’ was seen as a way of taking back control from the ‘mysterious world of the professionals’ (Boyle, 2000, pp. 48-49).

At this point the critic may say: I have no difficulty with the idea that, given the large amounts of public money spent on education, there must be public accountability.⁴ But is it really true that we must pursue *explicitness* as our public duty? Is demonstrating their accountability through ‘transparency’ really the distinguishing mark of a person who recognizes the proper demands of public accountability? Is incomplete *inarticulacy* about what one knows really such a failing?

If the notion of ‘public accountability’ is contemplated only in the abstract, timeless, decontextualised way in which we might contemplate the abstract idea of ‘justice’ or of ‘liberty’—or if the idea of transparency is not anchored to anything specific—then the demand for ‘total’ transparency will seem intuitively plausible and correct. For we carry about with us the presumption that *with* transparency and explicitness truth will not be concealed and public trust will be assured:

...there is a greater requirement of explicitness of reasoning in public morality than in private (Hampshire, 1991, p.50).

In the same way, Nietzsche’s sketch of ‘the truthful man’: ‘simple, transparent, not in contradiction with himself...without wrinkle...concealment, form,’⁵ reminds us of the links that connect *truth*, *transparency*, *trust* and *accountability*—when these concepts are thought of in abstract terms. But accountability in the abstract is not our concern. This chapter is concerned with three main questions: (i) what might happen in practice when an *a priori* theory of accountability, such as managerialism enforces, is laid as a pre-formed template over various organizational practices? (ii) what happens when that template forces a particular meaning

⁴ See Brighouse (2000), p. 31: ‘Inefficiency is wasteful...waste is bad... it constitutes an opportunity cost.’

⁵ Nietzsche, cited in Desjarlais (1996), p. 893

onto 'transparent'? (iii) what happens to the practical knowledge and judgement of agents when they are subjected to the rationality of managerialism? Later on, we shall discuss the detrimental effects which such conformity may have on personal responsibility.

There are critics of managerialism such as Shore and Wright (2000, p.77) who say that an abstract, *a priori* model of accountability—such as we see in a managerial model of accountability, with its prescriptions and procedural rules as to what *counts* as 'quality', excellence, 'good practice', 'visionary leadership', etc.—cannot help but be 'coercive'. They say that agents become complicit in the ends at which the managers aim:

...caught in a disciplinary system whose negative characteristics they are actively reproducing and yet over which they feel increasingly powerless (Shore and Wright, *ibid*).

But what sort of freedom do Shore and Wright seek which would prevent the 'powerlessness' they describe? To an apologist for managerialism their view will be unrealistic—an existentialist fantasy, even. It is just not possible, the apologist will say, to think that one can *feel free* in all contexts which demand decision-making at work. They will point out that the classic distinction between 'private' and 'public' morality (see Hampshire, 1991; Montefiore and Vines (1999) on this) is based precisely on the old familiar dilemma which arises when there is a conflict between one's own ('private') view of how things should be done and what one's ('public') duty—'role' responsibility—demands.

But the apologist has not got it quite right. The so-called 'private-public' morality dilemma does not map on accurately enough to the problem Shore and Wright identify. The apologist is missing their point. For it is not as if they are recommending the abrogation of contractual 'role' responsibilities or even suggesting that the concept of duty has no place in an accountability system. The problems they point to bear essentially on the practices of managerial-audit regimes and the power these regimes enjoy (Hatcher, 2005)

as well as the particular construction these practices put on the idea of duty itself—when one is both ‘agent and subject within the regime of performativity in the academy’ (Ball, 2001a, p.214).

3.2 Freedom and responsibility

Michael Shattock worries when audit or ‘performance reviews’ reduce to management ‘faddism’ or ‘box-ticking’ (Shattock, 2006, p.138). Managerial ‘reviews’, he says, should be ‘integral to strategy formation and... not undertaken for their own sake’ (p.14)—otherwise ‘institutional integrity’ may be compromised (p. 128). Although there is something right in this criticism, the emphasis is unfortunate. In such situations, the thing that matters (and matters no doubt for the integrity of the institution) is the integrity of all the *persons* involved. What matters is the freedom of agents to act responsibly—in accordance with the virtue of *responsibleness*—to be free to reject the kind of activities that pay only ‘lip-service’ to accountability. Here I take the view that freedom, responsibility and ethical activity are not separate, but overlapping aspects of human activity. For *responsibleness* in action might require one to put whatever are the established rules, procedures or standards in question (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 313). The fear, as one higher education lecturer says, is that, when ‘corporate-style human resource management’ is introduced into educational practices:

These concepts can quickly be used by management as a stick to beat us with. We need to avoid a system whereby we become parrots speaking and dancing ...marketing speak.⁶

It is coercion of a psychological nature, then, that seems to be the problem: allowing oneself ‘to be manipulated... a tool enabling others to achieve their ends’ undermines both one’s sense of self-respect and one’s capacities for deliberation and judgement (Govier, 1993, pp. 110-111).

⁶Report on the detrimental effects of managerial practices on university academic life, ‘Public Agenda’, *The Times*, 27th March, 2007, p. 6.

So the freedom critics of managerialism have in mind when they refer to managerial *coercion*, I suggest, is one of the kinds that John Lucas (1980, pp. 198-9) discusses, namely, the freedom which gives people, *if* they are appointed to a particular job, the *discretion* to decide to do that which they think fit. *Freedom*, in these sorts of situations, Lucas suggests, is not an unbridled, or ‘unfettered’ freedom—to choose ‘as one pleases’. It is, in fact, the sort of freedom with which we are quite familiar—the kind upon which the pre-conditions for a ‘free’ society and the rationale of the legal justice system in any democracy are based (ibid). Personal responsibility or responsibility is a basic presupposition for any system of legal justice.

What do I mean by *personal responsibility/responsibility*? I understand the same as Hans Jonas (1984) understands by his notion of ‘feeling responsible’. *Feeling responsible*, in his sense, is to be distinguished from the responsibility ‘that concerns...the *ex post facto* account of what has been done’ (Jonas, ibid, p. 93) — the responsibility of being answerable after the fact. Instead of facing backwards, Jonas’s notion of responsibility is concerned with ‘the forward determination of what is to be done’:

...I feel responsible, not in the first place for my conduct and its consequences but for the *matter* that has a claim on my acting...[T]he welfare of others ...obligates to actions not otherwise contemplated at all. (Jonas, ibid, original emphasis, p. 92).

‘Actions not otherwise contemplated’. Jonas’s phrase imports the idea of *open-endedness*. The concept of responsibility or responsibility that emerges is quite different from anything we shall find in a managerial model of accountability with its need for precise, pre-specified objectives or targets to measure, assess and evaluate agents’ competence.

Consider the requirement for teachers to be precise and explicit in their practice about ‘outcomes’. This duty to be explicit results from the neo-liberal, ideological pressures discussed in the last chapter which have made organizations transform themselves into an auditable commodity—‘one structured to conform to the need to be monitored *ex post*’ (Power, 1994b,

p.8). Nothing could be more alien to Jonas's forward-looking, open-ended, notion of 'feeling responsible'. It is just as alien to what Shore and Wright seek. A major feature of managerial forms of audit, they point out:

...is the extent to which it reshapes in its own image those organizations that are monitored. What is required is auditee compliance with the norms and procedures demanded by inspectors (ibid, p. 72).

'Auditee compliance' is *coercive*, they argue, because, even though it is claimed that the standards against which departments and individuals are to be assessed 'are those they set for themselves' (ibid, p.72), the processes of managerial audit, as Power (1994b, p. 33) puts it, 'do as much to *construct* definitions of quality and performance as to monitor them' (my italics). According to Etzioni (1961, p. 138-9), 'coercive' organizations are organizations 'in which instrumental communication...predominates' and there is reliance on '[b]lue-prints, technical textbooks, and experts' directives'. In such 'coercive' cultures it is difficult to see how there can be personal responsibility of the kind Lucas and Jonas bring to our attention. (In Chapter 4, we shall draw again on Lucas for further dimensions of 'responsibleness' and 'discretion'.)

The relationship between freedom and responsibility is, of course, notoriously complex. We still lack firm answers to some ancient philosophical questions that relate to these matters. My sole concern, though, here is to point to the Kantian idea, elucidated by John McDowell, that freedom is a necessary condition and source for responsible agency. Practical reason is not to be thought of as being merely compatible with freedom but, rather, as constitutive of it (McDowell, 1996, p.5). It is connected also with non-coercion—'negative liberty'—as understood by Isaiah Berlin (1967): 'Coercion implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I could otherwise act...The defence of liberty consists in the 'negative' goal of warding off interference' (Berlin, 1967, pp.142,146).

But it might be argued here that 'non-interference' (in Berlin's sense) just does not make sense when applied to teachers: it may not always be

possible, desirable or even feasible for teachers to be the only ones to decide 'directly' what 'attainments' their pupils/students are to achieve (Davis, 1998, p.25; see also White, 1976, p.64); autonomy can be legitimately curtailed. I think that what Shore and Wright have in mind, however, is something like the following. The problem at present is that teachers are held to account, not simply for pre-specified *outcomes* and *results*, but also for demonstrating that they have adhered to certain *principles of procedure*⁷ (e.g., by completing audit or evaluation checklists, or by following 'recommendations' for methods of 'good practice', or by adhering to 'guidelines' for 'quality control', etc.)—as a way of *proving* that those outcomes and results have been successfully achieved. (That is how 'success' is now understood.)

By making teaching practices increasingly prescriptive the 'managerial' model thus 'interferes' on two levels: by stipulating not only the 'ends' but the 'means' (Kogan, 1986, p.75-77). A paradigm example of this model defines:

education accountability as responsibility for identifying and measuring educational outcomes and using information about these outcomes in decision-making...Teachers' methods [are] assessed against success and costs. In the process, goals, objectives, needs assessment ...evaluation and recommendations... [are] linked into a continuing cycle... 'delivery systems' [are] analysed...methods and techniques...[are] drawn up.

To those policy makers trained in management theory, all this might make sense. But for others, this 'managerial' model has led to a view of *teaching* (understood in a generic sense) which must be understood in 'cause and effect' terms (Watkins, 2005, p. 10-11): *if* the right (i.e., 'effective') strategies are put in place *then* improvement will take place; *if* more students take more tests *then* the standard of education should rise, and so on. For those who do not see virtue in the managerial approach and think that one of the chief professional attributes a teacher may possess is having an awareness that the link between learning and teaching is fragile—sometimes uncertain and without a fixed end—then this cause and effect model is inhibitive. Shore and

⁷ Sockett (1980) draws a distinction between teachers *being held to account for outcomes/results* and teachers *being called to account for the principles* according to which they engage in their professional practice.

Wright feel powerless because they find themselves having to act in ways that do not accord with their professional vision of themselves as *educators*.

So what teachers appear to lack now is a *pedagogical* form of ‘negative’ liberty. Bernard Williams (2001, p. 9), echoing Berlin, suggests that a crucial element of having liberty is the idea of not being in someone else’s power. Williams offers us a link to the problem which Shore and Wright identify—‘increasingly powerless’ in the face of the demands of managerial and audit regimes. It is difficult to act on the basis of judgement in ways that ‘are not determined or scripted’ by others (Hansen, 2001, p.48).

At this point, we need to understand better the conception of practical rationality upon which managerialism is grounded. What kind of rationality is it that generates the kind of coerciveness and the ‘routinized compliance’ (Gleeson and Husbands, 2003) we have been discussing?

To make a start on this, we shall now revert to one of the main tenets of the managerial model of accountability which we touched on briefly in Chapter 2, namely, the need for the inner workings of public service practices to be *rationalized* so that they become ‘transparent’—transparent for the ‘rituals of verification’ of audit and performance management systems (Power 1997). According to the project of rationalization, education, as a public institution, not only has to be explicit about how it spends its money but it must also show it provides value for the money it receives (Harvey and Knight, 1999, p. 233). Managerialism plays its part here by ‘creating criteria of performance and rules of accountability’ that link funding to ‘quality’—ostensibly, ‘to ensure the automatic improvement of efficiency and effectiveness’; non-academic criteria and accounting procedures will dominate decision-making (ibid, pp.234, 236). So, under the guise of ‘economic rationalization’ managerialism thus imposes its *own* conception of accountability on education. In practice, this equates to: ‘a desire to treat education as a product that can be continually improved whilst lowering ...cost’ (ibid, p.236).

The *rationalization project* (henceforth: RP) was the economic response to meet a political demand: the pressure on government to deal with competing claims for budgetary considerations. But was it the right *educational* response to such a demand? In the face of the immense sums now spent on educational consultants, quangos, agencies and PFI deals with private industry and the inspection and monitoring of education,⁸ we can even ask whether it was the right *economic* response. Are we actually getting *value for money*? More pertinent to our concerns though, now, is whether the problem of *coerciveness*, that we are trying to identify within educational practices, originates within RP itself. Here is one description of the effects which RP had on educational practices:

Effective rationalisation presupposed a tightening of the relationships between educational 'outputs' and the needs of society and economy ...Roles and responsibilities were... clarified, authority and discretion defined, inter-organizational machinery developed and policy instruments for steering capacity designed (Ranson, 1994, p. 64).

So a crucial aim of RP was for 'roles and responsibilities' to be 'clarified'. Once clarified—made explicit and transparent, for assessment and evaluation purposes—they could then be made to cohere with public sector policies which were designed to be integrated into the economy at large (Hartley, 2003).

Much hangs on the way the notion of 'clarification' is interpreted by managerialists here. How much does the managerial ideal of transparency have to do with honesty, or with democracy? In anticipation of Chapter 6 where we shall be looking at a competing (neo-Aristotelian) model of agent-accountability, I argue that if we are interested in what it means for an agent to make sincere, public spirited responsible decisions as to how to act, then our concern with *that* should be no *less* compelling than the demand that is commonly made now for 'total transparency'.

⁸ See [Appendix 2](#)

3.3 The rationalization project (RP): a fallacy to expose

In a report on standards and quality in education, the requirement for explicitness is clearly evident:

In a minority of schools, the performance management of teachers did not comply fully with the requirements...some teachers...did not conform to the guidance issued by the government...many [objectives] were not measurable and they were not supported by clear criteria... (Ofsted, 2003c, p.66)

Notice how the language of the Fulton Committee Recommendations lives on in what is now a recognizable language of *managerialese*: ‘clear criteria’ and ‘measurable objectives’ rank as key terms in this language. Notice, too, how everything that has to do with a ‘performative’, bureaucratic culture—its measuring, regulating and auditing regimes—affects the way in which public service workers are intended to see themselves and their roles.⁹ Without *managerialese* would Ofsted be able to function? This seems unlikely:

...New forms of managerial government ...are the outcomes of policy measures on the part of specific governments, reinforced by a corporate community...[T]hese outcomes have involved the deliberate promotion of key concepts and... as a matter of policy, deliberate attempts to modify people’s cultural outlooks (Strathern, 2000, p. 288).

Following Pierre Bourdieu, we may say that to speak *managerialese* is to acquiesce in the *power* of managerialism. For Bourdieu, as William Gay (1998, p. 138) explains, *the* predominant language in a society is inseparable from the distribution of power in society: it ‘is tacitly to accept the official definition of the official language of a political unit’.¹⁰ If this is right, then we may expect *managerialese* to become *coercive*—to become ‘an instrument of covert institutional violence’ (Gay, *ibid*, p. 139).

But what is the rationale for RP? How rational is it? Bernard Williams points to the futility of the foundationalist quest to ‘rationalize everything’:

...Once we see that it is impossible to rationalize everything, the project of rationalizing as much as possible need not be understood as doing the next

⁹ Ball, cited in Woods (2003), p. 149.

¹⁰ Bourdieu, cited in Gay (1984), p. 138.

best thing. We may conclude instead that we were looking in the wrong direction (Williams, 1993, p 113).

Williams's concerns here are epistemological: 'if [a] linear search for reasons is pursued, there will have to be at least one practice of reason-giving for which no reason is given' (Williams, *ibid*). But his comments bear equally upon the lengths to which a managerialist will go to make agents provide explicit, quantifiable 'evidence'—in order to prove their accountability.

Right from the start, the aim of the project of rationalizing the public services (RP) has always been to provide the systemic means for practitioners to ground—and hence, justify—their actions in explicit, measurable outcomes. This idea has been at work for a long time (see Chapter 2)—for so long indeed, that we must ask whether (to use Williams's words) this 'project of rationalizing as much as possible' has been successful in its aim:

Performative cultures presume ...core activities within organizations can be made transparent...through technologies of audit... [These] rest upon the assumption of fixed ...standards against which to judge performance. If quality cannot be measured against ...fixed...standards or targets, it does not exist' (Elliott, 2001a, p. 194).

One strange effect of RP and which Elliott highlights is that *quality assessment*, in a managerial model of accountability, is defined in *quantitative* terms. Another effect is that: 'Driven by concerns for productivity, accountability and control':

the ... tendency is to exert tighter control over teachers' work and...time, to regulate it and rationalize it; to break it down into small discrete components with clearly designated objectives assigned to each one. Preparation time, planning time, group time, individual time... "directed time"... (Hargreaves, 1994a, p. 113).¹¹

Are there any further effects of RP? Consider the following:

...we can now draw up assessment criteria which can then be distributed to assessors and assessed alike. The whole process, being explicit and transparent, can now be audited and performances of both teachers and

¹¹ For a critique of the DfES 'four-part' lesson plan ('starter-guided-independent-plenary'), see Philip Beadle in *Education Guardian*, 24th, 2006, p. 6

students can be evaluated. The situation has been reached in which what happens in the classroom and in the minds of the students and their teachers is wholly conducive to systematic monitoring, auditing and management (Hussey and Smith, 2002, p.223).

Those who think that it is desirable that teachers' work is now 'conducive' to such systematic control clearly assume that adherence to RP provides the *best* way for all services to be run. But how compelling is the logic which grounds that assumption? That is still the question.

Well, what is that logic? Inspection of the literature suggests the following:

"All sorts of activities and ventures fail because practitioners are not clear what they are doing. They need to spell out better the aim of their activities. Or someone else needs to help them do this. This is especially true of large organizations. Among such larger organizations are public ones, which, in the past and before the public service reforms, failed conspicuously in this regard. Until better management practices forced professionals to be more accountable, knowledge was hidden in the 'secret garden' of those who claimed to have 'professional autonomy'. This was an unacceptable state of affairs, wide open to abuse and corruption. To counter these evils, knowledge must always be made more explicit. How else can we put any trust in public accountability? *Something* must secure clarity in organizations and democracy for the people. The answer to both problems is: *transparency*. We must make all public service organizations run as transparently as possible."

This argument evidently overlooks the possibility that there were other deficiencies besides what is seen as the chief problem, 'opacity'. Another complication which we can not fully address here is that the notion of trust has been woven into the argument and that immediately raises the question of how

the managerialist thinks conditions of trust are cultivated and best preserved. I shall defer dealing with this question until Chapter 9. Meanwhile, let us consider the treatment of explicitness in this argument.

The idea that *some* explicitness might be necessary for the efficient running of an organization is one we need not deny. But in the argument it is extended into a quite different claim, namely, that *the more* explicitness there is in an organization the better. I put the fallacy in schematic form, below:

(1) If some x is good, then the more x the better.

Therefore

(2) If some explicitness is good, then the more explicitness (that can be instantiated in practices through RP) the better.

And then it seems we reach a universal proposition:

(3) What is *really best* is to extend RP to all public services.

Consider (1). If oxygen is good for a patient, then the more oxygen, the better? If a certain pesticide is good for growing carrots, then the more of this pesticide, the better? In its generality (1) is laughable. The conclusion (3) is groundless.

From our examination in Chapter 2 of the 'elective affinities' between economic liberalism and managerialism, we see how easy it has been for *economic rationalization* to transmute into *managerial rationalization*. RP, we may predict, will never be abandoned until, as André Gorz (1989) writes in his *Critique of Economic Reason*, 'economic reason' ceases to be given licence to expand its territorial domain into every form of social practice. According to Gorz, we need to determine:

which activities can be subordinated to economic rationalization without losing their meaning and for which activities economic rationalization would be a perversion or a negation of the meaning inherent in them (Gorz, 1989, pp.132-3).

3.4 'Economic reason' at work: the corrosion of practical knowledge under managerial modes of accountability

There do exist, of course, 'humanistic' approaches to systems-management theory that have their origins in the 'human relations' school of industrial psychology (Hatcher, 2005, p.254)—Human Resource Management (see Clarke and Newman, 1997; Thrupp and Willmott, 2003)—and which aim to place emphasis on persons as individuals. One might have thought this a way forward from the kind of rationalization processes which we have been criticising. But these approaches have not completely shaken the mystique which attaches to a social scientific conception of management (Smith, 2002; Fielding 1996). Rhetoric such as 'self-management' and 'empowerment' are intended to sweep away 'Fordist' or 'Taylorist' styles of line-management but a 'contrived collegiality' might be all that is on offer: 'compulsory cooperation... collaborative planning, stage-managed mission statements... programmes...whose viability and practicality are not open to discussion' (Hargreaves, 1994a, p.80). Why not? Because managerial rhetoric, whatever else it may be advertising, stresses 'the need for more effective mechanisms of monitoring the use of resources ... in relation to measured outcomes': it is a rhetoric which cannot be separated from the 'wider political strategy to reduce the autonomy possessed by professionals...' (Grace, 1995, p. 19).

So however consensual or 'team-building' the rhetoric, all individual action and decision-making by practitioners can still be subsumed within the technical managerial specialist perspective (Ball, 1990a, p.157; Hatcher, 2005) which requires activities and practices to conform to the 'imperative of monitoring'— rather than to 'their own intrinsic agendas' (Miller, 1994, p.26).

The epistemological implication of such conformity amounts, in brief, to this: practical knowledge will be re-conceptualised in two stages: (i) unify

all knowledge under a universalising template of managerial principles; (ii) having objectified *the knowledge* (whatever the specialist domain of practical knowledge) according to the lay-out of this epistemological template, divide up the domains of existing occupational know-how into discrete parts for task and role purposes.

After 'integration' of managerial regimes and re-organisation of practice according to RP it is assumed that a sufficient residue of practical knowledge will remain; it will find its own level in the new system and be then *just as serviceable as before*. This is an important but audacious assumption. How well does the system work in practice?

Here let us turn aside from education to an area where we see managerial modes of accountability and RP fully exposed. For a description of the detrimental, practical effects that managerial modes of accountability and NPM principles can have on the running of a public service consider the train crash at Hatfield, in 2000, as documented by Ian Jack (2001) in *The Crash That Stopped Britain*. Our focus will be primarily on the *structure* of the model of management in use at the time of the crash and not on the fact that the model is an example of early privatisation of a public service. Our immediate interest here is in trying to unearth the epistemological assumptions upon which the structure of a managerial model of accountability is grounded and the culture which conditioned decision-making on safety issues. According to the Rail Regulator, this culture was 'biased towards performance-driven decisions'.¹² The same kind of culture now permeates every public service. I hope that this example may serve as a way of examining in general terms the effects which managerial modes of accountability tend to have on practice.

Ian Jack reports that the train involved in the Hatfield crash came off the track rails at a curve that had been safely negotiated for 150 years. The

¹² Report on the Hatfield crash, *Financial Times*, July 25th, 2007, p. 3

'immediate cause' was 'gauge corner cracking' (p.73) on a rail already reported as defective and later found to show obvious signs of 'pre-crash metal distress'. Under these conditions speed limits ought to have been in operation on this section, pending a replacement rail. How was it possible, one might ask, when *five* different agencies of management¹³ were contracted in one way or another to concern themselves with 'the same stretch of line' (p. 64), for such an obviously faulty rail to be ignored?

One sort of answer will mention the temptation to which the whole system of industrial fines and rewards for 'efficiency savings' (p.53) subjected Railtrack to keep trains running at high speeds rather than slow them down or divert them from the line during repairs. Under pressure to meet targets, managers may lose sight of the objectives that gave rise to the targets (Kay, 2003, p.354).

But *why* might managers lose sight? The fundamental problem was the structuring of the accountability system itself and the dispersal of responsibility between the various managerial units, each with its own commercial targets and responsibilities. Within this structure personal responsibility/responsibleness ebbed away between the many different sub-contracted sites, the 'interfaces' of management, and through 'confusing flows of money and paperwork' (p.65). *No one, in the end, took responsibility for the safety of the crucial bit of track at Hatfield.* The policy of outsourcing and sub-contracting different agencies of management to run a railway service led to the fragmentation of a service where individual personal responsibility was reduced to the point of non-existence.¹⁴

The question arises whether this apparent elusiveness of systemic accountability, due to the difficulty in locating personal responsibility/responsibleness, is an *inevitable* by-product of a system that still

¹³ See [Appendix 3](#), note 13

¹⁴ The judge, summing up at the trial of the Hatfield rail crash, said the disaster was 'the worst case of sustained industrial negligence' he had seen in his 30 years' experience, *Evening Standard*, 7th October 2005, p. 1.

carries all the marks of 'management by objectives'. According to the theoretical principles of such a system, governments impose economic 'market' disciplines on public service managers, through contracts and 'target specification'. As Kay (ibid) says, micro-management *means* 'the contractualization approach'.¹⁵ For reasons of 'efficiency', and in order to satisfy the conditions under which funding is granted, people in an organisation, whether operating individually or as a group, work on a need-to-know basis to meet their own specific target, thus complying with the original contracts made. The resemblance to Taylorism is striking. But here we see the application of neo-Taylorist principles of scientific management outside spheres for which they were originally intended. It is this that pushes micro-management beyond Taylorism into entirely new normative frameworks (Korsgaard, 1996) for conceptualising public accountability.

This is no accident. From our discussion in the last chapter regarding the deliberate injection of market values into the public sector, we can see how little room there is for even a vestige of what was once referred to as the *public service ethos* (or '*ethic*' as it is sometimes also called), for the norms and values traditionally associated with the 'common good' (Plant, 2001). With the rise of the idea of the consumer-as-sovereign, the institutional agenda of managerialism has its own norms, shaped by the exchange-value logic of the market. Organisations structured and regulated by contracts that create business units and set up internal purchaser/provider divisions (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p146) are conceived as chains of 'low cost principal/agent relationships', rather than as 'fiduciary or trustee-beneficial ones' (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, p.9).

When organisations are re-shaped under relations of 'managerialised' accountability and we lose our trusting presumption that 'public servants' will themselves act in the name of the public good, what happens to the know-how that used to be expected of ordinary servants of the public? One of the retired engineers whom Ian Jack interviewed said he had seen the virtual

¹⁵ For the impact of a 'contractualist environment' on teaching practice, see Brown *et al* (1996)

displacement of engineers from the business of running a railway. He spoke of *loss*—of the practical knowledge that had disappeared under managerial changes as a result of The Railways Act in 1993. He spoke, too, of the ‘in-house’ track maintenance gangs answerable to the district engineer:

... ‘you’d never see a weed on the line. That was when you had six chaps working from the same hut, looking after their bit of track...The days of the line being patrolled by a man every day have gone. But it’s worse than that. Not only have the maintenance structures disappeared, but the knowledge of what the structures *did* has disappeared.’¹⁶

Does such remembrance of times past point to a real problem? Or is there nothing more to the passing of a form of practical knowledge than one man’s wistful nostalgia?

To try to answer this question, and to focus on responsibility/responsibleness, let us ask how *safety* was conceived by one who worked in the railway service, prior to managerial re-organisation. Judging by the engineer’s reminiscences, safety was not designated as an explicit managerial organisational control target against which ‘standards’ of safety could be measured.¹⁷ Safety was so important that it was omnipresent in an engineer’s ‘occupational formation’. It conditioned everything. It was integrated with all the ‘technical virtues’ (Winch, 2002b) particular to the practice of railway engineering. Like the ethical virtues, Winch suggests, technical virtues are directed towards *excellence*; they involve more than the simple accomplishment of competent performance. Thus, for the engineers to whom the gangs worked and were responsible, safety was inseparable from the ‘good’ which would be realised *in the practice of being an engineer*. In a manner conforming to Aristotle’s account of how the *phronimos*, the person with practical wisdom or *phronesis*, derives his/her ends from ethical formation, similarly, the know-how of practitioners, if it is gained through the right sort of occupational formation, will help determine the relevant ends of a practice. (See Chapter 6.)

¹⁶ Jack, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

¹⁷ It was the setting of safety as an explicit and separate target that precipitated the insolvency of Railtrack; safety became an expensive ‘bolt-on’ to an already ‘managerialised’ practice, generating a regress of more targets to amend previously aimed for targets.

Aristotle says that to develop the kind of formation that aims at excellence, ‘takes time’. For it has to become a kind of *personal* knowledge, a ‘part of [our]selves’ (NE 1147a 21-22). Such knowledge is part of a person’s own character ‘formation’—or their *Bildung* (to be discussed more fully in Chapters 5 and 6). Demands for explicitness or ‘transparency’ do not feature here. In a context where nothing counts as an end unless it is explicitly identified as such, the *telos* of a service or a practice will be lost. That is the lesson of the tragedy at Hatfield. The fact that Railtrack’s collapse finally forced track-engineering to be taken back ‘in-house’ suggests that managerialists themselves can be brought to realise deficiencies in the model. Not that this realization has gone to the root of the problem or exposed the fallacy upon which the model is based. For the same sort of problems keep surfacing.¹⁸

The story is familiar. Each layer of management works to its own explicit, clear objectives. Unless safety is made an *explicit target* no one person or group of people can be identified as being responsible for safety matters—whereas ideally everyone should have their own awareness of it. The principles of micro-management through the sub-contracting and ‘outsourcing’ of different parts of services are still a vital part of RP, the on-going public sector reform programme.

What about other public services—education, health, police, fire services, etc.—where there are just as many layers of management to be found? What effects do the epistemological principles that ground managerial modes of accountability exercise upon practical knowledge in other public service spheres, where there can be nothing as visibly dramatic or tragic as the damage done by a train crash? Well, in relation to education, at their 2002 annual conference, head teachers were reported as saying that a ‘crisis as damaging as the Railtrack debacle threatens to erupt’: examination boards

¹⁸ See [Appendix 3](#), note 18.

were ‘buckling under pressure to cope’ and ‘teachers were not coping with the expansion of tests’.¹⁹

Policy makers are not blind to these problems. Running parallel to the enthusiasm to outsource more and more is a new recognition of the negative consequences and problems which organizational fragmentation can bring. But what is the managerial ‘solution’? As often as not, it is to create another tier of managers: ‘joined-up’ governance,²⁰ or the ‘politics of partnership’ (Newman, 2000, p. 52) as attempts to bring coherence to all the other managerial agencies!

It is an empirical matter, for future commentators, what success there has been in countering the fragmentation of services in this way. But so long as responsibility can trickle away when contracts become too complex for people to implement in practice; or when interstices and gaps that appear in the infrastructures of different agencies create disputed, ‘non-liable’ zones of management²¹—so long as the foundational ideas of managerialism remain—we must question the wisdom of what has become known as ‘governing without governance’ (Glatter, 2003, pp. 45-6). Governments, on this model, rule ‘from a distance through devolved management’ (Olssen *et al*, 2004, p. 138). Furthermore, ‘governing without governance’, we are told, leads to ‘opaque accountability’. It seems the task of governing has outrun the capacity for governments to do much more than let complex external networks of ‘groupings’ (the private and voluntary sectors, the professional experts, the consultants, etc.) undertake the job of ‘governing’ (Glatter, *ibid*).

How can managerialists acquiesce in all this? The original aim of the public service reforms was to erect a new type of accountability system transparent to all. Can it be that the result is ‘governing without governance’ and ‘opaque accountability? Have we arrived at a *reductio ad absurdum* of the

¹⁹ *The Guardian*, March 18th 2002, p. 7.

²⁰ For more on ‘joined-up governance’, see [Appendix 3](#), note 20.

²¹ Reference given in footnote 18.

public service reform enterprise—the project of rationalizing public services for accountability purposes?

Perhaps these descriptions are not meant to be taken literally—they are to be taken as an ironic statement about our ‘post-modern’ condition, a reflection of the ‘legitimation crisis’ we are told all ‘advanced’ liberal societies now experience. In the early days of public service reform politicians in the Western world, as we discussed in the last chapter, became disenchanted with the ability of ‘hierarchical’ government bureaucracies to provide public services that were economically viable. They saw as a matter for reproof or censure the attachment public servants at that time had to ‘outdated’ liberal humanist public service ideals. But what has replaced all that? We now have the ‘hollowed out’ state phenomenon, where government has disengaged itself from managing its increasingly costly ‘horizontal’ networks of ‘outsourced’ and ‘contracted-out’ agencies.²² Why is such disengagement, expense and lack of accountable management tolerated? Defenders of the status quo, however, will say that we *do* have very ‘engaged’, responsible people managing our public affairs—individuals appointed for their expertise and skills.

The point about ‘expertise and skills’ need not be disputed. The important point is to see the ‘Managerial State’ (Clarke and Newman, 1997) for what it is. Within the state, a ‘new magistracy’²³ has been formed to serve on government ‘quangos’ and the various ‘councils’, ‘audit offices’, ‘commissions’ and ‘trusts’. These agencies are governed by a small number of key individuals who hold ‘multiple board-level positions in the new-style public sector’ (Ferlie *et al*, 1996, p. 201). How transparent are these agencies?²⁴

²² See [Appendix 3](#), note 22, for predicted growth of the ‘outsourcing’ market; and [Appendix 2](#) for the general costs of PFI contracting.

²³ Stewart, cited in Ferlie *et al* (1996), p.200

²⁴ The National Audit Office questions the number of PFI deals and ‘public sector agreement’ targets from the DfES that do not appear in any accounts, *The Times*, Public Agenda, 27th February, 2007, p. 4; *Education Guardian*, March 6th, 2007, p.8

What we have ended up with is beyond irony—beyond the playful tropes of critical theory. Managerialism has extended its empire, erected its own elite forms of power and destroyed that which it never understood in the first place. With the advent of ‘opaque accountability’, it now also appears to have lost its own plot! Where is personal responsibility/responsibleness in ‘opaque accountability’? What is the substitute for it? What, after all this, is the ‘new public’ accountability?

3.5 Transparency as opacity

However well-intentioned the thinking may have been behind the architecture of the project to rationalize everything as explicitly as possible in order to attain standards of public accountability and quality within educational organizations, we have clearly arrived at a paradox. As Martin Trow (1994, pp. 41-44) perceives:

The paradoxical result may be that vigorous efforts by agencies of central government to assess...quality lead to ...decline ...as more and more energy is spent on bureaucratic reports, and as...activities themselves begin to adapt to the simplifying tendencies of the quantification of outputs...managerialism...may allow governments to imagine that they control the uncontrollable. But ...it is at most an irrelevance and a distraction from the daily business of teaching and learning, and at worst a threat to already vulnerable institutions.

Michael Power (1994, p.304) points to a similar paradox of opacity latent in the search for transparency:

Audit practices are publicly represented within extensive rhetorics of accountability and transparency. And yet auditing practice denies the very ideals which mobilize it. The paradox...arises because...*how* an audit is done is less important than *that* it is done. In other words, considerable symbolic and financial capital is invested in the activity of audit without a corresponding publicity of process and results.

Stephen Ball (2003, p. 215) interprets the paradox in the following way:

Performativity produces opacity rather than transparency, as individuals and organizations take ever greater care in the construction and maintenance of fabrications.

The pressures now placed on practitioners to meet explicit objectives result in *fabrications of evidence* in order to fit their actions to measurable targets demanded by managers. These ‘fabrications’ are the frequent response to the pressures linked to funding and pay (Ball, 2001a).

Such ‘fabrications’, commonly reported in the media, are not confined to educational practices. Another kind of ‘fabrication’ takes place, for example, in local councils, hospitals or doctors’ surgeries, police stations, etc., where clear, explicit objectives are the political target. Take, for example, the target, *to bring waiting lists down*. ‘Waiting lists’ or ‘appointment times’ have been ‘brought down’ or ‘reduced’ only because other ‘lists’ have been made larger which are not, at that time, under political scrutiny. Such manoeuvres artificially manipulate figures to obtain the desired statistics. The statistics make *visible* what it is politically or managerially expedient to make visible—‘selective visibilities’ (Hopwood, 1984, p.178). To survive in a ‘name and shame’ culture, where funding depends on showing ‘continuous improvement’, organizations will continue to meet targets which ensure funding, even if it means ‘playing the system’ by engineering statistics to make league tables look better than they really are.²⁵ If, as a result of the pressures which managerialism places on organizational life, such distortions *are* taking place, then what has become of the venerable *ideal* of transparency? Why has transparency been uncoupled from honesty? Why do we only have selective forms of transparency and selective visibilities which are artificially constructed for us to notice? The answers to these questions go back to the perceived political need for economic rationalization—to rationalize organizations in accordance with ‘management by accounting’.

The problem with ‘management by accounting’ is that the activities of accounting and audit now accord a particular form of visibility to events and processes. This allows managers to ‘reconfigure’ organizations (Miller, 1994, p. 2)—all of which helps influence what now *counts* as ‘problematic, possible, desirable and significant’ (Hopwood, *ibid*).

²⁵ See [Appendix 3](#), note 25, for how this may happen even with ‘laudable objectives’ (Tsoukas, 1994, p. 6).

Marilyn Strathern, an anthropologist, unravels the different layers of 'visibility' that can subsist in managerial cultures:

... .. what is concealed are the 'real' facts about how the organisation operates...[such as] ...implicit knowledge that makes interactions between people in an organisation work to make the organisation work ...[P]erformance indicators are highly selective objectifications of performances... [T]he language of assessment, in purporting to be a language that makes output transparent, hides many dimensions of the output process...The rhetoric of transparency appears to conceal that very process of concealment ...Realities are knowingly eclipsed (Strathern, 2000, pp.314-315).

If realities are 'knowingly eclipsed' and we see only too well the way in which our actions, situated within a managerial system of accountability, cannot avoid sometimes being opaque and inauthentic, then we should ask: what does managerialism *add* to the idea of public accountability? What does it add if the problems that it creates are so clear to us and we see with such ease how it can turn sour what should be an unambiguous social and democratic ideal—the ideal of transparency?

3.6 Conclusions

(i) *Prima facie*, the demand seems persuasive for public accountability in a democracy to be secured by explicitness and transparency. But neither democracy nor accountability ought to be assumed to issue from the teaming up of these ideas.²⁶ It does not follow from this, however, that we should launch an *all-out* assault on the idea of explicitness. Any appreciation of the regulatory functions of bureaucracy will tell us that certain sorts of explicitness need to be available on demand in an organisation. Efficient bureaucratic management will entail the co-ordination of activities in a proper sequence for tasks that have to be done; individuals will need to know what their roles and responsibilities are. But in acknowledging this, it is also important to recognize the limits of what can be *made* explicit for standardisation purposes in organizations (Ritzer, 1996). Some kinds of

²⁶ 'Democratic deficits' can arise in spite of 'greater levels of transparency of decision making and enhanced patterns of direct accountability' when the power of 'quasi-public' bodies, such as 'trusts', supplant what were once understood as traditional functions of local government. See Clarke and Newman (1997, pp. 144-5).

practical ‘know-how’ may in fact be impossible to articulate fully in words.²⁷
(More of this later.)

(ii) At its best, the *ideal* of transparency stands as an inspirational ideal for those in public positions to aspire to virtues of honesty, fairness, openness, honesty and to pledge a commitment to public accountability. Holding transparency up as an ideal in practice helps enhance the democratic credentials of public institutions by giving people the right to know and trust what is being done in their name. But transparency, understood ‘within the context of a particular kind of performativity’ runs the risk of ‘becoming prey to reductionism and distortion’ (Fielding, 2001c, p. 148).

(iii) When *the idea* of transparency is used as ‘an instrument of hierarchical control’, then it operates ‘paradoxically... in a non-transparent manner...through opportunistic blame deflection’ (Heald, 2006, p. 64)—the sort of activity which we discussed in section 3.5, associated with the ‘fabrications’ which people may have to resort to in a ‘high stakes’ culture of managerial audit-accountability. Such fabrications may undermine trust in professional judgment (O’Neill, 2002, pp, 63-79) by diverting the agent’s attention away from his or her own objects of responsible deliberation, choice, thought and judgement, in the direction only of managerial ends. This point bears importantly on teaching practice. To marginalize that which is non-verbal and non-measurable in professional ‘know-how’ (e.g., implicitly understood intuitions, responses, observations and perceptions) in favour of ‘transparent’ accountability practices and standardized measurements of ‘performance’, may lead to teachers’ lack of confidence in their own assessments of pupils’ ability (Claxton, 2000, p. 36-7). It is in its potential capacity to undermine *practical judgement* that the ‘tyranny of transparency’ (Strathern, 2000) lies—and from where we now see the *coercive* nature of managerialism originates.

²⁷ See also [Appendix 3](#), note 27, for details of empirical research into ‘implicit learning’.

(iv) If (iii) is right, then it follows that any accountability system that elevates the ideal of transparency into a predominant organizational principle of management will produce distorting effects on the practical judgement of agents. The intrinsic value of transparency is no greater than the intrinsic value of honesty. Once the idea of transparency comprehends something other than honesty and it is set up as *the* predominant ideal, then other worthy ideals, equal contenders for consideration in an agent's decision-making and deliberation, will be marginalised. However, as Christopher Hood (2006, pp. 221-222) remarks, it is easy to *say* that transparency is 'a value that has to be traded off ... against other equally important values'; the difficult question which remains, 'is to identify exactly what those trade-offs are' and how we 'distinguish valuable transparency from more negative forms' (Hood, *ibid*, p.222).

(v) In the name of transparency, managerial modes of accountability aim at ever and ever more explicitness to control individual knowledge bases as part of a public service reform programme to erect an accountability system universally applicable to and for *all* contexts. But this is inconsistent with the operation of the practical knowledge of those who wish to direct their work at *that for the sake of which* an organisation exists.

(vi) Moreover, there is no basis in reason to the claim that a managerial form of accountability (such as we have examined in this chapter) is universally appropriate for all contexts. For even if every situation requires some form of accountability, it does not follow that there is one form of answer to every question of accountability.

Part II

PRACTICAL JUDGEMENT

Chapter 4

Responsibility and accountability

...The last word on how we may live or die
Rests today with ...
Men, working too hard...
Reducing to figures
What is the matter, what is to be done...

W.H. Auden, *The Managers*

4.1 The appropriation, by managers, of the notion of accountability

Some critics of managerialism, wishing to distance themselves from the predominant managerial concept of accountability have suggested that because the word 'accountability' carries within it all that is found offensive about the managerial culture and ethos, we should focus instead on the notion of responsibility. 'Accountability', is 'punitive' and 'pre-dominantly contractual ...in its discourse', Michael Fielding (2001b) says. It is with the concept of 'responsibility' that we are able to locate ethical intent on the part of an agent:

the distinctions between accountability and responsibility point to two contrasting realities and intentions... Because responsibility is primarily a moral, not a technical or contractual notion, it both elicits and requires a felt and binding mutuality that does not depend upon hierarchical structures so typical of accountability (Fielding, 2001b, p. 699).

Fielding's argument is an elaboration of, and endorsement of Inglis's argument that the political, moral and existential qualities of the two notions, accountability and responsibility are different (see Inglis, 2000). And other critics of managerialism, who would clearly be in agreement with such views, point out that accountability is now 'equated narrowly with the use of

accounting procedures' (Willmott, 1996, p.31), and that 'what is being assured is the quality of control systems rather than the quality of first order operations':

... In such a context, accountability is discharged by demonstrating the existence of ... systems of control, not by demonstrating good teaching, caring, manufacturing...(Power, 1994b, p. 19).

Accountability, in its 'operation and scope' is seen as more 'insistent' than responsibility: 'Not only are duties specified, but the means of evaluating the level of their performance is already prescribed, in...standards and targets of performance' (Hoskin, 1996, p.265). If we do not 'declare in precise terms, the ends achieved...according to specific goals set', then we lay ourselves 'open to some possible disciplinary reaction' (Laughlin, 1996, p. 228). This is precisely 'the culture and practice of blame' which Fielding describes.

The impression we take away from all these critiques is that we should abandon the use of the word accountability. For it has been despoiled by its association with the performative culture which managerialism encourages. We should, instead, 'rehabilitate' responsibility (Gaden, 1999).

We can certainly agree that *the responsibility* of a teacher goes much wider than any accountability requirements set by managerial procedures—wider than all the managerial lines of accountability that originate in central government and then 'cascade' down through various bodies to whom the teacher is accountable and ending with the 'expected performances of individual teachers' (Pring, 2001a, p.281). For included in the teacher's *responsibilities* to her pupils or students will be those classroom virtues that attach to 'duty of care': reliability, fairness, tolerance, patience, etc. One who recognizes such a duty will possess the virtue of *responsibleness*. The notion of accountability (as we shall see soon, when we examine some dictionary definitions) *should* be broad enough to absorb this virtue in its scope of meaning. For the concept of accountability is Janus-faced. Accountability can be understood as something 'external' to an agent, 'an outwardly directed accountability' (Kemp, 1999, p. 306)—accountability as

adherence to explicitly laid out regulations of an institution, set down in contract and extending to wider centres of authority which rule the institution. But also, importantly, accountability can be understood in ethical terms, as something 'internal' to an agent, an 'inwardly directed accountability' (Kemp, *ibid*).

To this extent it is very clear how ethically barren, under managerial influences, the notion of *educational accountability* has now been rendered by the impoverishment of the broader umbrella-concept it comes under, namely, *accountability*. It has been made morally barren because those who promoted the managerial practices of NPM, when they were first introduced, in the first wave of public service reforms (discussed in Chapter 2), were able to capitalize upon the etymological roots of 'accountability' which derive from the world of accountancy and audit.¹ 'Accountability' soon became synonymous with 'management by accounting' (Mc Sweeney, 1996). This is precisely what Fielding and Inglis find offensive and inadequate for conceptualising educational aims, purposes and practices.

But, strongly though I endorse the general criticisms Fielding and Inglis make of a managerial conception of accountability, I wonder whether we should be so quick to agree with them that the notions of accountability and responsibility should be *severed* in the way they suggest. There is a risk of losing something we might regret. For if we do sever them then it makes it difficult to adopt the widely accepted principle:

that people should only be accountable for those acts for which they are responsible or for those factors which it is within their power to influence (Winch, 1997, p.64).

MacIntyre (1999, p. 316) appears to endorse this principle:

Moral agents ...have to understand themselves as accountable, not only in their roles, but also as rational individuals... [W]hen responsibility is detached from accountability, what follows about the responsibility of moral agents *qua* moral agents?

¹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 1.

So to sever links between responsibility and accountability would seem to go against a strong tradition of thought. In 1876 F. H. Bradley wrote that, 'For practical purposes we need make no distinction between responsibility, or accountability, and liability' (Haines, 1955, p.141). Admittedly, Bradley was talking about punishment here. But even if it is agreed that 'accountability' is 'by no means the whole...and not even the most significant meaning of responsibility' (Haines, *ibid*), is it wise to let the concept of accountability be appropriated for managerial use only? Would this not be to acquiesce in just one more case of what Fielding (1994, p.19) himself calls 'linguistic robbery'?

4.2 Complexities inherent in the notion of accountability

Even though the concept *accountability* is not included in Raymond Williams's book, *Keywords*, it would be a good candidate:

...every word which I have included has at some time, in the course of some argument, virtually forced itself on my attention because the problems of its meanings seem to me inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss (Williams (1976, p. 15).

Anyone who becomes interested in the subject of *accountability*—from whatever aspect—will resonate to this problem Williams points out. So often one finds that an author, in the process of trying to elucidate the idea of accountability, has need to appeal to concepts which are as complex as the notion of accountability itself—*autonomy, responsibility, trust, competence, professionalism, standards, transparency, quality, excellence*—to name just a few.

There are especial problems of this nature when attempts are made to unravel the notion of *educational accountability*. Consider, for instance, the 'professional' model of accountability that Hugh Sockett expounds (1980; 1990;1993). His hope is to re-instate some substantive notion of the *professional teacher* in contrast with the now predominant managerial-

performance-based model of accountability, and to explain accountability in terms of 'principles of practice' that will respect 'professional autonomy'.

Much as I agree with the spirit of Sockett's argument which seeks a different vision from the 'productivity managerialist order' (Kogan, 1989, p.140) now endemic in our educational practices, we still have to ask how far it can take us in the face of the present reality—a reality that accommodates standardized testing, audit monitoring and accountability regimes. These regimes which reflect the neo-liberal global economy agenda have overturned established meanings of professionalism. Is his notion still available?

In Chapter 1 we discussed Michael Barber's reassurances that 'more informed' and 'knowledge rich' forms of educational professionalism offer a kind of 'world-class' education that older, traditional ones never could. I argued that whether these new forms of teacher professionalism really are 'better' (as he insists) must remain controversial. The managerialists may think the matter closed, but if they do, they are begging the question. For it is clear that the concept of professionalism—and the very meaning of the term—is itself the site of an ideological struggle (Sachs, 2003, p. 3). That is why an argument such as Sockett's,² proposing a model of educational accountability consistent with traditional definitions of professional autonomy (Kogan, 1989, p. 137), will stand awkwardly with now dominant conceptions of what it means to be a 'professional' teacher, as it does with received understandings of standards of public accountability. Why? Because the *idea* of public accountability cannot now be separated from the political and economic ideas, ideals and ideologies upon which the rationale of New Public Management (NPM) was first based. In Chapter 2, I referred to the 'elective affinities' that exist between *managerial accountability* and NPM neo-liberal principles of governance. Because of these 'affinities', a *market accountability*, arising through the democratic process, has been co-opted effortlessly into current policy discourses on, say, 'effective' school management, 'school improvement', 'transformational leadership'—discourses which are intended

² See also Bailey (1980) who argues for 'the autonomous' teacher.

to shape present understandings of what counts (in the relevant contexts) as *public, democratic, professional or educational* accountability.

But there are further problems. Consider the following suggestion made by Becher, Eraut *et al*, who in 1979 once wrote of three ‘facets’ of accountability:

Answerability to one’s clients (moral accountability), responsibility to oneself and one’s colleagues (professional accountability); and accountability in the strict sense to one’s employers or political masters (contractual accountability).³

Twenty eight years later what are we to make of this? If it is meant as a complete typology of different aspects of public accountability, then it is unequal to the complexities of our present market-managerial educational status quo. Writing at a time when corporatism had not yet crept so invasively into the operation of all public sector institutions, these authors leave no room for yet another ubiquitous type of accountability which permeates policy discourses on educational accountability: *stakeholder accountability*. Educators are now contracted to fulfil government’s expectations of particular ‘audiences’ (Preedy *et al*, *ibid*, p. 53) in terms of standards, outcomes and results that can be measured. They are also expected to be ‘responsive’⁴ to the interests of relevant stakeholders—parents, governors, education authorities, central government, inspectorates, local communities and business interests (Preedy *et al*, 2003, p.8).

Already we are close to conceptual overload! Within a moment of beginning our enquiry into the idea of *educational accountability* (via Sockett’s notion of ‘substantial professionalism’), we have been catapulted into an ontology of diverse ‘accountabilities’—*public, professional, managerial, market, democratic, moral, contractual, stakeholder*—so far. How are we to keep track of their relations to one another? We can see, for instance, that the ‘financial’ accountability of a governing body in a school is

³ Becher, Eraut *et al*, cited in Kogan (1986), p.27

⁴ Halstead, cited in Preedy *et al* (2003), p.53

not the same as the 'moral' or 'professional' accountability of a teacher (Lallo, 1993, p. 2). But is there something that links them? The neo-Platonist question that lurks here is whether all the different varieties of accountability come under some overarching Ideal Form of Accountability, in the way Plato thought all the varieties of good came under the Form of the Good.

But let us re-direct the question. If we are interested in what the term *educational accountability* stands for, should we not try to understand whether all the varieties of accountability, if they are related to educational issues, are working towards some unifying aim or *telos*? (If they are not, then why bother referring to *educational* accountability, as if it stood for a *distinct* form of accountability?)

John Lallo (1993) cashes out a notion of accountability which he argues helps elucidate the idea of educational accountability:

[Accountability] involves reporting to other people about what you are doing, voluntarily or compulsorily. It means having a conscience or a moral responsibility about what you are doing. It means being answerable to other people both junior and senior...It is part of the essential administrative cement in a democratic society (Lallo, 1993, p. 1).

This description shows the many layers of meaning in the idea of 'accountability'. The refracted nature of accountability described above reflects what Kogan (1986, p. 26) calls 'restricted' and 'diffuse' concepts of accountability—both of which, he suggests, can be at work *at the same time* in any educational discourse. 'Restricted' relates to the 'external', formal, contractual side of accountability: 'rendering accounts to bodies in authority'. 'Diffuse' forms of accountability relate to the 'internal' aspects of accountability, finding their realisation in 'the general responsibility that any worker feels, or should feel, towards those affected by his work', if placed 'in a position of trust'.⁵

⁵ Becher and Eraut, cited in Kogan (1986), pp. 26-27

Like Kogan, Richard Laughlin (1996) also sees different layers of accountability at work at the same time. But he adds a new point. He interprets the refracted nature of accountability in terms of the moral legitimacy of those who are in a position to expect accountability from others. Even though there might be clear, explicit lines of accountability, assumptions about legitimacy, power, and meaning are implicitly contained in *any* accountability relationship:

...there is a moral relationship involved, whereby an individual or small group is exercising domination over another to ensure that something, meaningfully defined, is done by that person or persons (Laughlin, 1996, p.229).

If this is right, then there should always be room to raise questions regarding the moral legitimacy of a particular accountability relationship. Is there an acceptable purpose behind asking us, *in the name of accountability*, to do *x*, *y* or *z*? Without the freedom to ‘stop and think’, as Hannah Arendt puts it⁶—without the opportunity, that is, to distance ourselves from routine actions or from the people who are asking us to do *x*, *y* or *z*—we run the risk of transforming ourselves from a loyal worker or citizen into a perpetrator of wrongdoing or even evil (Arendt, 2003; Bauman, 1989; Munro, 1998).

When the notion of accountability is viewed from this kind of personal and ethical standpoint, it suggests even more that, rather than *abandon* the use of the word ‘accountability’ we need, rather, to *reclaim* it. We need to reinstate the links that should exist between *the virtue of responsibility* and *the idea of accountability*.

4.3 Some dictionary definitions

To make a start on this work, consider a selection of dictionary entries for ‘accountability’ and ‘responsibility’.⁷ They reveal an intricate network of cross-referencing. At the level of dictionary definitions [A] and [B], below, it is simply not true that ‘accountability’ and ‘responsibility’ point to ‘two

⁶ Arendt discussed in Nixon (2004), p. 116

⁷ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*; and *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*

contrasting realities and intentions'. Amongst the various definitions offered we find that a notion of 'responsibility as accountability' (Darwall, 2006, p. 69) is readily available:

- [A] **Accountable: adj.**
- (i) (of a person, organization or institution) required or expected to justify actions or decisions;
 - (ii) responsible (*to, for*);
 - (iii) liable to be called to account;
 - (iv) to be counted on;
 - (v) explicable;
- derivatives.** accountability
- [B] **Responsible adj.**
- (i) answerable, accountable (*to* another *for* something);
 - (ii) liable to be called to account;
 - (iii) answerable to a charge;
 - (iv) having an obligation to do something...as part of one's job or role;
 - (v) reliable, trustworthy;
 - (vi) morally accountable *for* one's actions;
 - (vii) capable of rational conduct;
 - (viii) capable of fulfilling an obligation or trust;
- Responsibility noun.**
- (i) the state or fact of being accountable or to blame for something;
 - (ii) a charge, trust for which one is responsible;
 - (iii) the state or fact of being responsible;
 - (iv) the opportunity or ability to act independently and take decisions without authorization;
- derivatives.** responsibility **noun.** responsibly **adv.**

From these definitions we detect that 'accountability' and 'responsibility' share similar conceptual links to 'obligation', 'being answerable', 'explaining', 'justifying', or 'being called to account', depending on whether *explicability, liability, responsibility, or answerability* is being considered (Haines, 1955) and on whether reasons demanded for the 'account' are expected to be causal or justificatory. In view of the range of meanings that may be ascribed to 'responsibility' and to avoid ambiguity I frequently prefer 'responsibleness' over 'responsibility' when I specifically want the noun to carry the idea of a

virtue (such as trustworthiness or reliability). And in this connection, we can see that the entry for 'trust' extends the network of shared concepts by *including* the idea of responsibility:

[C] Trust: **noun.** The state of being responsible for someone or something—in a position of trust.

So, given the links between *responsibility-accountability* and *responsibility-trust*, we should not allow 'accountability' to be reduced to 'management by accounting' or be squeezed dry of moral import. Moreover, we can see that it is not just 'accountability' (as Fielding and Inglis suggest) that is associated with the idea of 'blame'. Blame or censure may be correctly apportioned to someone who acted *irresponsibly*.⁸

[D] Blame: Responsibility for anything wrong.⁹

Once we acknowledge, however, that openness to blame constitutes part of the meaning of responsibility we see just how irretrievably inter-related the relationship between accountability and responsibility is. In this connection we must not forget *negligence*. But where the question is "Who is to be held to account?" I argue that need not mean: "Who failed to follow the line-manager's instructions?".

4.4 Is it possible to salvage an acceptable notion of accountability from managerial appropriation?

The etymology of 'to be responsible' is 'to be answerable' (from the Latin *respondeo*, I answer),¹⁰ as in the idea of a person's being answerable for an action. *Answerability*, I suggest, provides the first step in linking accountability to responsibility.

⁸ See [Appendix 3](#), note 8, for the distinction between 'irresponsibility', and 'non-responsibility'.

⁹ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

¹⁰ Lucas (1993), p.5

Graham Haydon (1978) offers us the next step by suggesting that it is through the notion of accountability (p. 48) that we can understand attributions of responsibility, as ‘an approved quality either to some instance of conduct, or dispositionally, to a person’ (p.46). Here though, we may already be wondering what is meant by *being a responsible agent*.

H.L.A. Hart’s classification of responsibility into five types—causal, legal, moral, capacity and role, is considered by Haydon, but he distrusts the idea that ‘one particular sense of responsibility’ can incorporate the sense of what *being responsible* means (p.48), even that of ‘role-responsibility’:

a person is often judged to be responsible or irresponsible not just with respect to the specific obligations needing to be undertaken in the role but also with respect to his or her *fulfilment of* and *attitude to* the responsibilities of the role (Haydon, 1978, p.58).

The notion of ‘role responsibility’ will represent a web of inter-related responsibilities which help define ‘the role’—for example: ‘institutional’ (what my employer demands), ‘professional’ (the professional code expected of me) or ‘vocational’ (deeper traditions and values I hold dear) (Cribb, 2006). There can then be no simple answer to “What is my responsibility?”—it will depend on the context of inquiry. In this connection, Bernard Williams (1993, pp. 55-56) warns against thinking that there might be ‘one correct conception of responsibility’.

If we are to hold on to the notion of accountability, as just one of the many concepts that responsibility is related to, then Haydon’s suggestion is that (p.55):

Apart from the derivative causal sense, to be responsible is to be, *in one way or another*, in a position to give an account of one’s conduct...the person who is most likely consistently to give a satisfactory account is one whose conduct is informed by the realization that an account...can be appropriately called for. (This is not the thought that anyone actually will ask... [for]... an account; rather...it is part of the agent’s awareness of his situation as an agent in the social world.) The person who realizes this is...the responsible person ...

This is a helpful framework for building a bridge between the two concepts, accountability and responsibility, for re-ethicising the concept of accountability and for showing what is involved in the idea of *being answerable*. The idea of someone's being prepared to be 'called to account', as we saw from dictionary definitions, is one of the classic ways of understanding what it is to be accountable. Haydon (ibid, p.56) offers the additional idea of an agent's having 'an awareness', or a 'realization' that an account 'can be appropriately called for' (even though, as he says, no one might ask for it). An agent's sense of responsibility is to be understood, therefore, in *dispositional terms*: a 'capacity': to choose how to act, in awareness of the possibility of being called to account for the choices made.

Whatever choices she makes, the agent is responsible because she is aware that actions 'do not take place in a causal vacuum' (Haydon, ibid). John Lucas, too, conceives the responsible person in this way as someone who is 'aware of the causal nexus' surrounding their activities, aware not just of 'the actually foreseen, but for the reasonably foreseeable' consequences of their actions (Lucas, 1993, p. 52).

4.5 An ambiguity in the idea of 'being called to account'

In this section, I extend Haydon's argument, to show that, although it is right to draw our attention to the idea that the responsible person will always be potentially 'aware' that she might be 'called to account' there is an important ambiguity in this idea that needs to be brought out, an ambiguity which, if not exposed, will feed managerialism exactly what it wants: namely the idea that someone's being answerable to expectations of public accountability depends upon reasons for their actions being articulated in clear, explicit, means-end terms.

As we saw in Chapter 3, managerialism, in its quest for transparency, seeks always precise rules, and articulated/codified regulations and procedures. Without these it supposes nothing will demarcate the accountable from the unaccountable, or distinguish professional responsibility from non-

professional responsibility. But the truth is that being considered accountable and responsible for something or to someone is not always a matter of exactitude (Bennett, 1980, p. 15). As Lucas (*ibid.* p. 186) points out:

however much we specify reasons, we find occasions when it is reasonable to do something which outruns the reasons we have specified... if we require people only to act on reasons they can subsequently give, we are preventing them acting on a hunch or other intuitive reasons they believe are cogent but could not defend to a hostile questioner. Instead of asking myself whether I am really doing my job properly, I concentrate on making sure that I can answer the questions other people may put to me...

In this light we see that *answerability*, however helpful as a 'bridging' concept between responsibility and accountability, masks what seems, *prima facie*, to be a conceptual incoherence: that in the idea of expecting someone to be answerable —'to be able to give an account'—there may be much that lies in the 'account' that will be resistant to full explication. In pressing for 'an account' we may be asking too much (perhaps the virtuous person is inarticulate) or too little (we do not want to hear clever exculpation).

In answer to the problem that has now emerged, let's start with Lucas's idea of *negative responsibility* (Lucas, 1993, p.53). For Lucas, negative responsibility is a 'duty of care' responsibility. Negative responsibility is the responsibility to see to it 'that not...'. Where something goes wrong and there is some special reason why I should have tried to do something about it, I shall be asked, 'Why didn't you do something about it?'. But 'duty of care' responsibility also applies in the here-and-now of *praxis*. If I am a responsible person I need to ask at the moment *when things are going wrong*, "What can I do to prevent things getting worse?", or "How can I make the best of the situation?".

What I choose to do in such circumstances cannot be prescribed in advance. In a work situation it will take 'professional' *phronesis*—practical judgement in work situations to make the best decision in those particular circumstances. (See Chapter 6). To ensure certain bad outcomes do not occur, 'may require us to undertake actions we would not normally do' (Lucas, *ibid.* p.53). So even where I am appointed to a specific task to achieve a certain

goal, it is *also* my responsibility to try to avert bad (or evil) side-effects and to waste no effort in counter-productive acts in the process. But nobody can write all this up as 'instructions'. Having 'negative responsibility' is an inherently, implicit (non-explicit), articulated form of knowledge which the responsible person will show they have by embodying it *in action*. Here is a chance for the virtue of *responsibleness* to come alive.

'Negative responsibility' thus *extends* the concept of responsibility by allowing the agent just the kind of indefiniteness which we met in the last chapter (section 3.2), in connection with the 'open-endedness' which was characteristic of Hans Jonas's concept of 'feeling responsible'. The concept of negative responsibility shows up starkly the impossibility of specifying precisely, as managerialists like to do, the terms on which accountability will be judged by another. Lucas considers what might be 'the criteria for successful discharge' of someone's responsibilities:

There is no one goal of endeavour but a heterogeneous collection of awkwardnesses to be avoided and problems to be diffused, with little ...to show ...except that things are no worse than they were at the outset (Lucas, *ibid*, p.55).

But, if so, then one's general accountability is not only open-ended. It is also, as Lucas says, 'inherently limited': 'nobody can be required to answer for everything' (*ibid*, p.186).¹¹ And this 'limitation' bears importantly on how one is to assess someone's discharge of responsibilities:

...Sometimes duties are specified minutely, and sometimes it is appropriate to do so, but there is a cost; the more [someone] is tied down by ...instructions, the less [they] can be...[responsible] to see to it that things go well generally within [their] sphere of responsibility... [Unless we really want the agent, under certain stated conditions to report a specified task as impossible to perform] we *eo ipso* confer on [them] some authority to take decisions as seems best to [them], and implicitly agree to accept [their] judgement in the absence of weighty reasons not to (*ibid*, pp. 185-6).

Lucas's idea of the 'limiting' factor helps bring out the complexity inherent in the idea of someone's being aware that they might be 'called to

¹¹ I am drawing here also on Griffiths and Lucas (1996, p. 197): 'The 'more we limit discretion, the less we can look for in the way of actual achievement or new initiatives.'

account'. It becomes apparent how this view of accountability differs from the managerial one. The managerialist aims for an unambiguous and non-complex view of what it would be for agent to 'give an account'.

4.6 'Having a reason'

Managerial transparency demands that agents be able to justify actions through reasons attached to ends, managerially approved. But is it always necessary for someone to provide a reason to act thus and so? Williams suggests that it is not:

When we say that someone ought to have acted in some required or desirable way in which he has not acted, we sometimes say that *there was a reason* for him to act that way—he had promised, for instance...Although we can say this, it does not seem to be connected in any secure way with the idea that *he had a reason* to act in that way. Perhaps he had no reason at all. In breaking an obligation he was not necessarily behaving irrationally or unreasonably, but badly. (Williams, 1993, p.192)

To have a reason (*logon echein*) does not necessarily mean one can give it (*logon didonai*)—this is the way Lucas (1993, p.186), drawing on Aristotle, puts the matter. We can be good but inarticulate deciders (Lucas, 1993, p.57), able to size up a situation rapidly, to act in a certain way, but unable to subject every reason we might have to explicit examination.

Does this convince? We need to understand more about the dialectic at play when an agent is engaged in goal-oriented, intentional action—between reasons that need to be explicitly articulated and ones that do not. The *activity of reasoning*, Aristotle, Lucas and Williams all appear to be saying, need require no more than that an agent be in a certain mental-cognitive state; and being in such a state is perfectly intelligible and rational without that agent's having to *make explicit* their reasoning. (More of this in Chapter 7 and 8.)

G.F. Schueler (2003, p.159) argues for a position sympathetic to this view:

Someone who acts for a reason must at a minimum take some consideration, at least one, as *providing* some reason for her to act as she does. But this is not to say that she herself needs to *conceptualize* this

consideration as providing her with a reason. She need not 'say to herself' that this consideration provides her with a reason....Of course...she might formulate the explicit thought that this consideration gives her a reason to act in this way. But formulating the explicit thought, and even perhaps sincerely agreeing to it, say, verbally, is neither necessary nor sufficient for it to be true of her that she regards this consideration as a reason to do what she does.

The idea, then, of 'having an 'awareness' (in Haydon's sense, see again, 4.4), suggests that one's ability to form beliefs in a way that is 'responsive to evidence is not at all the same as the ability to present reasons for one's beliefs, either to others or to oneself'.¹²

The problem we face here, of course, is that the notion of 'a reason for action' is ambiguous. For reasons can *justify* as well as *motivate* and, however logically separate they may claim to be (Straughan, 1988, p. 11), in practice these functions can combine.

So even if it may sound counter-intuitive—counter-intuitive because it might be thought that an essential defining part of what our rationality consists in is that we are always able to give reasons for what we do—it is becoming evident that practical rationality does not necessarily demand an agent's *explicit* cognisance of why she acts thus and so when she does. Someone can act when there may have been no call for explanation or justification, before, during or after that person's action. The fact that one is able to Φ without being able to explain or justify Φ -ing by articulating one's reasons does not compromise the rationality of the action Φ . MacIntyre (1988, pp.24-5) helps explain why this is so:

The structure of normality provides the ...basic framework for understanding action. Acting in accordance with those structures does not require the giving or the having of reason for so acting, except in exceptional types of circumstances in which those structures have been put in question...It is departing from what those structures prescribe which requires the having and the giving of reasons.

The theoretical model of practical rationality suggested in all the quotations I have so given so far in this section, expands on the notion of practical

¹² Kornblith, cited in Foley (2001), p.21

rationality that is presupposed by Lucas's idea of *negative responsibility*. His idea is compatible with an Aristotelian model of practical rationality. An agent's 'negative responsibility', we recall, serves as that agent's 'watching brief' to guard against all the innumerable things that have the potential to go wrong. The agent's *responsibleness* resides in this kind of *implicit* (i.e., non-explicit) watchfulness.

This idea is further cashed out by Stuart Hampshire (1978). The rational person according to this kind of model:

...is not governed, in a mechanical way, by explicit formulae or rules which he imposes on the facts... we can never completely specify the vast amount of collateral knowledge which we bring to bear in responding to an ordinarily complex situation...[T]his failure to specify, and to make explicit, does not impair the rationality either of the agent or of his actions... (Hampshire, 1978, pp. 89, 90).

The upshot of the discussion in this section is that the kind of rationality that is entirely appropriate for responsible agency has much less to do with assuming reasons must always be specifiable in advance of action and much more to do with the kind of rationality Oakeshott portrays:

No action is by itself 'rational'... [T]here is no ground... upon which we may exclude *a priori* any type of action. An impulsive action, a 'spontaneous outburst', activity of obedience to a custom or to rule, and an action which is preceded by a long reflective process, may, alike, be 'rational'. But it is neither 'rational' nor 'irrational' on account of these or in default of these... 'Rationality' is the certificate we give to any conduct which can maintain a place in the...coherence of activity which composes a way of living (Oakeshott, 1991, pp. 129-30).

4.7 Questions of justification

Let us just pause here for a moment and reflect how far we have come from the managerial perspective. The Aristotelian conception of good 'governance' will always depend on the skilful and intelligent use of discretion on a case-by-case basis by professionals, wise leaders or governors (Hood and Heald, 2006, p.60). The managerial conception of what counts as good 'governance', however, is that the choices, decisions, judgements and actions of the agent should always be capable of justification against pre-specified criteria or objectives (the 'ends' managers seek). In a managerial lifeworld there just is no other way of judging

whether expectations of public accountability have been met. But contrast this managerial way of understanding accountability with Lucas's interpretation of how a responsible person might be thought to be acting accountably within an Aristotelian lifeworld (Lucas 1993, p.206):

[I]n the discharge of responsibilities [it is a mistake]... to construe purposeful action in terms of some end to be achieved, which gives the rationale of the action, and hold that we should always be setting ourselves goals, and working out how to achieve them. [For] then it is natural to construe success by reference to those ends, and the extent to which they have been realised... The doctor whose timely advice saved his patients from contracting heart disease or cancer... [the school teacher] whose swift intervention saved a child from being bullied... all have nothing to show for their pains, because their main concern... rather than the pursuit of some definite good... [was the avoidance of] the bad things which but for them would have happened...

What has just been suggested will go against every instinct of the managerial mind:

“What *justifies* these ascriptions of responsibility or ‘answerability’ (as you call it) and how can *we* believe in those judgements if we are not to have access to explicit reasons and cannot do our checks that objectives are being met?”

This reaction is understandable, for what is now being suggested, according to the Aristotelian-Lucas view, is that the demands for more and more rationalization of activities, or for means and ends to be pre-specified explicitly as outcomes, outputs, products, delivery, targets, etc., is as impractical and irrational as it is ungrounded.

Nevertheless, let us attend to the challenge. To the dismay of the managerialists all that remains, if someone does press the case for *justification* is to make reference to a kind of fundamental, implicitly understood knowledge that shows itself in the ‘moment of action’, as Aristotle might have said (NE 1110a 14). It is this knowledge of the agent that serves to justify certain practical activities or ways of acting. For theorists of management it

will be very difficult to accept Williams's suggestion that a practice can 'hold itself up':

if [a] linear search for reasons is pursued, there will have to be at least one practice of reason-giving for which no reason is given and which holds itself up... We may not be able in any real sense, to justify [a practice] even to ourselves. A practice may be so directly related to our experience that the reason it provides will simply count as stronger than any reason that might be advanced for it (Williams, 1993, pp. 113-114).

Williams goes further: the idea that our practices must 'stand up to reflection' that will demand 'total explicitness', is based on a misunderstanding of rationality, both personal and political (Williams, *ibid*, p. 200). Wittgenstein, in *On Certainty* (1974, sections, 110,139,140), puts the point like this:

As if grounds did not come to an end sometime. But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting... Not only rules, but examples are needed for establishing a practice. Our rules leaves loop-holes open... the practice has to speak for itself. We do not learn the practice of making empirical judgements by learning rules; we are taught¹³ judgments and their connexion with other judgments...

4.8 Scepticism and accusations of pragmatic dogmatism

This is what the managerialist has to say to Williams and Wittgenstein:

"How can you seriously suggest that we run a public accountability system on the basis of a practice 'speaking' for itself? Why should we trust a practice to speak for itself? Without external forms of accountability those voices are merely 'subjective' or 'personal'. What you suggest is just *pragmatic dogmatism*."

The managerialists are like those who, in Williams's words, 'stand outside' a particular practice (Williams, 1993, p.114) and are sceptical how that practice can justify itself if it is not subject to the so-called 'objective', transparent

¹³ The word 'taught' has been offered for the original German, *beigebracht*, from the verb *beibringen*, to furnish, produce, impart, teach.

forms of audit accountability deployed to scrutinise organizational practices. What this means is that, when it comes to being audited in accordance with New Public Management standards of accountability, all who belong to professional communities of practice—whether educators, doctors or nurses, policemen/women, etc.—will speak, not in their own particular professional ‘voices’ but in the specialist, technical language that managerial modes of accountability demand. They will have to speak *managerialese*, otherwise their organizational ‘practices’ will not be considered fit to be judged as publicly accountable. Nothing less than this is acceptable—otherwise one is excluded.

Dewey helps us to see just how deeply mired the managerial position is in a Western philosophical tradition which insists that (i) the ‘practical’ be contrasted with its alleged opposite, the ‘theoretical’; and (ii) the ‘personal’ be associated with the ‘subjective’, with the implication that ‘subjective’ is inferior to ‘objective’ theoretical knowledge. To insist on making these dichotomies, Dewey argues, leads easily to the idea that practical and personal knowledge are in some way suspect: *private* and *secret*. Knowledge, he suggests, can be both personal and practical without ceasing to be either ‘public’—or open to criticism. He castigates those who think that:

everything of a practical nature is [to be] regarded as “merely” personal, and the “merely” has the force of denying legitimate standing in the court of cosmic jurisdiction (Dewey, 1977, p. 126)

It is ‘sheer prejudice’, he writes, ‘a culture-survival’, to think like this:

If we suppose the traditions of philosophic discussion wiped out and philosophy starting afresh from the most active tendencies of to-day...one can hardly imagine any philosophical view springing up and gaining credence, which did not give large place...to the practical and the personal...without employing disparaging terms such as ...merely subjective and so on... (Dewey, *ibid*, p.126)

According to Dewey, the error in thinking in this ‘prejudiced’ way is due to mistakenly thinking of practical knowledge as something fixed and static. It should be thought, rather, as an *activity of knowing* by means of which we are

able to transform our experiences (Johnson, 2003, p. 339). Dewey, I am sure, if faced with the managerialists' scepticism, would say that they just do not understand the nature of practical knowledge; that, in their quest to make as much practical activity as they can explicit (through 'rationalization'), they go against that nature and, ultimately, risk destroying it.

Interesting comparisons may be drawn here, between the thoughts of Dewey, cited above, and the part of Michael Polanyi's work which is concerned with implicit, or as he preferred to call it, 'tacit' or 'personal' knowledge. Polanyi always insisted that his use of 'personal'— as exemplified in his idea of *personal knowledge*—must not be seen as a synonym for 'subjective' and as somehow an 'inferior' kind of knowledge. On the contrary, *the personal* is linked to what it is to make *responsible judgements*:

[an] act of personal knowing makes us both necessarily participate in its shaping and acknowledge its results with universal intent. This is the prototype of intellectual commitment. It is the act of commitment...that saves personal knowledge from being merely subjective. Intellectual commitment is a responsible decision, in submission to the compelling claims of what in good conscience I conceive to be true. (Polanyi, 1962, p.65).

So what are we to conclude from our inquiries? In Dewey's claim that the *practical* and the *personal* can be shared and made public, and in the congruence we find between his views and those of Polanyi concerning the epistemological status of practical knowledge (which, for Polanyi, is always rooted in the 'tacit', the *implicit*), and in the notion of 'negative responsibility', I suggest that we have put up a modest defence against the managerialists' scepticism. Indirectly, we have defended an Aristotelian model of practical rationality. We might not have won over the total sceptic who is dissatisfied with the kind of practical rationality which Lucas, Williams, Wittgenstein and Oakeshott propose. But we have offered apologists for managerialism a

different perspective from which they might re-assess their allegiance to the explicit and their quasi-Cartesian fixation with 'clearness and distinctness'.¹⁴

To win the apologists over we should have to persuade them to abandon their fixation on measurement and give up the idea that we can only judge the worth or viability of a practice if we continually bombard it with tests to measure its successes. The apologists will find disturbing the kind of freedom that is needed for negative responsibility to be given its head. They will think it no better than an 'anomic' or 'ungoverned' form of accountability (Bailey, 1980). "Accountable, if and only if following explicit instructions", dies hard. How different is the non-managerial view, described by Lucas:

Many people are severer judges of themselves than anyone else would dare to be, and have more intimate knowledge of failures and inadequacies, and can hold themselves to account more exactly than anybody else (Lucas, 1993, p. 187).

We have, then, two completely different worldviews: one which is prepared to trust people and their practical knowledge, recognizing that there is no alternative, and one that is not prepared for that. Which one is more appropriate for grounding a public accountability system? Having shown the cost of continuing with the second alternative and the near certainty of alienation and bad outcomes for which no one can be identified as being strictly responsible (see Chapter 3), I adjourn the question till Chapter 6.

Before I conclude, here is an example which might help to show the enormous leap of faith which managerial apologists will have to make if they are to open their mind to the kind of practical rationality that has been suggested in this chapter.

Consider, with Andrew Davis (2000), the case of a teacher who is doing the right kinds of things in a classroom, but, when she is questioned by an Ofsted inspector and asked to assess herself, she cannot give a satisfactory

¹⁴ See [Appendix 3](#), note 14, for places we can detect Cartesianism in the language of school inspection.

answer. She is unable to provide an explicit account of her actions or make assertions about how well her learning objectives have been achieved. So the inspector is unable to assess the teacher's own self-assessment. A formal statement will need to be made that the teacher 'failed' the required criterion of assessment. On this view a gap appears between her expertise and her 'accountability'. But is there really a gap?

There is only a gap between the teacher's 'expertise' and her 'accountability' if what is to *count* as knowledge is based on a Platonically inspired paradigm of rationalism. That paradigm dictates that we shall only count as having a rational grasp of *x* if we can articulate *approved* reasons.¹⁵ In section 4.5 and 4.6 we argued against such a requirement. Neither rationality nor rational agency is subject to such a requirement.

Davis's example of the teacher highlights the kind of problem that can occur when, in order to judge whether a teacher is worthy of 'qualified teacher status' (QTS), an explicit, pre-specified list of 'standard based assessments'¹⁶ is brought to bear on her teaching practice. The rationale for this approach is ostensibly to maintain the educational accountability of the teaching profession. But the result, as we see, may be a clash of epistemologies and rationalities, where the agent *within* the practice comes off badly in the eyes of one who 'stands outside' the practice itself. The teacher's knowledge served her well enough to teach the lesson that was observed. But she was unable to articulate what she knew. Does this mean that she was not responsible or that she was educationally 'unaccountable'?

That the teacher's response might not do justice to the actual quality and standard of her teaching only tells us that it might not be possible always to break down one's knowledge into particular elements or say how or why one knows how to do certain things. (See Luntley, 2000, p.30, on this).¹⁷ This is

¹⁵ See [Appendix 3](#), note 15.

¹⁶ Such as DfES (2002) which specifies 84 standards; see also *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2001), 35 (4) which contains several articles on the subject of school inspection.

¹⁷ Cp. Polanyi (1962, p.56) who discusses how someone's 'skilful performance' may be 'paralysed' when a 'sense of context' is destroyed.

not to be understood as a significant weakness, Aristotle suggests.¹⁸ As we shall see in Chapter 6, it is in the nature of practical knowledge. *That* is the leap of faith demanded of the managerialists.

4.9 Judgement and ‘ends’

In a managerial world, having a sense of accountability involves agents making choices from amongst various managerially specified ‘ends’ (aims, objectives, outcomes, goals, missions, etc.). Pre-specified objectives will be the ‘ends’ to which an agent must work. This is deliberate, a way of achieving a neutral way of being able to evaluate, assess and compare standards—without bias. But, as MacIntyre points out—*à propos* of the spurious managerial quest for ‘neutrality’—*any* ‘ends’ which have substance, and thereby raise questions of value will lie ‘outside the scope’ (MacIntyre, 1985, p.30) of an organization run on managerial lines. Are apologists for managerialism who are ready to contemplate the demise of ‘negative responsibility’ (in the sense we have discussed in this chapter) equally prepared to sacrifice real judgement? As Mark Lutz cries out, ‘Isn’t choosing between *ends* what *real* judgment is about?’ (Lutz, 1999, p.154).

Here is a rallying cry to make us look in the direction of a completely different model, one drawn, I suggest, on Aristotelian lines—of how an agent makes responsible decisions and judgments. These will be decisions and judgments that will arise from an agent’s own ethical education (Burnyeat, 1980), her ‘ethical formation’ (Lovibond, 2002) or *Bildung* (McDowell, 1994, p.84). Such attributes, together with the agent’s capacity for *phronesis*, will enable an agent to make choices that do not have to align themselves with the ‘ends’ that managerialists articulate. What may surprise the apologist for managerialism is the way in which this alternative model characterizes practical reason while dispensing altogether with the cult of the explicit. For it is in the idea of *the implicit* (the non-explicit) that we shall locate the notion of accountability.

¹⁸ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V.10

Chapter 5

Accountability, answerability and the virtue of responsibility: sketch of a neo-Aristotelian model of practical rationality

...of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity...[T]he virtues we get first by exercising them...we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II 1103a 20-25

...moral virtue is the outcome of a successful process of *formation*.
Lovibond (2002), p.9

Our nature is largely second nature, and our second nature is the way it is not just because of the potentialities we were born with, but also because of our *Bildung*...
...Our *Bildung* actualizes some of the potentialities we were born with.
McDowell (1996), pp.87-8

5.1 Is there a model of practical rationality to rival the managerial one?

In previous chapters we have spent time examining certain aspects of management theory and practice. But now we need a competing, compelling alternative theory of practical rationality that can be put into contrast with the 'New Public Management' form of practical rationality—even if only a sketch of a theory. There is no other way to throw into relief the corrosive aspects of the practical rationality which orchestrates all the different elements associated with New Public Management—and the managerialism it has spawned.

The rival theory I shall present is from Aristotle. Just as a shaft of bright sunlight picks out dust particles in the air, the Aristotelian model will pinpoint that which seems alien to reason in this 'new public' model of practical rationality. Aristotle offers us a model of practical rationality that shows what the *structure* of an agent's practical reasoning needs to look like if purposive action is to aim at 'practically wise' ends. Someone who is merely

'clever' at following *the means* to an end might be in pursuit of a silly, bad or evil end (NE 1144a 18-28; Cp.1152a 11-15; *Politics* 1331b 32-33). Can the managerial model of practical rationality distinguish between these two kinds of purposive action?—this is the kind of question I seek to make relevant to ask in this chapter.

An Aristotelian model of practical rationality, as we shall see, understands goal-oriented, purposive action very differently from a managerial one. Stephen Toulmin's description of what it is to explain human behaviour in 'the Aristotelian manner' well illustrates just the kind of contrast that I think our inquiry demands:

[Aristotelians] do not *impose* patterns or ideal forms on human behaviour...rather, [they] recognize such general patterns as operative factors *in* human behaviour... then explain particular actions by relating them to ...recognized modes of behaviour (Toulmin, 1969, p.100).

Aristotelian practical rationality is remarkable in that it is congruent with the ordinary way in which we make decisions every day. Unlike the managerial model of practical rationality, it does not carry presuppositions about rational action from business, economic, or systems-organization theories. In so far as any of those theories are needed and Aristotle leaves out something vital we shall have to consider bringing some or all of them back. But let us see if we are forced to do so.

We begin with a sketch of Aristotle's theory based on some distinctive points central to his model of practical rationality. In the next chapter I shall set out his theory more fully. At the outset, rather than plunge the reader immediately into Aristotelian exegesis, I shall draw on just a few Aristotelian insights to highlight what is deficient in the managerial theory of practical rationality.

5.2 Individual practical rationality

When a person acts or chooses how to act, he or she acts or chooses for the sake of an end, namely, what Aristotle calls a '*that-for-the-sake-of-which*'

(NE 1140b 16-19).¹ Either (when possible)² the person chooses that end itself or else chooses some means to the end or some constituent of the end. But *where* does the end itself come from? What determines an agent's starting point for action (NE 1110a 16-17; 1112b 33-34)?³

For Aristotle, an end—a *that-for-the-sake-of-which*—is the object of a want or desire (*orexis*) that is both endorsed and adopted along with the means towards achieving that object. But to the extent that the issue is one of practical rationality such a motivating kind of desire cannot be just any kind of desire—a vague, ungrounded, unfocused wish or longing. Where desire for a good end is the initiating point of action and where reflection or deliberation are in point—when *phronesis* is at work—the *that-for-the-sake-of-which* appears to an agent either as *worth* pursuing in itself (under the aspect of the good) or as forced upon the agent by some existing commitment which can itself satisfy the agent (under some aspect of the good) (NE 1094a 16-23; 1138b 22). That takes us back to the *that-for-the-sake-of-which* that grounds the purposive action of agent.

Sometimes the agent takes her time to formulate the *that-for-the-sake-of-which* by 'calculation and reasoning' (NE 1117a 21)⁴ or after consultation with others when it is difficult to decide what to do (NE 1112b 3-9). Sometimes, though, the matter has to be decided immediately. But even in this second sort of case we can *reconstruct* the agent's practical reasoning. Of course, there are clear differences between 'hot', spontaneous, intuitive forms of decision making and 'cooler', deliberative ones.⁵ But the resemblance between these two modes of decision-making, I suggest, is more striking than the differences between them. As Aristotle says, 'sudden actions are in accordance with one's character' (NE 1117a 21). In such 'sudden' moments one does not suddenly

¹ This is just one of many references throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* to 'the-that-for-the-sake-of-which'. See [Appendix 3](#), note 1, for further elaboration.

² Aristotle's notion of 'possible' needs to be situated in the context of his wider discussion about *the voluntary* in NE Book III, Ch. 1. See [Appendix 3](#), note 2.

³ The notion of *arche/archai*—starting-point(s)—is used in more than one context and with more than one meaning. See [Appendix 3](#), note 3.

⁴ Translation from Broadie and Rowe (2002). Ross (1931) has 'calculation and rule'.

⁵ On this distinction, see Eraut (1994, p.53), (1995); Schön 1983; Beckett (1996); Beckett and Hager (2002, p.10).

lose all one's dispositions, values or beliefs. So if an agent is asked to 'give an account' of what happened in those 'sudden actions' the reasons she gives under questioning (by a supervisor, assessor, inspector, barrister etc.), will always need to bear on what, in the circumstances, *mattered*, *prevailed* or *counted* for that agent. And that will reveal her character.

In so far as the *that-for-the-sake-of-which* is a rational basis on which to deliberate or act, the agent will quite typically have had a range of questions to consider, such as: What is important here? Will pursuit of this end stand in the way of achieving something else that matters equally or even more? How much does this end itself matter? How much will I have to be prepared to re-specify this *that-for-the-sake-of-which* in order to attain the good that is to be achieved here?

Spelled out in this way, these may well appear heavy, ponderous questions. But adult people often run through such a gamut of questions as a matter of course when there is a need—say, at a weekend—to balance the needs, aims and hopes of all the individual members of a family, including one's own. How does an agent decide, even from what might be quite a mundane list of things, such as needing to finish a report for work next week, or to keep a promise to children to go out, or to remember to phone a friend, etc., *what is for the best?* “If I keep my promise then the children will be happy but I might not have time to write the report (so: trouble at work). If I break the promise then I disappoint and upset the children (so: I betray their trust).” And so on. “*What really matters here?*” is the basic question the agent is tussling with. If practical reason or rationality is to be at issue, such questions, as those I listed earlier, above, cannot be avoided if the activity of *judgement* is to mean anything.

Once we imagine someone's taking questions about what matters seriously, it appears that a reasonable person must not only have a dispositional sensitivity to the opportunities, challenges and pitfalls that present themselves at the moment when she is to act. She must have something else as well—namely some a *antecedent sense* of what matters to a human life and what

doesn't matter, and, along with that, some way of applying that sense to her own case. The rational agent, I am suggesting, has to consider her end of action and bring to bear upon it some antecedent formation, a process of development a person has gone through, and a mentality, a certain state of mind or being which such a formation will bring into being. The logic of the term *formation*, as it will be used in this chapter and the next, is similar to the logic of the German idea of *Bildung*. Both of these terms stand for complex sets of ideas, and—rather like the term 'education'—can be deployed either to describe a process of development, an initiation into a certain way of being, or the actual state of being of a person who has experienced such a process of formation and initiation.⁶ *Bildung*, as I intend to use this complex concept, is to be thought of as a dynamic, on-going developmental process without an ascertainable limit, or *pre-determined* end-point.⁷ Following Gadamer (2001), I see it as a process of formation, a process of 'self-education' (as he puts it) that lasts for a person as long as life itself lasts for that person.

There can be many varieties of formation—a *managerial* formation, even a *mafia* formation, for example. But our concern is with *ethical* formation (*ethismos*), as expounded by Aristotle (when he describes the kind of deliberation that someone with *phronesis* will embark on), and with *professional* formation as that overlaps ethical formation. Professional formation, Terence McLaughlin helped me to see (through his idea of *pedagogic phronesis* as that relates to the teaching profession), is a structural counterpart of ethical formation. (More of this in Chapter 6.) It is this antecedent element which pre-exists a particular action or decision, this *formation* of a person—or, following McDowell (1996), their *Bildung*—and its application to 'the moment of action' (NE 1110a 14), that we are attending to in this chapter. We need to understand better how those elements encompassed in a person's *Bildung*, the 'animating values... inner resources and character' which a person possesses (Winch, 2006b, p.108) contribute to particular *acts of judgement*. And as Winch reminds us, character formation is not just

⁶ See [Appendix 3](#), note 6.

⁷ The notion of *Bildung* I am drawing on here comes from the tradition where *Bildung* is an *on-going* process of formation of character and dispositions. But see [Appendix 3](#), note 7, for a brief account of alternative conceptions of *Bildung*.

inculcation or habituation into virtues. It also involves 'the development of interests, abilities, attitudes and values' (Winch, *ibid*, p.76).

For an Aristotelian, rational personhood is something more than an instrumental agential capacity for maximizing 'desire-satisfaction'. It has to do with the kind of person someone has become—her (ever-developing) conception of what *matters* that prepares her to see the possibilities and impossibilities that present themselves in this or that situation in which she is to act or decide.

Managerialists want all goals to be made explicit. But Aristotelian agents who have undergone a process of ethical formation in the sense we are sketching now understand effortlessly and implicitly an indefinite mass of considerations which, if they had to be made explicit every time any decision was taken, would be *impossible to itemise or enumerate*. For many decisions would have their origin in infancy or childhood when the first rudimentary building blocks of moral and social understanding were being laid—in the early stages of *formation*.⁸

It is this formation that enables agents who make goals to be in a position to qualify or further specify the goals they choose to act upon, and, if necessary, to re-assess the terms on which the goals are worth pursuing. That which starts 'from within' (*archai*) (*Eudemian Ethics* 1224b 8-14) depends, wherever one happens to be, on the needs and necessities upon which one has to act. The ethically/professionally formed person's knowledge about the end to be pursued, in so far as this is general and represents a whole way of being or acting, cannot, from the nature of the case, be given a complete verbal articulation. (How could it? This is a slice of life.)

Sabina Lovibond (2002, p.28), illuminating this aspect of Aristotle's doctrine, stresses 'the *uncodifiability*' of what someone with formation knows

⁸ My MA dissertation, *Understanding Moral Understanding* (2000), London University, sought to understand both the starting points for social and ethical awareness in human understanding and the acquisition of moral concepts in early childhood.

(original emphasis). So a person's action which shows the presence of such knowledge cannot be reduced to the mastery of something given in a form of words. Rather it is itself a capacity to determine, *articulately enough for the purpose*, what end is to be pursued *here* in a particular context, if the overall end is to be made real *here*.

Consider how someone with the kind of formation we are talking about is always at the ready, exercising a 'watching brief' to guard against the *innumerable* things that may spoil or undermine the achievement of the goal. The watching brief is carried as implicit, personal knowledge. No code of practice, realistically, could enumerate everything that might have to be guarded against. Nor could the *that-for-the-sake-of-which*, towards which a rational agent deliberates and on the basis of which she acts, be re-described in words that encompass everything it represents. This is because a desire (*orexis*) that serves in its context as an appropriate starting point for practical reasoning is not a mere form of words. It is a state of being (Lovibond, 2002). It issues from a general conception and developed trust of what is worthy and worthwhile (Strike, 1999)—a conception of the good/*telos* (NE 1142b-33). That conception enables an agent to conceive ends, *to test them under the aspect of the good*, and either renew her confidence in whatever she is proposing, or to spell out (to herself or others) what may be judged to be problematic/bad/hurtful/etc. in the proposed action. In other words, she understands the meaning of her own *that-for-the-sake-of-which* and how it relates to a larger set of concerns that may involve others' well-being. She understands how it relates to *eudaimonia*, to happiness, or to flourishing as a human being.⁹

5.3 Practical rationality within institutional organizations

Now let us consider an organization and the rationality of its operations. This shift of focus obviously makes a difference, but it does not simplify the question of the *that-for-the-sake-of-which*. Just as an individual will fall into

⁹ There is no exact translation of the Greek, *eudaimonia*. See [Appendix 3](#), note, 9.

irrationality unless she understands what is good about her *that-for-the-sake-of-which*, the terms on which it is worth pursuing and the terms on which it may have to be abandoned, so will an enterprise, a firm, a school or health service, or even a ministry or agency of government fall into irrationality if it does not make clear to itself and those who work for it what is worthwhile about the course or policy it is pursuing. It must not forget the reason why it embarked on this or that policy.

An organization conducts itself rationally to the extent that it validates its policy in the larger framework in which it has its being, whether this be (if it is a private company) the long-term interests of its shareholders and stakeholders, or (if it is public institution) say, the education of pupils or students (in schools, colleges, universities), or the health needs of the public (in hospitals, doctors' surgeries, etc.), for which it has been made guardian. A policy pursued will be rational to the extent that it appears as answering to some good within that larger framework and to the extent that it can be interpreted in these or those circumstances in a way as answering to that good.

What, then, in the institutional case corresponds to the formation or *Bildung* of an individual agent? I suggest: a shared and communicable sense of the human good that is served by the institution itself—and especially so if it is a *public* institution. Such a sense cannot be wholly encapsulated by words alone—as we find in 'mission statements'. At best, a mission statement expresses some part of that shared sense or *ethos*. But in itself a mission statement for an organization is just words, not a state of being. At worst, whatever high ideals and objectives a mission statement expresses, if the organization is carrying out time-wasting, dubious or corrupt practices then the words on the statement will be just idling, like a broken wheel that engages with nothing.

An individual who works within an organization that has an inexplicit yet communicable ethos that serves some indispensable human good (the health of patients, the safe conveyance of passengers, the education of pupils, etc.) needs to understand the policies she is charged with implementing in the

light of her participation in that sense of a *shared purpose or role*. (Recall the railway engineer from Chapter 3, interviewed after the Hatfield crash, whose understanding of his *telos* was that he was part of a large shared concern to make railways carry passengers *safely*). It is by virtue of that participation that one who works in an organization will have a sense of what-is-to-be-guarded-against—even to the point of questioning the policies one is asked to administer. It is in this way that someone who works in an organization may still retain a ‘critical element’, and avoid becoming merely a ‘servant of policy’ (Young, 1999, p. 3), one who thinks it sufficient to say, if ever asked to ‘give an account’, “*I was just following orders*”.

This is the place to note that one with some shared, *implicit* sense of the good that the organization is concerned with, not only has that which John Lucas calls ‘negative responsibility’ (discussed in Chapter 4), the ‘watching brief’ I spoke about above, where an agent is attuned to the possibilities of things not turning out as planned. Such a person can also have a sense of flourishing (*eudaimonia*)—even a sense of pride—through their own endeavours, as well as a sense of helping to contribute to the well-being of the collective, co-operative practical rationality of an organization (Mackie, 1985). Here, if anywhere, is what protects an organization from the dissipation of its efforts, irresponsibility, indifference, neglect, stress, low morale and ‘alienation’ (see Woods (2005) on this) of those who work within it.¹⁰

Here we return to the irreducibly ethical dimension of an agent’s engagement with her own (authentically initiated) practical reason, and to the formation, nature and bearing of a person’s character. On an Aristotelian view, good practical judgement must be rooted in an affirmation of the idea of a robust sense of *personal* agency, not primarily—as in a managerially run organization—in the idea of a well-run *system* with clear targets, prescriptions and regulations for all to meet or obey. For Aristotle, as for Dewey, thousands of years later, practical judgments are not about systematising practical

¹⁰ See longer note 19, given for **Chapter 9**, in Appendix 3, for documentation of stress and ill-health in the teaching profession.

knowledge under some overarching theory. Practical judgements are about persons *acting* in the world. They have ‘*direct* existential import’.¹¹

5.4 A thought experiment: Aristotle confronts an apologist for managerialism and the apologist for managerialism sets a challenge

Suppose Aristotle came back to life, acquainted himself with recent political and economic history and studied the way in which, over the last century, the notion of *professional knowledge*—its status and what should substantiate its content—has become such a contentious and topical issue.¹² Suppose also, that in order to situate himself more fully in the modern world, he reviews the present work of the doctor, the financier/business man and the navigator (Cp. NE 1104a 10; 1112b 4-5). Then, having brought himself up to date with how the formal structures of our present democratic arrangements differ from the Athenian conception of participative democracy and how these formal structures of governance now impact upon the institutions of the *polis*, he confronts an apologist for managerialism. I imagine that this is what Aristotle might say:

“I notice that teachers now have to defer to the precepts issued by “line-managers”. I notice that the members of many professions are judged not on their own terms—according to their own *telos*, what they are aiming for—but on the criteria and rules of another: that of *management*. So the thing I want to ask is this. Why do you believe that managerial ‘ends’ *should* claim priority in *praxis*? This seems all wrong. Surely to think in this way is to ‘take refuge in theory’ (NE 1105b13) and to misunderstand the nature of what it is to have to *make* a practical judgement? The ‘end aimed for is not knowledge’—*knowing*, say, what *counts* as the science of ‘best practice’—‘but action’, *doing* the thing that it is right to do (NE 1095a 5-6).

¹¹ Dewey, cited in Hager (2000), p.292

¹² The literature which considers such questions is vast. See [Appendix 3](#), note 12.

'The fact that men use the language [of 'excellence' and 'quality'] that flows from [managerial] knowledge proves nothing; for even ...those who have just begun to learn a science can string together ...phrases.' (NE 1147a 18-22). What does that kind of knowledge show about their capacity to do the right thing?

The kind of practical knowledge— '*know how*', I believe you all now call it—needed for a well-run practice, starts not from 'universals' (those managerial principles and rules for 'best practice' which your managers speak about) but from the 'particulars'—in specific contexts (NE 1143b 5). Your managers are mistaken to 'look for precision' (NE 1098a 26-27) all the time. For the subject matter of the practical, things to do with 'conduct and...of what is good for us, these have no fixity'. No one statement will be correct for all contexts (NE 1104a 3-5). Some one with 'know how' will grasp implicitly in practice—through *noûs*—how to apply 'principles' (NE 1104a 5-9; 1137b30-1138a 5; 1143b4-6). For they will know what *good* is at issue in the context.

'Know how', I say, can *only* be understood relative to human purpose and to what is conducive to *eudaimonia* (human flourishing). For 'the end of an action is relative to the occasion' (NE 1110a 13). And everything that I have said bears, too, on that which concerns the good of the *polis*. For the flourishing of an individual and the well-being of the *polis* are interdependent (NE 1103b 3-7; *Politics* 1252a 2-6)."

Straightaway, though, we can equally imagine that Aristotle would have to contend with the incredulity of the managerialist:

“Surely clear ‘ends’ have to be set to ensure that the *polis* is served well, as *you* yourself, Aristotle, would clearly wish. It may be hard for you to accept, but such clarity—we now call it ‘transparency’—is a prerequisite of a modern democracy. How could your ideas about practical matters—that they ‘lack fixity’—be put to use in a public accountability system? And just how would agents know how to apply principles in practice, as you suggest is possible, if we don’t make clear at the outset *which* principles are to be put to use in practice?”

I challenge you to answer: where else *can* ‘ends’ in practice come from if not through clearly specified targets, objectives or outcomes as means to those ends? How will anyone *know* what they are meant to be doing without making it absolutely *explicit* what it is that does need doing?”

I intend to take up the challenge that has just been made, in a way that I hope Aristotle would not have condemned outright. In the next chapter we shall explore in some detail what it will take for a person to make a certain decision how to act—which could go in either one of two ways: *in* the public interest or *against* it. From an Aristotelian perspective we shall examine the structure of this man’s thought and see how what he decides springs from the kind of formation he has acquired, the sort of person he is and his *engagement in* the good. But before we get to the next chapter, there is just a final bit of the sketch that needs to be filled in.

5.5 Reply to the challenge: preliminaries

First, I need to make it clear that in the interpretation of Aristotle that will be offered, I lay no claim to originality. My reading derives from interpretations of several Aristotelian scholars.¹³

¹³ [Appendix 3](#), note 13, lists those to whom I am particularly indebted.

Secondly, for brevity, *ethismos* (ethical formation), *Bildung*, upbringing, habituation, etc., will often be shortened under the single word, *formation*. But in this choice of word, I wish to avoid any suggestion that someone's acquiring formation is little more than a process of being moulded—a 'being-for-others' (Hollis, 1985, p. 222). 'Formation' may, of course, be used in this sense.¹⁴ But that is a sense which would 'lose the actor completely' (Hollis, *ibid*, p. 227). Someone who acquires formation, in the Aristotelian sense, is an active participant in the whole process.

But how does one go about building a rival model of practical rationality from the place where we are in now? In answering the managerial challenge I shall not confine myself to Aristotle. I shall marry his theory with what we can learn from the less formalized, pre-managerial modes of administration that the pioneers of management-by-objectives and NPM were determined to replace.

Without commitment to be in agreement with everything which managerialism displaced, I propose that we try to see those older modes of administration in the way their administrators might have seen them. How would *they* have answered the managerialist's challenge? I want to understand the *praxeological justification*¹⁵ which those pre-managerial administrators might have given for their way of 'doing things'. Can we set that kind of justification against the justification which apologists for managerialism now claim for their way of 'doing things'?

If the old public administration paradigm is to contribute to our response to the challenge, there are three things we need to understand:

- (1) the pre-managerial idea of practical rationality on which all older modes of administration relied;

¹⁴ See Holland (1997), pp.170-179, who discusses some 'extreme essentialist' positions which pay no attention to 'competing sites of the self'.

¹⁵ See [Appendix 3](#), note 15, for more on *praxeology*.

- (2) the largely unsystematized or intuitive knowledge on which these modes depended: knowledge made more articulate only on demand and at need, and knowledge that was never *fully* articulate because it was almost coextensive with the whole lifeworld that the practitioners themselves inhabited;
- (3) the non-fractured, open-ended kind of *responsibleness* (as described in Chapters 3 and 4) which, at their best, these modes demanded of those who worked in the service of the public—what we called in the last chapter, someone’s *answerability* to expectations of public accountability.

It is part of the ‘reconstruction’ task we are now undertaking to see how (1) (2) and (3) would have hung together in any careful defence of the administrative culture that they supported. Apart from the faults managerialists have pointed out about ‘outmoded’, ‘inefficient’, ‘inflexible’ and ‘monopolistic’ forms of traditional bureaucracies¹⁶ and despite the fact that in ‘such critiques, the more positive traits of professional practice are usually ignored’ (Cribb and Ball, 2005, p.118) what may be said of the merits of the Old Public Administration culture?

One thing worth pointing out, straightaway, is that we can see the rationality of older modes of administration as developing out of the *everyday* rationality of the individual agent and not from some *theory* about how humans should act in organizations. That is to say, we can see the practical rationality, characteristic of older modes of administration, as developing out of the practical wisdom (*phronesis*) of the individual agent in the company of his/her colleagues or associates. The starting point of our enquiry, then, is *phronesis*.

¹⁶ For some faults about the old administrative culture that were admitted at the time by one who thought that the civil service could update its management without dismantling everything

In managerialist textbooks, *decision-making* is represented as one, among many, desirable organizational skills to be acquired for strategic planning and for demonstrating creativity (e.g., ‘blue-skies’ or ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking). So consultants and researchers will recommend *systematising* the activity of decision-making by introducing ‘explicit strategies’ (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006, p. 150) to help people respond to the question, ‘What should I do in this situation?’:

...[I]nstituting a disciplined process of decision-making ... to set goals and monitor performance... enhance[s] organizational performance (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006, p. 136.).¹⁷

In their search for the ideal decision-making model, managers may well latch on to the idea of Aristotelian *phronesis*, practical wisdom, and see something attractive to be mined from it, viz., the bare idea of ‘know how’. But to think ‘know how’ can be extracted in this way would be to misunderstand *phronesis* completely.¹⁸

‘Know how’, it is true, is often used by some as a gloss for the term *phronesis*. But the risk then, is that ‘know how’ will be reduced simply to *knowing what to do in practice*.¹⁹ Without further qualification, the original meaning of *phronesis* will then be lost. For in certain contexts, ‘*knowing what to do in practice*’ may mean no more than that an agent knows how to comply with pre-specified ends set by others²⁰—the antithesis of what Aristotle intended in the idea of an agent’s capacity to make a *phronetic* choice.

But once we put to one side managerial theories of ‘strategic’ decision-making and restore the discussion of choice, decision-making and judgement to the domain of philosophy where *phronesis* began its philosophical life—

the civil service had stood for, see Lord Simey’s *Note of Reservation* to Chapter 1 of ‘The Fulton Report’ (which we discussed in Chapter 2).

¹⁷ ‘Strategic management is about how firms can create and sustain competitive advantage’, Sako (2002), p. 91. See also Pfeffer and Sutton (2006, pp. 137, 150).

¹⁸ For a rich discussion on the complexity and the ‘varieties’ of *phronesis* in the literature, see Noel (1999).

¹⁹ See Beckett and Hager (2000), p. 173, who choose to explicate *phronesis* in this form of words.

²⁰ See Pring (2001a, p.281) who cashes out the scope of what ‘others’ will mean in educational contexts.

namely within the Aristotelian theory of the ethical that contains it—a missing component will come onto the scene, over and above the elements I refer to in (1) (2) (3).

This is the idea (4), of ethical formation (or, *formation*, for short) which I introduced earlier and of its relation, *professional formation*. This is the stance, or dispositional outlook, which an agent—or the sensible ‘servant’ of the public—is able to identify in a particular context of practical choice: the ‘*that-for-the-sake-of-which*’ someone is to act (NE 1140b 16-19).

In that framework, it ceases to be a mystery how *phronesis* might play a part in a work situation, how, that is, through *Erziehung* (upbringing) and participation in life a person gains a way of understanding and seeing the world. In this capacity, if she finds employment, she will then be formed further by the expectations of, and communication with, associates and colleagues in a workplace, ‘trusting in action and speech as a mode of being together’, as Hannah Arendt (1957, p.208) puts it. On these terms *occupational formation* is revealed as another element of the developmental process, *Bildung*.

Acquiring an occupational formation is the process of initiation into a form of life; it is to ‘participate’ in a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1998). In the process of coming to share in a certain culture or outlook, those who ‘participate’ will have acquired a whole range of concerns, some of which will be prohibitive in nature, whilst others will be understood to promote certain good ends. These concerns are waiting for the moment they might find fulfilment in a particular context. (A person so ‘formed’ is like a well-rigged sailing boat, prepared to sail off in pursuit of its destination, ready for either calm waters or storms.) Such concerns will not be in any order (as a list of ‘key points’ or ‘criteria’ will be set out in order of priority for ‘good practice’). But, in a *given* context, a person who has developed the kind of formation we are discussing will be able to say which of all these concerns there are at issue in that context and how important each one is *there and then*.

5.6 The relationship between *principles* and *phronesis*

In our thought experiment (in 5.4, above), the managerialist challenged Aristotle to say how agents would know how to apply principles in practice, if it were not made clear at the outset, and in explicit terms, *which* principles are to be used in practice. This is set as a challenge because in a managerial concept of accountability an agent's decision-making and practical reason is directed to *start* from a procedural principle, carefully worded in the name of, say, promoting 'effective schools', a 'learning environment', 'quality assurance', or 'excellence in practice'. On an Aristotelian view, the managers have got things the wrong way round:

...when the thing is indefinite the rule is indefinite, like the leaden rule used in ...[constructing a] moulding; the rule adapts itself to the shape of the stone and is not rigid (NE 1137b 31).

What Aristotle means by this is that principles, in the guise of 'guidelines' or 'rules of procedure', however useful they may be, need to be flexibly applied in practice. For, even at their best, such 'principles' are generalizations *from* previous practice. They do not displace a practitioner's grasp of the good that is at issue *right now*. It is simply a mistake 'to look for precision in all things alike', Aristotle suggests (NE 1098a 26-27) for, 'about some things it is not possible to make a universal [a fully general] statement' (NE 1137b 13). This is because the subject matter of the practical is unlimited (NE 1137b 18-19, 29-32). Principles, then, may serve to remind the agent of what, amongst many other considerations, she needs to bear in mind, but as Joseph Dunne suggests, universals 'are always modifiable in the light of ... continuing exposure to particular cases' (Dunne 1993, p.361). They are modified because they are understood as fallible generalizations. They will be modified in the light of what someone with formation will see as relevant for a particular context.

So when the *phronimos* applies a principle in practice, doing so is not the same as simply following some form of words. When a rational person acts on a principle she acts from a state of shared understanding that has grown

from a shared public language. Such a principle develops its own genealogy as it 'adapts' itself to the historicity of life. Consider how particular laws have to be amended or re-interpreted in the light of new cases. *Practical judgement* is always needed to decide how a principle *applies* in context, to refine and possibly re-state the would-be universal statement, adjusting it, if necessary, to make a correct statement for this or that context:

Nor is practical wisdom (*phronesis*) concerned with universals [generalities] only—it must also recognize the particulars [the specifics instantiated by particulars]; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars (NE 1141b 15-17).

It is not, then, that Aristotle disagrees with the managerialist about the usefulness of principles in the sense of precepts, prescriptions, rules, codes, mandates, instructions, guidelines. The argument that general principles are insufficient for correct choice does not prevent the Aristotelian ethical view also taking a 'deep interest in the universal' (Nussbaum, 1990, p.38). The important point here is that principles, if not applied with fresh judgement in specific contexts, will prove insufficient for an agent to be able to respond well to new circumstances. Indeed, when principles are not understood as providing only general guidance concerning the good, and instead are applied rigidly, whatever the circumstances, they may in fact frustrate or destroy that good.

This is why, in opposition to the managerialist lifeworld, the Aristotelian insists on the logical and practical priority of 'the particular'. General principles have a role in practice only in so far as they help give 'form and specificity to the reasons supporting judgement': 'they *need not be made explicit in advance*' (Hostetler, 1997, p. 14, original emphasis).

With this proviso regarding the role which principles play in practical judgement, we are now ready to turn to Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

A neo-Aristotelian model of practical rationality: ethical formation and practical judgement

...the beginning (starting point) is “the that” [*to hoti*], and if this is sufficiently apparent to a person, he will not in addition have a need for “the because” [*to dioti*]. Such a person has, or can easily get hold of beginnings (starting points)... Of starting points some are seen by induction, some by perception, some by certain habituation, and others in other ways again....

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b 7- 8; 1098b 3-4¹

6.1 The non-articulate, pre-articulate or non-explicit nature of concerns proper to deliberation

What will it take for a particular person of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), the so-called *phronimos*, to deliberate in a practical context and to arrive at his or her specific choice of an act to do there and then (Burnyeat, 1980, p. 82)—or, if not to deliberate, then to choose *as if* she or he had deliberated (Anscombe, 1992, p.80)?

Suppose that the matter in hand is the kind of thing that is proper to be deliberated by the given person—‘no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise nor about things that it is impossible for him to do’ (NE 1140a 32-4).² Then, according to Aristotle, practical deliberation itself is a process by which the person with a sound general conception, that is, a practical and non-explicit conception of the end specifies *here*, where she deliberates, ‘that which is towards the end (*telos*)’—and discovers the end or *telos* for the context (NE 1112b 12-13, 36-37; 1113b 3-4).³ As we discussed in Chapter 5, such an end or *telos* will be the agent’s ‘first principle’ or starting-point

¹ Trans: Burnyeat (1980, pp.7-72); a brief commentary on, and an alternative translation of, these lines is given in [Appendix 3](#), note 1.

² Cp. NE 1112a 28-31; NE 1112b 27-28: ‘By ‘possible’ things I mean things that might be brought about by our own efforts...’

(*arche*) for action. But how does the agent obtain the *telos* itself as so specified? Here is a first response:

...virtue and vice respectively preserve and destroy the first principle [*arche*, starting point] and in actions the final cause [or that-for-the-sake-of-which] is the first principle..... [V]irtue, either natural or produced by habituation, is what teaches right opinion about the first principle (NE 1151a 15-19).⁴

From this passage and others that I shall give soon we get confirmation of the claim made in Chapter 5, 5.2, that *phronesis* needs (i.e., presupposes) *ethismos* to get its *that-for-the-sake-of-which* for action as well as the resolve to act. Merely knowing what is right does not give an agent *phronesis*; the agent must be disposed to do it, too (NE 1152a 8-9).⁵

But now, *abstracting from the specifically ethical interest of Aristotle's doctrine*, in the 'narrow' (as it were, 'moral') sense of ethical, and aiming for a more inclusive formulation, which will help go some way to addressing the managerialist's challenge, I propose that we consider what we might call a 'broader' sense of ethical.⁶ Let me explain.

The 'broad' sense will embrace that which we regard as professional behaviour, worthy of, say, *the prowess* of a true sports man or woman (one who has not taken muscle-enhancing drugs or deliberately sabotaged a competitor's chances), or *the expertise* of a skilled plumber who stops a burst pipe flooding a house, or *the bravery* of a fireman going into a smoke-filled house ...and so on.

All such people, in their jobs, carry an implicit ideal of a *duty of care*—to the task in hand, to other people, to fulfil the challenge before them. What is to be included in this broad sense of the ethical then, is the mentality or attitude of an agent as formed by that agent's *métier*. We can see that a

³ These lines have been the subject of much controversy amongst scholars: see [Appendix 3](#), note 3.

⁴ Cp. NE 1140b 16-19.

⁵ Translation: Dunne (1999), p. 54

condition of this broad sense of ethical is that the agent *should care for some sort of good*. Crucially, the structure of the agent's practical reasoning is grounded on this *telos*. Knowledge of the relevant *that-for-the-sake-of-which* essentially depends on the agent's whole, overall formation, her own *Bildung* and her own specific form of 'professional' *phronesis*, appropriate to her chosen occupation.

So although the texts we shall be looking at from the *Nicomachean Ethics* will speak of 'moral virtue' or of what is 'noble', etc., concepts essential, of course, to the notion of *phronesis* as Aristotle intended, the reader is invited to consider the neo-Aristotelian position I am arguing for by (i) reading these texts in the more inclusive way I have just suggested and by (ii) focusing on the idea of the crucial role that formation plays in *structuring* wise and responsible decision-making in particular contexts.

There is a general point at stake here, having to do with how, in a much larger domain than that which is specifically 'moral', wise judgements will still need to be made in contexts where human goods, aspirations and needs are considerations. The structural role of formation is that it *connects* the contingencies that an agent has to cope with—'on the spot'—and her appropriate responses there and then.

6.2 The relation between *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and *ethismos* (ethical formation)

Let us now return to Aristotle:

... For the originating causes [*archai*/first principles/starting points]⁷ of the things that are done consist in the end at which they are aimed [the *that-for-the-sake-of-which* they are done]; but the man who has been ruined by pleasure or pain... fails to see any such originating cause [*arche*]⁸—[fails] to see that for the sake of *this* or because of *this* he ought to do whatever he chooses and does; for vice [lack of formation, *Bildung*] is

⁶ For a rich discussion of 'narrow' and 'broad' conceptions of morality, see Haydon (1999)

⁷ See again, the longer notes regarding *archel/archai*, given in [Appendix 3](#), for **Chapter 5**, note 3.

⁸ Burnyeat (1980, p.72ff.) describes the kind of 'moral education' needed if someone is not to be 'ruined by pleasure and pain'.

destructive of the originating cause of action. Practical wisdom, then, must be a reasoned and true state or capacity to act with regard to human goods. (NE 1140b 16-21) (my emphasis).

... virtue [ethical formation, *Bildung*] makes us aim at the right mark [end, *skopos*] and practical wisdom makes us take the right means [the right thing towards that end] (NE 1144a 7-10).

...it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom or practically wise without moral virtue ...[Virtue] determines the end and [practical wisdom] makes us do the things that lead to the end [*telos*] (NE 1144b 30-1145a 6).

Such passages from Aristotle, stressing the intimate interdependence of *phronesis* and formation, lead us to the next step, namely, to see an agent's practical wisdom and formation not as *separate* attributes of an agent, but as *different* aspects of *one and the same state*. Formation is a pre-condition of practical wisdom. Stressing the interdependence between formation and *phronesis* in this way helps us see the special role of formation in the fixing *in context* of the *that-for-the-sake-of-which*. I shall ask later, in 6.5 (as a challenge to the managerialist) how else it might be fixed and try to show that there is no other way to fix it.

But now we need to pin Aristotle down further and establish *how* formation or *Bildung* identifies a *that-for-the-sake-of-which* that is specific enough for practical deliberation. How do the repeated declarations from Aristotle, about the starting point for action, connect with his doctrine concerning an agent's practical syllogism?

6.3 The vital role which the minor premise plays in the practical syllogism

We can understand the practical syllogism as a form of words *recapitulating* what moved an agent to such and such an act.⁹ (I stress the idea of *recapitulation* because as Elizabeth Anscombe (1992, p.80) says, it would be 'absurd' to think a practical syllogism described 'actual mental processes'.)

⁹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 9, on the practical syllogism.

The syllogism is an explanatory mode of words used to understand the structure of practical reason.¹⁰

The practical syllogism consists of a piece of reasoning with one premise (the ‘major’) concerning some sort of a good, another premise (the ‘minor’), concerning facts that make it possible in the circumstances to attain that good, followed by a practical conclusion, resulting in action (Wiggins, 1980, pp. 229-31).¹¹

Practical reasoning then, is concerned with the rational execution of intentions in *action* (Carr, 1981b, p. 646) and, at its best, enables the agent to be alert and sensitive to whatever ‘particulars’ strike that agent as relevant to meet the diverse competing demands that occur in practical situations where decisions need to be made concerning the good. This is precisely what it means for an agent to use *discernment* in judgement (Pendlebury, 1993, p.150) and—if we pick up the argument from Chapter 4—to be prepared to be *answerable* for decisions taken.

So much hangs on the notion of *choice* here. Choice, we are told, ‘rests with perception’ (*aesthesis*) (NE 1109 b21-23)—which we may understand as ‘situational awareness’ (Wiggins, *ibid*, p. 237) or ‘attentiveness’ to the context (Smith, 1999, p.330). And it will be *phronesis*, as a deliberative excellence (*euboulia*), together with *aesthesis* which helps to mediate between habitual generic knowledge and the particulars of any given action-situation: *phronesis*, together with *aesthesis*, supplies the necessary component of practical judgement (Dunne, 1999, pp. 49, 51). But this is not all. As we saw from the texts cited earlier (NE 1140b 16-21; 1144a 7-10; 1144b 30-1145a 6), *phronesis* cannot be understood without reference to its *antecedents*: the *ethismos* or ethical formation that equips the agent to look for the good and find *the-that-for-the-sake-of-which* she is to act here.

¹⁰ The interest of Aristotle’s schematic account of practical inference is that it describes ‘an order which is there whenever actions are done with intentions.’ (Anscombe, 1992, p.80).

¹¹ See Aristotle, *De Motu Animalium*, Ch 7, 701a 12-14; see also Wiggins (1998) pp. 226-228, for a rich discussion of the relation between *the good* and *the possible* with respect to *ends* chosen by the agent: [Appendix 3](#), note 11.

Now let us go back to the managerialist's challenge: how will a person know how to do the right thing without explicit objectives being set? The managerialist implies that in the absence of clear, pre-specified targets an agent's practical rationality is deficient or else non-accountable. Here, at last, is the Aristotelian answer. Formation gives the agent an outlook and a general readiness to pick out that which matters for purposes of the good. Then *aesthesia* is the exercise of 'the readiness'. It assembles material for the minor premise. *Phronesis* then narrows general concern for the good to the context and to a *that-for-the-sake-of-which* to act. What is so hard for the managerialist to understand here is that in the Aristotelian picture, 'we may have a *telos*' which need not be a 'clearly envisaged objective' (Emmet, 1972, p. 51). *Knowing what to do* issues from a *practical understanding*—an understanding which can only become operative by reference to a particular context—whether a routine occasion, an opportunity or an emergency. Knowing what to do is *summoned* implicitly, from *formation* only at the time of need—at the time an agent needs to act on a decision. Let an example help illustrate all these points.

Suppose that a man who has made his own life around a reputable business has been invited to participate in a business venture that seems, on the face of it, interesting, profitable, legal, and well within his area of expertise and understanding. But suppose that, on further examination, he discovers that, even though it would bring funds to his firm (an ever-present *that-for-the-sake-of-which* that this man has), the business venture seems easy enough but deleterious to the public interest and doubtfully honest. *Take the man at this very moment*—before he says "yes" or "no" about participating, but at the moment of his reaching the conclusion of the inquiries that his ethical formation has prompted him to initiate. Where has he got to?

He has got to something specific about the situation—something 'particular' or 'ultimate', 'the last and variable fact' (NE 1143b 2; 1147b 9-10). He has got to the 'minor' premise, the premise pertaining to *the possible* in a

practical syllogism.¹² He has the following kind of thought: “The thing is ‘do-able’, helpful to the business, but it sounds a bit shady.”

This minor premise, which sets out that which is doubtful and deleterious about the proposal, is ready to engage with some major premise. What major premise? The major premise which spells out his committed concern for the well-being of the *polis* and, also, of his concern not to be dishonest over financial matters.

The *two premises in combination* decisively prescribe that he should refuse the proposal. The agent, *being the person he is*, sees he must decline to participate. This is a man who holds ideals of how he should live. And so he does decline: ‘practical wisdom issues commands, since its end is what ought to be done or not to be done’ (NE 1143a 8-9). In brief, his thought is this: “My company is important to me and this deal would have helped my cash-flow problems....but the proposal goes against what matters and what I believe in.” In a subsequent syllogism the two premises can combine to show what he must now do positively to extricate himself from the venture.

So how was the right end arrived at? It was the man’s formation which gave rise to the particular thoughts he had, to make operative *his* decision not to go ahead with the venture. He clearly had sufficient moral knowledge and imagination not to fail to grasp what the minor premise records.¹³ Ethical virtue pointed in the direction of the end. Practical wisdom led him to that end—in this case, to refuse. No wonder Aristotle says (at NE 1147b 9-10) of the minor premise that it ‘determines action’ (Anscombe, 1981, p.72).

These are the terms in which, I suggest, a further passage, 1143a 31-b13, Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* may be understood (using Ross (1931) for

¹² See again, note 11 in [Appendix 3](#), already referred to.

¹³ But he may not be, in strict Aristotelian terms, a perfect *phronimos*, one who has arrived at a complete ‘unity’ of the virtues (NE 1145a 1-3)—let’s say he sometimes cannot control his anger and he is occasionally unfaithful to his wife. But even if not a ‘paragon’ of virtue, the reasoning which led to his conclusion is not foreign to the form of practical reasoning that is *phronetic* in character and structure.

translation). In order to make it easier to discuss the passage I shall subdivide the citation into four parts [A][B][C][D] (see below). Before I set out the passage, however, I must again remind my managerial opponent that the point we are concerned with is not in the narrow sense a ‘moral’ one – even if the example seems so – but *structural* (see footnote 13). The thing we are concerned with is the way in which the relevant considerations have to be *summoned* and the *shape in which they present themselves to the rational agent*.

[A]Now all things which have to be done are included among particulars or ultimates [the particular specifics of some here and now]... And [all] intuitive reason [*noûs*] is concerned with ultimates [of some sort] the [special kind of] intuitive reason [that is] involved in practical reasonings [contrast that which is involved in theoretical reasoning] grasps the last and variable fact, i.e. the minor premiss.

[B] For these variable facts [which enter into the minor premiss] are [themselves] the starting point for the apprehension of the end [as the end manifests itself to us here], since the universals [the sort of generalities that the person who has formation/*Bildung* has practical/implicit knowledge of] are reached from the particulars [the specifics of particular situations calling for this or that response]; of these therefore we must have perception, and [the capacity for] this perception is intuitive reason [*noûs*].

[C] This is why these states [or the predisposition for them] are thought to be natural endowments—why, while no one is thought to be a philosopher by nature, people are thought to have by nature judgement, understanding and intuitive reason.....[W]e think our powers correspond to our time of life and that a particular age brings with it [mature] intuitive reason and judgement...

[D] ...[This is the reason why] we ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom no less than to [deductive] demonstrations [as used in theoretical wisdom]; for because experience has given [these people] an eye [that] they see aright....

(NE 1143 a 31- 1143b 13 with several omissions).

I offer some commentary:

[A] adds various things to that which I have already drawn from Aristotle's theory, a claim about a form of 'intuitive reason' which emerges from the descriptions in Book VI in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of the faculty of *noûs* – the faculty of (so to speak) 'catching on' at the point where explanations run out. This is a general capacity rational beings have, an 'intuitive reason' or intelligence that will be *presupposed* not just in cases relating to proof or logical analysis but also for practical reasoning. Jerome Bruner describes the phenomenological experience of 'catching on' as an 'intrinsically unanalysable process from an experimental point of view', 'unverbalisable'— an 'enigmatic process' akin to the 'psychologist's "aha" experience' (Bruner, 1993, pp. 131-20). In the ethical or practical version of this faculty, *noûs* develops by the process of ethical formation and is brought to bear more and more discriminatingly upon the 'particulars' or 'ultimates' (as Ross sometimes translates them) that need to be grasped, after a certain point is reached, *without further explanation or explicit instruction*.

The last comments prepare for [B], where I take 'the universals [generalities] are reached from the particulars' to entail for the practical case a claim about the *development* of formation, the enhancement of formation and the focusing of intuitive reason, *noûs*—the focusing, that is, of the practical intelligence of the learner. [C] reinforces the point that everyone is born with certain cognitive faculties. Then [D] enlarges upon that which habituation itself involves (learning from those who 'see aright' and have practical knowledge).

Since the thing which it involves can be expressed only in its particular application, there is no full or completely articulate statement to be had of that which it involves. This is practical, personal and implicit knowledge I shall say.¹⁴

6.4 Means and Ends

Is implicit knowledge a problem philosophically or even psychologically speaking?¹⁵ Is *Bildung*?¹⁶ Of course, there are all sorts of philosophical questions to be asked about them—about the psychology of learning by doing and about the further ramifications of *Bildung* that resonate in the idea of a *Bildungsroman*, of *paideia*, of *ethos*, and, not least, questions to do with the notion of *culture* itself as well as the *cultivation*—initiation—into a tradition or way of being (Holland, 1997). But my purposes are fully satisfied if (i) I can persuade the reader that there is such a thing as implicit knowledge in the sense we see embodied in the Aristotelian notions of *ethismos* and *phronesis* and that (ii) there *has* to be such a thing if all sorts of things which we know about already in the worlds of action and administration are even to be possible. These points once made, I suggest, do not need to wait for confirmation by a theory of, say, the cognitive psychology of formation. They are *explananda* not hypotheses. They find their own praxeological justification in the lived rationale of our various modes of being.

The beauty of the Aristotelian account is that it shows how close the fit can be between the means and the ends of an agent who knows what she is doing and why she is doing it. The ‘what’ and the ‘why’ come into being together. The value of the Aristotelian model is that practical reasoning can be both ‘normative’ and ‘effective’ at the same time (Orton, 1997, p. 570). When we exercise practical judgement, we see the ‘good’ to be realised as something to be sought *through* the action undertaken by the agent and not to be

¹⁴ How close does Aristotle come to recognising the implicit? see [Appendix 3](#), note 14,

¹⁵ See longer notes on implicit knowledge, given in note 27, for **Chapter 3**, in [Appendix 3](#)

¹⁶ See longer notes on *Bildung*, given in [Appendix 3](#), for **Chapter 5**, note 7.

understood as ‘an independently specifiable aim’ (Smith, 1999, p. 331). The ‘means’ are ‘constituents-to-end’ as Wiggins (1998, p.220) puts it:

Deliberation is [a] search, but it is not primarily a search for means. It is a search for the *best specification*. Till the specification is available there is no room for means. When this specification is reached means-end deliberation can start, but difficulties that turn up ...may send me back a finite number of times to...a better or more practicable specification of the end... [T]he whole...difficulty of the matter is in the search for adequate specifications, not in the technical means-end sequel...the main business of practical reason is ends and their constituents, not instrumental means (Wiggins, 1998, pp.225, 374).

The points just made bear importantly on issues that relate to education and the practice of teaching. As David Carr says:

One trouble with conceiving the role of the teacher primarily in terms of managerial and other skills is that it is precisely liable to encourage the kind of instrumental or consequentialist thinking about education which opens a dangerous space between ends and means (Carr, 2000, p.221).

If the chief focus in the organization of human affairs is on the efficient means to the attainment of clearly defined ends (the *sine qua non* of managerial rationality), then, as Richard Pring says, *means* easily become logically separated from *ends* (Pring, 2001a, p. 286). Weber observed that when an organization encourages ends and means to be ‘external’ to each other—‘logically separated’ in the sense Pring describes—it will be a strong indicator that utilitarian forms of bureaucracy and instrumental forms of communication will predominantly shape the ethos of that organization (Etzioni, 1961, p.141). What might be wrong with that?

An organization which regards the relation of ends and means as being purely *external* to each other has the potential to create the ‘dangerous space’ to which Carr alludes— a ‘moral gap’ opening up between means and ends. The dictum, ‘the end justifies the means’ can mean ‘*any* means’, so leaving room for the means to be free from moral constraints (Honderich, 1995, p.230).

Moreover, it is the *language* of management, its metaphors, Pring (2001a) suggests, that promotes and reinforces this kind of instrumental form

of rationality within educational organizational practices. When metaphors used in management theory and practice *prioritise* values aimed at securing managerial *desiderata*, viz., efficiency, effectiveness and economy:

The result is a language of 'ends' and targets established outside the process of being educated—the endless lists of competences...which might be objectively measured, the professional skills on which teachers are to be assessed if they are to progress... 'Education' ...becomes the means to achieve those ends, and it is judged essentially by its effectiveness. If it is not effective, then it should adopt other 'means' ...the quality of the 'input' is measured simply by the reference to the success or otherwise of the 'output' (Pring, 2001a, p.286).

Once instrumental values are permitted to define the ethos of a school's life and become embodied in teaching practice it will become increasingly difficult for a teacher to exercise what Terence McLaughlin calls *pedagogic phronesis* (McLaughlin, 2000, p.454; 2005, p.322) in relation to 'complex pedagogical challenges where abstract principles and guidelines require interpretation and implementation in practical contexts' (McLaughlin, 2005, p.56). *Pedagogic phronesis* embodies 'reflective thinking that is appropriate for teachers to use in practice... harmonising with, and aris[ing] out of, *phronesis*' (McLaughlin, 1999, p.15).

Can we think of the role that *pedagogic phronesis* might play in a teacher's practice on analogy with the role that Aristotelian *phronesis* plays in *praxis*? Care is needed here if an analogy is attempted. For emphasising the notion of *phronesis* must not *ipso facto* downgrade the place of *techne* in a teacher's expertise—as if acquiring *technical skills* played no part in the activity of teaching. In this regard, Winch has argued that teaching is more than just 'displaying practical wisdom in...dealing with students' (Winch, 2004, p.189).

But even if Winch, following Dunne (1995), is right in suggesting that there is room for a nuanced sense of *techne* to feature in a teacher's professional knowledge,¹⁷ we can still understand why Carr (1995;2000;2003) and McLaughlin (1999;2000;2005) seek to illuminate the nature of the

¹⁷ See [Appendix 3](#), note 17, for further elucidation.

professional knowledge base of teachers in terms of the kind of practical deliberation which Aristotle distinguishes as *phronesis*. For even technical questions—such as “Is this the right technique to use *here*?”— are not exempt from requiring ethical responses.

If an analogy is to hold between (i) the relation in which *phronesis* stands to *formation*, and (ii) the relation in which *pedagogic phronesis* stands to *professional/occupational formation*, then the following conditions must apply. First, alongside all the technical competences necessary for teaching—‘classroom virtues’ we might call such forms of competence, thus accommodating Winch’s point that *techné* need not always be interpreted in purely rule-following terms—there will also need to be those irreducibly implicit and ethical elements in a teacher’s bearing and manner (Hansen, 1993; Van Manen, 1991) which will direct her to her *that-for-the-sake of which* (her guiding *telos*) and which, in general terms, will be ‘caring’ for her ‘student’s ‘greater good’—‘for *this* student at *this* stage of readiness’ (Dunne, 2004, p.172).

Certainly, a teacher’s judgement will sometimes be concerned with technical means and ends. But if caring for a student’s ‘greater good’ is to be respected, then a teacher’s practical reasoning must be normative in nature as well as concerned with that which is technically effective (e.g. a particular reading scheme, thought ‘effective’ for helping children learn to read). Wilfred Carr expresses the thought I have in mind here:

The educational character of any practice can only be made intelligible by reference to an ethical disposition to proceed according to some more or less tacit understanding of what it is to act educationally (Carr, 1987, p. 166).

Through an Aristotelian lens we catch sight here of an alternative to the model of teaching now promoted, and, most importantly, an alternative of a quite different conception of what it might mean to be considered *educationally accountable*. We have a view of teaching where:

The application of practical reasoning to teaching involves more than a calculation of the most efficient means to achieve a desired end. Work in these areas impinges on the lives of others, who may be influenced, guided or manipulated by the means chosen to undertake particular tasks. For this reason the ethical as well as the technical desirability of the means becomes an issue.¹⁸

John Dewey, I believe, would have been sympathetic to the non-managerial, alternative ideal of teaching that I have drawn out from the Aristotelian model of practical rationality. He would have been as perplexed as Aristotle to learn that the notion of what counts now as *good practice* is represented in such a way that ends and means become uncoupled from each other. It is an 'absurdity', he writes, to think 'of any "end" which is set apart from the means by which it is attained and apart from its own further function as means' (Dewey, 1964, p. 97). Ends and means for Dewey lie on a 'continuum' and in the course of an inquiry or the attainment of a goal (what he calls, 'ends-in-view') we may revise our means or our ends or both. If we think of 'means' as constituents to 'ends-in-view', he suggests, we shall be constantly trying to judge whether the means to that end are right. What is 'right' cannot be fixed prior to judgement. To paraphrase Aristotle, it will depend on an agent's deliberative virtue to be able to make a decision in the right way, at the right time and for the right reason (Cp. NE 1106b 20-3; 1115b 19-20; 1151a 32-b4). Like Aristotle, Dewey recoils philosophically from the idea that ends be conceived as 'frozen and isolated' (ibid, p.73).¹⁹

6.5 Arguments the managerialist might offer to dispense with formation

My argument so far has been to show the distinctive role which *ethismos* and *phronesis* play in the fixing in a particular context of the *that-for-the-sake-of-which*. The aim, as I announced in section 6.2, was to show that there is no other way to fix it. But perhaps there is still doubt, so let us ask: is there any *other* way in which rational agents could be supplied with a starting point and a *that-for-the-sake-of-which* for rational deliberation? MacIntyre, if we were to enlist him here, might suggest that we propose the following experiment: let

¹⁸ Adelman, cited in Grundy (1992)

¹⁹ See Garrison (1999), p.305: 'for Dewey, the valued end...*emerges* in the creative effort.'

someone start from a desire that chances to turn up where they are. Why shouldn't they just go on from there? After all, as MacIntyre says:

in the liberal public realm individuals understand each other and themselves as possessing...[an] ordered schedule of preferences... Each individual ...in contemplating prospective action has first to ask him or herself the question: What are my wants? ... The answers to this question provide the initial premise for the practical reasoning of such individuals, a premise expressed by an utterance of the form: 'I want it to be the case that such and such'... (MacIntyre, 1988, p.338).

In such a 'liberal' scenario, the desire expressed is transformed 'without further qualification into statements of a reason for action, into premises for practical reasoning' (MacIntyre, *ibid*, p.338). What is wrong with that, someone may ask. Why do we need the story about *ethismos* and *phronesis*? Wouldn't it suffice to begin from a desire that is empirically supplied at the time?

What if, though, that *that* desire appeared mad, or totally trivial. How then would the result be rational? Well, if formation *were* present then we might try to see what could be reasonable in the desire. But then, at this point, at least, we surely need the thought at NE 1143b 3 about the importance of the minor premise (already quoted) and its relation to the good, or else we need a similar thought that is suggested by MacIntyre's critique of the kind of practical reasoning (already mentioned) that simply takes off from a particular 'preference' (MacIntyre, *ibid*, p. 341).²⁰ Either way, we shall need formation if there is to be practical reason in action.

Suppose that the Aristotelian conception of formation *were* dispensed with, then why shouldn't something else take its place? The managerialist's suggestion must be that the training of a fully accountable agent can perfectly well take the form of his or her internalization of an explicit set of instructions or of 'guidelines' for 'best practice'.

The example that I chose of the businessman, poised at the moment of deliberation, in illustration of the operation of the practical syllogism, was precisely intended to invite such objection from the managerialist theorist who

²⁰ See [Appendix 3](#), note 20, for further elucidation of MacIntyre's critique.

puts his faith in this sort of training. The managerialist theorist, I say, faces a dilemma.

Either the instructions will be general, in which case something Aristotelian will have to come back in order for them to be *made determinate for action in a particular context*; or else they will be specific. But if they are specific enough for action then there must be a limitless number of them. Given the endless variability of circumstances, no finite number of them will *ever* be sufficient even for the most ordinary life—unless somehow the learner can ‘catch on’ to the rationale from instructions given for certain *specific contexts* and then *extrapolate*, somehow (inductively?), to the others. But that rationale itself cannot consist of a specific instruction. We are carried back to the first alternative, and so, inevitably, we return to something like Aristotelian *noûs* as we previously explained it (in 6.3). So why not appeal, right from the start, to the Aristotelian account of practical *noûs* and the faculty which one with formation is able to identify in a given context as the right *that-for-the-sake-of-which*? In so far as educational practice is concerned, the idea that it is operationally possible to be trained up in an endless set of canons of ‘best practice’ constructed by policy-makers who, in each ‘iteration of reform’, will be ‘convinced that the new ideas they ...impose on teachers are better than the old ideas they [once]...imposed on teachers’ (Kennedy, 2002, p. 356), is not, I suggest, *progress*.

6.6 From individual responsibility to shared responsibility: foundations for a model of public accountability

There is one more consideration to discuss before I conclude. If Aristotle gives us a model of practical rationality for the case of a single agent in the ethical sphere, then how is that model to be extended beyond that sphere? More immediately, how is it to be extended to the practical reason of groups of agents acting in concert?

Where two or three work together in a venture of shared interest on the basis of shared information and shared habituation, nothing very unfamiliar is required—only a reasonable attitude towards the ordinary problems of self interest and competitiveness. There is little here that could not arise in family situations where, concerning important things, there is still trust and goodwill, ‘give and take’.

At the next stage we may imagine a larger group, needing a chain of command perhaps, but a group with a relatively simple, but not necessarily fully articulable objective, a small fishing business concern, say, where most of the sailors fully understand most of the things that most of their shipmates have to do. Or else we may imagine a small school, small enough for every child’s name to be known to everyone. Even within such groups, where most of what happens would probably happen within a framework determined by habit, and everyone knows everyone else there would still be room for creativity and individual endeavour and the development of *Bildung*.

At the next stage in our reconstruction of rational administration, there will be much greater complexity. There still remains, though, a shared conception of that which those who work in the enterprise are concerned with. There is still a common outlook—an *esprit de corps*, one might say— even though not everyone can come anywhere near understanding what everyone else does. Each has his or her own particular area of responsibility; but each has also some idea of how his or her area connects with others’ areas of responsibility. Furthermore, all share in some inarticulate idea of a good outcome and of what is to be avoided. Each or all can still be held responsible or answerable where they fall short of the standards of diligence, awareness or attention that come to be established within this enterprise as the received (not necessarily formalized or written) norm for those who work within it. In such an organization we can assume there will be social co-operation, sustained by sufficient inter-personal and shared communication amongst people who are able, as Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus*²¹ suggests, to work within practices with

²¹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 21, for further elucidation.

'regularity, unity and systematicity even in the absence of any imposed ...organization' (Bourdieu, 1997, p.59; see also 1977, p.72).

Agents in such conditions are able to provide explanations 'of their own practice, thanks to a quasi theoretical reflection on their practice'; but what will be concealed, 'even from their own eyes' is 'the true nature of their practical mastery...a mode of practical knowledge not comprising knowledge of its own principles' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.19). Bourdieu comes close here to invoking exactly the kind of practical, personal and implicit knowledge which I have argued becomes *embodied* in a person's formation.

In such a framework there is, one might say, a 'dynamic balance', a healthy mix of individual responsibility and shared organizational responsibility which 'makes it possible for large numbers of people to combine in complicated...operations' (Vickers, 1983, p. 229). In such a framework, the role of each person will have both 'a prescribed and a discretionary content' (Vickers, *ibid*). What an engineer is to make within a factory plant, for example, will be prescribed for him, but:

none can prescribe for him how best to make it: for this he must consult his own skill and experience which won him the post (Vickers, *ibid*).

We see resemblances here to the model of administration that characterised public institutions in pre-neo-liberal days, before, that is, New Public Management eclipsed Old Public Administration (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). But is the scenario we have just described perhaps the limit for trying to implement the Aristotelian model in organizational life?

It is clear enough that modern organizations have been engineered to go beyond this point. For under the 'division of labour' as this concept would be understood in managerial terms (different agencies of management each working to their own targets, as we discussed in Chapter 3), it is hard to see how to retain the common *esprit de corps* we found in the last group we considered. Here, at last, the inadequacies of the Aristotelian model can be

shown, or so the managerialist will say: it is obsolete and has no place in the kind of modern complex organizational institutions that now characterise our public sector services. But not so fast. The limitations of one model do not prove the adequacy of another!

What is to be made of the problems reported over the last few decades of the management of public sector services (in the UK, I refer to here) which have ranged over a whole range of diverse sets of public services? These problems that have occurred do little to advertise the virtues of the managerial way of doing things. Some of our public institutions have been described, even by those who have been proponents of managerial models of public accountability or in positions of management themselves, as 'not-fit-for purpose', 'unsustainable and inconsistent' or as inefficient, ineffective and too costly.²² So much for the famous managerial three 'E's' of *efficiency*, *effectiveness* and *economy*. If these reports are not exaggerations are they not an indictment of managerial rationality?

6.7 Summary: further reflections on 'the possible' and 'the good'

To the Aristotelian, it is not surprising that such problems are reported. For the Aristotelian model predicts that organizations that dispense with all care for individual formation and replace that with the 'incentivizing' instrumentality of management will end up with a warped conception of public accountability; they will fail in meeting the legitimate expectations citizens still have of their public service institutions.

It is widely accepted in the field of organizational studies that a key element of institutional organizations is *social structure* (Ogawa and Scribner, 2002, p. 577). Social structures provide 'regularized patterns of action and interaction' which become 'blueprints'²³ to shape the rationality of the organization: members of organizations grow 'committed to existing patterns

²² See [Appendix 3](#), note 22, for references; and [Appendix 2](#) for further details of costs of various management consultancy projects.

²³ Meyer and Rowan cited in Ogawa and Scribner (2002), p.577

of action and interaction...' (ibid). What is the form of practical rationality that now structures 'patterns of action and interaction' within our public service organizations and which we must deploy in practice?

MacIntyre, as we discussed earlier, points out that the structure of practical reasoning which prevails in our present political and economic climate *starts* with 'bare preferences' or 'wants' (as in: "We want X to happen", where X could be filled in by any general policy a policy maker might wish to initiate) *without also thinking about the good and the possible*—without re-situating the policy in the context of what good is possible *here* or what harm can be fended off *here*. A bare managerial target, for example, a bare: "We want ...to bring down waiting lists/raise the number of x's achieving y...", *needs no further qualification* (MacIntyre, 1988, p.338). Such desiderata exist in their own right as *wants*; they have been set 'loose' (ibid, p. 340) from all consideration of what is good or possible *in the particular circumstances* in which the 'wants' are expressed. With MacIntyre, we might say that this is how *desirable public ends* and *managerial means*, aimed at those ends, become so easily uncoupled from one another.

At this point, Aristotelians and advocates of non-managerial modes of administration will press the claims of a practical rationality that harmonizes ends to means, and means to ends in the way that the 'Aristotelian' model which I have described in this chapter does. They will press the following questions: when newer and still newer generations of 'new public' managers dispense altogether with formation and the *phronetic* mode of reasoning that formation makes possible; when the managerial way of 'doing things' becomes the only way of 'doing things', what then will *co-ordinate* the 'objectives' that are fixed upon with *the good that is in the there-and-then possible*? The managerialists' answers to these questions will need to be considered carefully—when they are revealed.

PART III

END-POINTS: IDEAS, IDEALS AND IDEOLOGIES

Chapter 7

Return of the lure of the explicit: 'making the implicit explicit' (Part 1)

The criterion of understanding is clearly not in the order's actual words, nor in the mind of the person giving the order, but solely in the understanding of the situation and in the responsibility of the person who obeys. Even when an order is given in writing, so that the correctness of the understanding and carrying out of it can be verified, no one assumes that it makes everything explicit. The comic situation in which orders are carried out literally but not according to their meaning is well-known. Thus there is no doubt that the recipient of an order must perform a definite creative act of understanding its meaning.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*¹

7.1 What is reasonable and unreasonable in the idea of *making the implicit explicit*?

It is easy to imagine that apologists for managerialism might have been reading Chapter 6 with mounting indignation. For in the neo-Aristotelian picture I have described I have drawn attention to the ways in which implicit knowledge is irremovable from practical judgement. In its own inscrutable way, the implicit knowledge carried in *formation* prepares an agent to find the good that can be realized in particular contexts. By analogy with the account Aristotle gives in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of the way the *phronimos* deliberates and comes to make a practical judgement, the Aristotelian will hold that the capability of making practical judgements, even in modern organizational practices, cannot be mimicked by subjecting the agent to specific objectives, targets, indicators, benchmarks or criteria.

One who is inclined to a managerial way of doing things, however, will challenge the faith and weighting the Aristotelian places on the notion of implicit knowledge and argue as follows:

¹ Gadamer (1970), p. 298

“We can accept your contention that implicit knowledge has an important role to play in how the *phronimos* makes decisions. But we now have a duty—in order to *spread good practice*—to try to turn this special kind of knowledge into something more accessible for strategic planning and dissemination purposes. To leave implicit knowledge where Aristotle leaves it is just far too mysterious! What we need to do is make more explicit the ways in which the *phronimos*—whatever his or her profession—knows *how to do* certain things.”

By the end of the chapter it will be clear what is problematic with this argument. But, *prima facie*, it might be thought the managerialist speaks some sense. After all, as Charles Taylor has argued, we are all ‘self-interpreting animals’ (1985) who are constantly trying to make articulate ‘a largely inarticulate sense of what is of decisive importance’ (1977, p.38). Making explicit that which lies implicitly in my understanding allows me to establish the kinds of values on which I would be ‘capable of taking a stand’ (Taylor, 1989, p.27). In this way each of us may explicate what we believe in. And now, why stop with the question: ‘What do *I* believe in?’ After all, it was Socrates’ intention (by means of the dialectical method of cross-examination, the *elenchus*) to bring someone questioned to an acknowledgement of their own ignorance with respect to a particular problem under discussion. Socrates ‘drew out’ his conversants by making explicit that which they assumed implicitly and then challenging them. There was no other remedy, Socrates thought, for the state of ‘illusion’ or false belief.

Similarly, the hermeneutic tradition is based on the idea of attempting to make explicit that which is held at the level of the implicit, namely, our ‘prejudices’ (=our ‘presuppositions’, ‘pre-judgements’ or ‘pre-understandings’). If every viewpoint we hold is coloured by presuppositions, what could be better than making those presuppositions explicit in order to gain better insight into our beliefs and attitudes, argues Gadamer:

reflection on a given pre-understanding brings before me something that otherwise happens behind my back...Thus only through hermeneutical reflection ...can [I] deem freely what in my pre-understanding may be justifiable and unjustifiable...²

From very different traditions we arrive at what appears to support the managerialists' position: that we must *transcend* the implicit if we are to fulfil our potential as human beings and live lives which aim at truth, progress and authenticity. In neo-Cartesian fashion it seems that we must be in a perpetual state of readiness to interrogate ourselves; the alternative is that we shall wallow in lazy habits of reasoning, not fulfil our human potential and condemn our selves to the 'ghettoes of [our] own practices' (Gilroy, 1989, p.106).

So are the managerialists not simply following where Socrates once led the way? For the notions of 'self-evaluation' and 'self-assessment', common ideas in managerial rhetoric and performance management programmes, rely heavily on the idea of the *self-examining self*. What is the alternative, it may be asked—an *unreflective* practitioner? No one would seriously want to promote *that* idea (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 9) so the idea of the 'reflective practitioner' (see Schön, 1987) remains a potent educational and pedagogical ideal type

But now let us ask how close the theses of Socrates, Taylor and Gadamer really are to the managerial project. There is at least one difference. Such theses will self-interrogate and explicate not endlessly (in the name of 'continuous improvement') but *at need* and *for a definite purpose*. One stops with something adequate for the context.

Similarly, Aristotle, as we saw in the last chapter, thought that precision is required only in so far as the nature of the case demands explicitness (NE 1094b 12-25): *some* implicit knowledge can be made *more* explicit or articulate at need. In pedagogical contexts, we see this idea at work in the teaching model that Vygotsky drew. His well-known saying: 'What the child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1989, p.220) is a good pedagogical example, I suggest,

² Gadamer, cited in Grundy (1989), p. 92

of a reasonable application of the principle, *making the implicit explicit*. Teachers, he suggested, may ‘scaffold’ a child from the ‘everyday’, ‘spontaneous’ concepts a child already knows and which are ‘situationally meaningful’ (being rooted in ‘concrete’, ‘personal experience’), to more complex (what Vygotsky termed) ‘scientific’ concepts. In this way a child will ‘restructure and raise spontaneous concepts to a higher level...’ (ibid).

We could identify many other examples of a pedagogical nature which draw, quite reasonably, on the principle, *making the implicit explicit*. For the teaching model based on Socrates’ own ‘method’, where there is an on-going commitment to reason and truth, is still inspirational for many teachers (Hogan 1995). Socrates’ influence will be present in any teacher who, as Hogan says, believes in the critical function of education, where the search for knowledge will give ‘a better insight into... beliefs, attitudes and actions’ (Hogan, 1995, p.39).³

Reasonable applications of the principle may also be found in situations that do not bear directly on matters of a pedagogical nature. Consider, for example, adults working as a team on a joint task. In such cases the knowledge of each ‘needs to be articulable’ (Clarke and Winch, 2004, p.512) in order to ensure sufficient mutual understanding for tasks to be shared and subtasks to be co-ordinated. For knowledge involved in joint action is a collective asset, something more than a set of discrete items of individual knowledge (Alanen *et al*, 1997; Bratman, 1999; Clarke and Winch, *ibid*).

So there are times when we might endorse the principle, *making the implicit explicit*—when there are specific tasks, purposes or goals to accomplish. But anything more *general* to do with making the implicit explicit would be problematic, an Aristotelian would say, if the generality were in the form of, say, a ‘policy initiative’ to be implemented across the whole of the public sector, in every organizational practice. As we discussed in Chapter 3, where we examined the ideal of transparency (as interpreted by

³ Cp. the rationale of the ‘Action Research’ movement: see [Appendix 3](#), note 3.

managerialists), if explicitness is pursued as an end in itself—as a principle of policy—then practice risks being distorted. The pursuit of explicitness must always be the servant of practice, not its master.

7.2 Making *implicit knowledge explicit*: some complications

But what is it that lies behind the managerialists' desire to make the implicit knowledge of the *phronimos* explicit? Can the 'problem' be that the *phronimos* lays claim to a 'know-how' that appears to carry its own epistemic authority?—that the *phronimos* does not depend on managerial prescriptions in order to know *what to do*?

The managerialists' thought is that any implicit knowledge that is embodied in the supposed know-how of the *phronimos* must (somehow) be transformable into a set of 'objective' training principles and practices that could then be used for someone else to learn how to make *phronetic* decisions. If it *must* be, then it *can* be, is the thought. ("How could it not be?", the managerialists ask.) Whatever the 'it' the *phronimos* has, this is what the managers think must be 'explicitable'. For accountability now depends upon 'making the invisible visible' (Munro, 1996, p. 5).

But is there any such 'it' for the managers to manage? The assumption that there must be, comes from thinking of implicit knowledge by analogy with explicit, codified knowledge. Practical knowledge, in this view, belongs to the same *generic kind* as codified, explicit forms of knowledge. It is just a shadowy, paler version. The opposing view that I shall defend and develop in the second half of the chapter and expand on further in the next one, is that the implicit knowledge of someone with practical knowledge is not like that. It is, in fact, *sui generis*.

Like Michael Polanyi's notion of 'tacit knowing', the notion of implicit knowledge that I shall expound is not something that can be individuated or *made* to appear in the way in which we might expect a set of volumes, stored

in a library basement, to be made to appear when retrieved by a librarian. There is no counterpart here for the library basement. The *phronimos*'s 'know-how' is quite unlike a 'store' of any kind. For there is no substantial *body* of knowledge which can be brought to the surface of consciousness/awareness—as if it were a nut, lying within its shell and just waiting until the moment it is cracked open.⁴

A first step in understanding why the analogy breaks down is to acknowledge the potential ambiguity inherent in the concept *knowledge* itself. *Knowledge* is systematically ambiguous (Allen, 1978, p.168) between 'knowing' (*noēsis*, which designates an act of a *knower*) and 'things known' (*noēta*, which can exist *apart* from a knower). Things known stand as 'objects' in the world. But when we refer to 'implicit knowledge', in the sense we have been talking about, as something embodied, as a personal kind of knowledge activated in the process of *phronetic* deliberation, we are *not* naming an object.

I have already urged on several occasions that we think of implicit knowledge as *that which is non-explicit or not articulate*. But this formulation may invite an objection of circularity: implicitness is to be understood by contrast with explicitness and explicitness by contrast with implicitness. There is a further problem. One often needs to make use of different, but related terms, such as 'inaccessible' or 'inarticulate' to help explain the character of implicit knowledge, but then, when it comes to explaining explicit knowledge, the same list may be enrolled, only this time, replaced by 'accessible' or 'articulate' (Tirosh, 1994, p. xix).⁵

Perhaps, though, what we are faced with here is a case of benign and not vicious circularity and the way out is to illustrate, by examples, what one means by the implicit or the explicit—examples which in their context are self-sufficient. Here I follow Wittgenstein's advice—that we should quell what seems to be an irrepressible, philosophical need: 'to understand the basis or

⁴ See longer note 27, for **Chapter 3**, given in Appendix 3, where psychologists' experiments which attempt 'knowledge elicitation' are discussed.

⁵ See Appendix 3, note 5, for further complications with the *implicit-explicit* distinction.

essence of everything', by providing *definitions* (Wittgenstein, 1969, p.27). It is a futile exercise—a quest for something unobtainable—Wittgenstein suggests, if we think we can always provide clear definitions to questions of the form: 'What is X?'

But even with this 'dispensation' from Wittgenstein, there is still another complication to be noted before we move on. Although Polanyi's position regarding 'tacit knowing' is full of technical terms,⁶ one aspect of his work at least is accessible and relevant to our concerns. According to Polanyi, 'tacit knowing' may contain 'actual knowledge'; but that knowledge is 'indeterminate, in the sense that its contents *cannot be explicitly stated*' (Polanyi, 1969a, p.141).

The examples Polanyi gives will be familiar: the bicyclist, the pianist, the surgeon, the radiologist, the blind man. All these people will use skilful *personal* knowledge. But even though they might 'possess intellectual control over a range of things' (Polanyi, 1962, p. 103), they would 'grope for words to tell what [they] know' (ibid, p.102). For 'personal' knowledge is an 'inarticulate intelligence' that 'cannot be put into words' (Polanyi, 1966, p.4).⁷ Can we say any more about what is meant by suggesting that the 'content' of what is known '*cannot be explicitly stated*'?

In order to confront this question we need to be aware of yet one more ambiguity, depending on how '*cannot be explicitly stated*' is interpreted. At the risk of grave over-simplification⁸ there are, I suggest, three *main* ways we may understand this idea, corresponding to three types of implicit knowledge.

Type I is knowledge that in principle cannot be put into *sufficient* words to say *how one knows what one knows*. Examples would be the recognition of a face, the skill in acquiring a first language, or in operating a machine, implement or instrument. Here one may be unaware of the linguistic,

⁶ See longer note 3, for **Chapter 3**, given in Appendix 3

⁷ The often quoted Polanyian aphorism, 'we know more than we can tell', precedes the quotation just given. See also longer note 3, for **Chapter 3**, in Appendix 3.

mechanical, ergonomic, gravitational, mathematical or biological-evolutionary principles upon which a large element of those skills depend (Polanyi, 1969a, p. 49-57).

Type II is knowledge which is not yet articulated, but which could *in theory* be articulated, perhaps in the form of a set of instructions for someone to follow. Consider, for example, the skill of tying a bowline sailing knot or of icing a cake. It is important to note though, even with Type II knowledge, that the articulation of instructions—however detailed—will not *guarantee* success in the transference of implicit knowledge from one person to another. Depending on the task in hand, it might still take a much more complex form of *practical knowledge*—one more akin to Type III knowledge (see below)—for successful completion of the task. For even detailed instructions may be misunderstood or misapplied by the use of inadequate or faulty materials; or else fail in their objective, because the learner lacks the background knowledge that the explainer had to assume that the learner had.

Now let's return to the kind of knowledge with which we were concerned in the last chapter, viz., the implicit knowledge of the *phronimos*. This might appear to be a very special case of Type I, but is really quite different in nature. This is Type III. Recall that the *phronimos* need not be able to reconstruct the workings of *ethismos* (ethical formation) or give rules for finding the right thing to do or to articulate the reason why she notices the particular things she notices. Much of the time she is just asking others to 'see' what has to be done. When asked to 'account' for herself, she may be able to reconstruct the practical reasoning which led to her decision, but *only in retrospect*. She can't state anything general.

From the examination we made in the last chapter of the crucial role that the minor premise plays in the practical syllogism, we learned that this kind of implicit knowledge (Type III) arises only when the agent is 'immersed in contingency' (Nagel, 2006), in the actuality of lived experience, making a

⁸ For some finely drawn distinctions, see [Appendix 3](#), note 8.

response to something which demands—at the appropriate ‘moment of action’ (Aristotle, NE 1110a 14) and in a specific context—a decision how to act. This type of knowledge, I argued, emerges in *praxis*. It emerges from the dynamic integrative relationship that holds between an agent’s dispositional make-up and the *ethismos* or *Bildung* that supports her *phronesis*. Such knowledge emerges only relative to the moment, as a response to all the intangible and eclectic things to which humans tend to attach significance, meaning and value—for example, the tone of someone’s voice, or the expression of vulnerability in another, or the desire to act and communicate sincerely or honestly. Such responsiveness, as I argued in the last chapter, helps inform choices and is at one with the attributes, dispositions or qualities, which a teacher who possesses ‘pedagogic *phronesis*’ will have when she decides what to do in the ‘pedagogical moment’ (Van Manen, 1991).

How can one start to pin down the ‘content’ of this kind of knowledge when it is so dependent on the character of a *particular* person acting in a *specific* context? Here we are truly ‘groping’ for words (Polanyi, 1962, p.102) to describe what, by its very nature, exhausts words. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1969) expresses the kind of complexity that attaches to the ‘content’ of certain kinds of human knowledge which is not susceptible to indisputable ‘proof’:

What is most difficult here is to put this indefiniteness, correctly and unfalsified, into words (p.227e).

In complete harmony with the account which Aristotle gives in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of how ethical formation is gradually acquired (the focus of the last chapter), Wittgenstein raises the following question, regarding the way we learn to make confident judgements about our feelings or perceptions:

Can one learn this knowledge? Yes some can. Not, however, by taking a course in it, but through ‘*experience*’.—Can someone else be a man’s teacher in this? Certainly...he gives him the right *tip*.—This is what ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ are like here.—What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct

judgments. There are rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating rules (p. 227e).⁹

So is not the managerialists' project doomed from the start? Is the desire to turn the knowledge of the *phronimos* into something articulate and explicit an attempt to turn what really belongs to the realm of *judgement* for a context into a *system* of general rules? First Aristotle, and now Wittgenstein, tells us that there is a kind of knowledge that cannot be systematised in principles/rules, even though, out of such a knowledge it is possible for *propositional attitudes* to be formed and from which rules—i.e., 'tips', as Wittgenstein says, or precepts, as Aristotle says — can be made. Polanyi adds the point that there can be no 'short cuts' in acquiring these attitudes:

...experience shows that no skill can be acquired by learning its constituent motions separately...imitation offers guidance...but in the last resort we must rely on discovering for ourselves the right feel of a skilful feat. We alone catch the knack of it; no teacher can do this for us (Polanyi, 1969, p. 126).

7.3 Further complications: unclear distinctions, a misleading dichotomy and a logical fallacy

Drawing together the various insights from Polanyi, Aristotle and Wittgenstein, we can now see the fundamental truth behind the saying, 'One learns from experience', something one might say, ruefully, after making a mistake. But what does it really mean to say that *one learns from experience*? What is the nature of the kind of knowledge which is so 'saturated' with experience (Vygotsky, 1989, pp.218-222)? Is it a knowledge that is *implicit* at the start, when it is in the realm of the practical, and then becomes *explicit* as soon as propositions are brought in to describe the practice? The idea of a continuum holding between *implicit* at one end, and *explicit* at the other, does not really make sense. How would we identify or individuate the point at which a 'change' had been made, where one kind of knowledge metamorphosed into a quite different one? What I suggest is this. When one learns from experience, one's state of perceptiveness, one's state of being, awareness and sensibility is what changes. *That* is the basis on which one can say, "I won't do that again...I

⁹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 9, for a commentary on this passage by Luntley (2003).

should have...”. If this is a ‘theory’ it is a theory that works dialectically with our practical experience when we pass it on to others: “If I were you...”.

What eventually becomes an established practice, a recognizable identifiable way of acting will be underwritten by thoughts such as: “It’s never a good idea to...”, or: “Whenever x, y and z...”. Here we see why ‘[n]o practice stands outside a theoretical framework’ (Pring, 2004b, p.129). In the case we are discussing (‘learning from experience’), ‘practical’ and ‘propositional’ understanding will be inter-dependent, each growing *into* and *out of* the other.

So now, looking beyond the kind of case we have just discussed, and seeking to broaden the discussion to a consideration of the developmental processes associated with the genesis and growth of human understanding (see Hamlyn, 1978), we are in a position to state the following hypothesis: that however clear, explicit and articulable we make our personal ‘theories’, formed on the basis of our ‘reflections-on-experience’ (specifying exactly how not to make *that* mistake again), the conclusion we come to, will still contain *irreducible* inarticulable or ‘tacit’ elements, the *residue* of their origin. Polanyi (1969) helps elucidate this difficult point:

...we see *tacit knowledge* opposed to *explicit knowledge*; but these two are not sharply divided. While tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is *either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge*. A wholly explicit knowledge is unthinkable (Polanyi, 1969, p. 144, his emphasis).

Some provisional conclusions for this section can now be offered. On the basis of this long exploration embarked on in order to understand what is meant by the suggestion that the ‘content’ of what is known ‘*cannot be explicitly stated*’, we are now in a position to say that Type III knowledge—the ‘know-how’ of the *phronimos*—is an ‘emergent’ kind of knowing where the use of the gerund, *knowing*, connotes an active, personal *state-of-being*. Such ‘knowing’ is definitely ‘off the page’ knowledge. For it is not explicitly codifiable. If this is right, then we might agree that the implicit knowledge of the *phronimos* is a knowledge that is like no other kind of knowledge. It is *sui generis* in nature—possible only through a process of *formation*. This is a kind

of knowledge that gradually comes to be *embodied* in ways we might describe as ‘visceral, felt, not easily communicated’ (Toren, 2001, p. 167), ways which constantly involve a ‘process of *negotiation* within a situation’; it is certainly not a knowledge that is dependent on goals ‘mapped out’ or ‘determined’ by ‘experts’ (Bonnett, 1991, p. 280). Nor can it be reduced *without residue* to explicitly articulable, propositional knowledge—if only because its existence will always be dependent on the ‘attentional field’ (Luntley, 2002, p.168) of individual agents in ‘the moment of action’ (Aristotle NE 1110a 14). *Prima facie*, Type III knowledge looks to be a highly unsuitable candidate for systematic forms of management.

We can now return to the managerialists’ project, announced at the beginning of the chapter, and try to make sense of their plan to try to make the implicit knowledge of the *phronimos* explicit. The managerialists must think that this is possible. Here is a reconstruction of something that they may have in mind.

- (i) In every given case there is some *explicitable* information in principle that might be made available about how the *phronimos* proceeds.

But now, the thought is: if that is so, then we ought to be able to turn the *phronimos*’s explanation to advantage and spell out her principles, explicitly. From this, it is tempting to conclude:

- (ii) There is a body of *explicitable* information about how, in every given case, the *phronimos* proceeds.

But the trouble is that proposition (ii) is a much stronger claim than (i). More importantly, (ii) does not follow from (i). It is an example of the notorious ‘quantifier-shift’ fallacy which often creeps in unnoticed in logical reasoning.

One cannot argue from:

‘For every child born there is a father’
(For all x , there is a y such that...)

to: 'There is someone who is every child's father'
(*There is a y, such that for all x...*)

7.4 Attempts to codify implicit knowledge

There is a clear demand for the *codification* of knowledge in fields where 'reflective' practice and 'continuous professional development' are studied. This demand tends to be made for good pedagogical reasons. But, as we shall see soon, in the context of our present accountability system this demand is problematic.

Even where it is acknowledged that 'teaching...cannot be reduced to simple technical descriptions', we are told that there is 'scope for making practical knowledge more explicit, and thus more capable of being ...codified' (Eraut, 1994, pp. 47, 65). Here the idea is that a teacher's 'vernacular pedagogical knowledge enters the realm of codified knowledge' which opens up 'the potential to develop a corpus of systematic pedagogical knowledge' (McNamara, 1991, p.307).

Similarly, Oakley (2003) writes that for proponents in the field of 'evidence-based education' it is a matter of regret that the educational sector appears to be dominated by a reliance on procedural 'craft' knowledge. There is a responsibility, she urges, to see non-codified knowledge as having the 'potential' to be made codifiable and synthesised in ways that are 'explicit, transparent, replicable...'.

In these arguments, there is an important assumption at work: that non-codified knowledge can (must?) be made codifiable and that, as Oakley puts it, doing this is a 'pre-requisite' for the development of 'systematic methods for applying knowledge to the *production* of knowledge' (Oakley, *ibid*). These arguments make covert appeal to an organizing and governing principle: *to make the implicit explicit*. That principle is openly endorsed in the work of David Beckett (2004) who seeks to establish 'a new epistemology of practice'

for learners in the workplace—to understand better their own ‘inferential understanding’ (ibid, pp.503ff) Rather than accept ‘experience’ as an ‘epistemological bedrock’, there needs to be ‘a conversion of what is done (acted) into what is said (articulated)’ (ibid. p.500).

Robert Brandom, author of *Making the Implicit Explicit* (1994) and *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism* (2000), on whose work Beckett draws, sees the ‘process of expression’ as:

making *explicit* what is *implicit*. This can be understood in a pragmatist sense of turning something we can initially only *do* into something we can *say*: codifying some sort of knowing *how* in the form of a knowing *that* (2000, p.8, original emphasis).

As we shall soon see, Eraut, McNamara, Oakley, Hager, Beckett and Brandom—are not alone in being what we might call *explicitists*—those who endorse the general idea of making knowledge which is implicitly known explicit by *codifying* it. In Habermas, for example, we see just where his notion of ‘critical self-reflection’ (Grundy, 1989, p. 92) leads. He, too, appears as an *explicitist*:

When we use the expression “rational” we suppose that there is a close relation between rationality and knowledge. Our knowledge has a propositional structure: beliefs can be represented in the form of statements...In linguistic utterances knowledge is expressed explicitly; in goal-directed actions, an ability, an implicit knowledge is expressed; this know-how can in principle also be transformed into a know-that (Habermas, 1981, p. 8).

So now the stakes are raised! We are no longer talking, as we were at the beginning of the chapter, about the risk, should we not engage in the activity of making the implicit explicit, of stifling progress, or of not fulfilling our human potential, or of remaining in a state of false belief, or even of becoming ossified in our practices. Our *rationality* is at risk.

Can this be right? Does our practical rationality—and all that hangs on it—mimic, as Habermas seems to suggest, the explicitness of ‘linguistic utterances’? How then is the notion of *agency* to be understood? What are the

metaphysical implications of such a linguistic thesis? Can practical knowledge really be represented by a propositional form of words? Is that what Habermas has in mind? The thesis of the *explicitists*—that ‘knowing how’ can be converted into ‘knowing that’—is not intuitively persuasive. In the next chapter we shall see just how implausible it is when we study one particular argument that claims such a conversion is possible.

7.5 Why those who attempt to codify practical knowledge may unwittingly collude with the demands of managerialism

‘All is explicit, all made present’ (2000, p.162), writes Paul Standish, as he reviews the way in which the demand for ‘what we need to know’ is presented to us in the form of ‘performativity league-tables’, ‘numbered paragraphs... bullet-pointed lists, spreadsheets, flow-charts’. *This*—that is to say, the things he describes here—is where the principle of *making the implicit explicit* logically leads. For the problem is *not* simply that managerial accountability practices attempt ‘to make the implicit explicit’. In the process of trying to do this, non-instrumental values which it is impossible to quantify will be ‘cheapened and debased’ (Bottery, 2000, p. 280). Teachers themselves may begin to be uncomfortable with anything that does not explicitly demonstrate the learning experience of their students in terms of ‘valid’, measurable outcomes:

How many teachers...are now able to listen openly, attentively and in a non-instrumental, exploratory way to their...students without feeling guilty, stressed or vaguely uncomfortable about the absence of criteria or ...a target tugging at their sleeve? (Fielding, 2001c, p. 146)

However uneasy they may be about the managerial pressures that they face as they are forced to demonstrate the ‘effectiveness’ of their organization or the ‘quality’ of their work, teachers need to become adept at measuring and reporting on their organization’s, and on their own, ‘performance’, if they are to convince others who are assessing (or inspecting) their credentials, that they are ‘educationally accountable’ teachers.

Strathern (1998) provides an anthropological explanation of why (what I call) the 'lure of the explicit', has so effortlessly taken over our practices:

...new virtues silently glide into existence...It has thus become 'good practice' simply to describe one's mission through stating aims and objectives and procedures to achieve them. Even to aim to do so smacks of virtue... 'Good practice' carries the double resonance of ethical behaviour and effective action. Simultaneously a standard of measurement and a target to which to work, it is thought to bring its own reward. Organizations will be more effective in their performance, if they are...explicit about their goals ... (Strathern, 1998, p.2).

In other words, the ubiquitous rhetoric of 'good practice' and 'excellence in practice' which promises so much, in reality, is 'invested' with 'a morality' that is 'hard to contest' (Morley, 2003, pp. 49). Why should educationalists fear this? One thing to fear is a version of Gresham's Law: work that produces measurable outcomes will tend to drive out work that produces unmeasurable outcomes (Wilson, 1989, p.161).¹⁰ The 'problem' is not just that:

...audit makes the implicit explicit, but that it is a false presentation of visibility, a false mirror indeed: with audit in place, no-one need *look for*... implicit values (Strathern, 2006, p.197)

If only what can be made 'visible' in an organizational practice is valued, then where does that leave the 'give-and-take' understandings we share with others (Aucoin, 1990, pp.198, 200)—understandings which are based on unarticulated forms of trust and knowledge and which are not entirely 'transparent to ...reflection' (O'Neill, 1998, p. 140)? Such forms of cognition, as we have already discussed, subsist at the level of the implicit in our everyday lives and underpin our practical knowledge—our 'know-how'. Do they have any future at all in our present accountability climate?

It is time to assess the supposed worth of the principle *making the implicit explicit*. To make a start on our enquiry let us note an important assumption that runs covertly in this principle:

¹⁰ Cp. Michael Oakeshott (1962) on the adverse effects of modern forms of 'rationalism'

K' The practitioner's practical knowledge ('knowing how') can be re-configured into propositional knowledge suitable for universal dissemination.

The managerial version of this carries a stronger modal emphasis:

K'' Managing 'know-how' and enhancing it by means of making it more explicit must be an objective of policy.

We need look no further than the work of Donald Schön (1983;1987), to find acknowledgement of the role of assumption K'. (We shall deal with K'' in the next chapter.) Schön's position regarding the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge is problematic. For although he sees clearly the essential role that implicit knowledge plays in practical judgement, almost everything he actually writes *about* implicit knowledge has the potential to be misinterpreted by those who do not respect the *sui generis* nature of practical knowledge. Let me explain.

Schön starts off by drawing our attention to the impoverishment of the 'technical rational' model as a basis for conceiving the notion of professional knowledge. He says that when professional practice is seen as no more than the skilful application of theoretical knowledge to the instrumental problems of practice, then *artistry* has no place.¹¹ Schön's 'knowing-*in*-action' draws upon Polanyi's notion of 'tacit' knowing. (Discussed briefly in 7.2 and 7.3.) Influenced by Polanyi, Schön insists that the characteristic mode of ordinary practical knowledge is that we are usually 'unable to describe the knowing which our action reveals' (Schön, 1983, p.54). So far, all this is helpful. However difficult the notions of implicit or tacit knowledge have been found, and in whatever ways Schön's work has been criticised or refined,¹² one basic point always seems to survive, namely, his endorsement of the claim that such non-explicit forms of knowledge are indispensable to practical knowledge. (Compare the managerialists' concession on this point, in 7.1).

¹¹ See Carr (1989, pp. 7-11) who gives an excellent summary of Schön's work.

¹² See Gilroy (1993); Eraut (1994); McLaughlin (1999).

But no sooner has Schön begun to illuminate the nature of the practical, than a version of the principle, *making the implicit explicit*, springs into action. Tacit knowledge is to be brought to the surface by students ‘reflecting on the tacit knowledge implicit in their own performance’ (1987, p.88). As Wilfred Carr (1989, p. 10) explains:

For Schon, ‘reflection in action’ involves reflecting on ‘knowing in action’. It is the process through which the hitherto taken for granted knowledge implicit in action is made explicit, critically examined, reformulated....

Schön’s suggestion may seem to have a reassuring, familiar ring about it, resonating, as it does, with the kind of Socratic-Taylorian-Gadamerian ideas we touched on earlier, in section 7.1, where it was agreed that, *in specific contexts* and *for specific purposes* there are good reasons why we should endorse the idea of making the implicit explicit. But there are hidden dangers in the *general* idea Schön advocates. The word ‘reformulated’ which is used in Carr’s interpretation of Schön’s thesis (in the citation I gave above), is where the problem begins.

Let us at this point turn to the work of Beckett and Hager which illustrates more easily than Schön’s work, the problem inherent in the idea that implicit knowledge can be *reformulated* into explicit forms of knowledge. Beckett and Hager argue that ‘much of the ‘tacit’ can be, and should be made explicit for learners’ (2002, p.120). They suggest that ‘know-how’ is a type of ‘knowing what to do in practice’ that is ‘evident from people’s various intentional actions’ (ibid, p.172). In its turn, this suggests a possible reading of ‘know-how’: Jones knows how to X just if Jones propositionally knows *what the way is or what the ways are of doing X*. (This form of words recurs in the Stanley-Williamson (‘S-W’) thesis, to be discussed in the next chapter.) Given this interpretation which Beckett and Hager provide—where there is a shift from *knowing how to*, to *knowing how to articulate*—the route to the explicit seems clear. One who ‘knows how’ has the potential to make his or her *knowing how to x...y...z* codifiable in terms of “I now *know that*— —”.

Even if such a thing is not intended, the chief beneficiary of such a thesis is managerialism. For *knowing how*, being deemed a suitable candidate for codification, becomes ready for 'capture'—wide open that is, to Oakley's demand that it be subjected to the discipline of 'systematic methods' to create 'explicit, transparent, replicable' knowledge (see again, section 7.4). To suggest that 'the knowledge base in education programmes lends itself to codification and generalisability' (Beckett and Hager, 2002, p.104) gives managerialists all they need to justify the regulation of the knowledge base of any practice they seek to organize.

But can practical knowledge really be *organized*? Hayek (1949, p.83) famously believed not: it existed only in 'particular circumstances and time', and could not 'enter into statistics'. Now, however, there are numerous attempts to 'organize' practical knowledge. It has been suggested that learning processes, if they become more explicit to a learner, will be more 'easily integrable' with 'managerial disciplines': strategy, economics, accounting and information systems.¹³ But here one might ask: is this ease of integration something for educationalists to *celebrate*? The demands for educators to 'integrate' their work in accordance with the principles of a managerial system of accountability arises directly from the very system in which those educators operate—in ways that are designed to 'facilitate, coordinate and order its inner workings'.¹⁴

Is it not strange that those who are most likely to be concerned about the low status and trust that is accorded to tacit, intuitive, embodied, practical and ethical forms of knowledge are some who *unwittingly* stoke the fires of technicism and instrumentalism? Consider Habermas, for instance, who coined the phrase 'colonisation of the lifeworld' in order to show how areas of social life can be subject to new forms of domination through instrumental, rather than 'communicative' forms of rationality (Habermas, 1987). Habermas alerts us to new 'legitimations' and counter-cultures which have encroached on

¹³ Agyris cited in Beckett and Hager (2002, p.184).

¹⁴ My argument here draws on Tauber (2005), pp. 159, 162-3, whose object of critique is 'this era of managed [health] care'.

practical and ethical lifeworlds. Yet he does not appear to have seen how easy he has made it for managerially minded persons to propose that practical knowledge be systematised and instrumentalised on the basis of 'transforming' 'knowing-how' 'utterances' into 'knowing that' 'utterances' (Habermas, 1981, p.8). The 'transformation' which he endorses (see again, section 7.4), may actually help set in motion the very kind of 'colonisation' he laments. Let me explain.

There is terrible irony at work in giving endorsement to any general project to codify and systematise practical knowledge. Take McNamara's (1991) urging that teachers' own 'vernacular' pedagogical knowledge be made 'accessible to colleagues' (McNamara, 1991, p.307). *Prima facie*, this sounds reasonable, resonating as it does with a well-established literature which sees a link between the collegial sharing of ideas amongst teachers and the enhancement of their own status, research and professional development (see Stenhouse, 1975; 2003, on this). The problems emerge with McNamara's stipulation that vernacular knowledge be 'codified...written down or recorded...as a permanent artefact' to create 'a corpus of systematic pedagogical knowledge' (ibid). How is this to be accomplished? Through 'deliberate intervention by a sensitive observer to ensure that teachers' subjective skill and experience become codified as permanent records of practice' (McNamara, 1991, p. 307). In our present climate of accountability what assurances do we have that the kind of 'intervention' and 'sensitive' observation he has in mind can be guaranteed? McNamara runs the risk of undermining his own thesis. Instead of *re-establishing* the professional authority of teachers (1993), his proposals could *re-enforce* managerial authority.

To exhort educationalists to be 'reflective practitioners' may in fact lead to activity which is profoundly anti-educational (McLaughlin, 1999). It offers policy power to managers eager to tabulate and systematise practical knowledge. Once demands are met to bring practical knowledge and experiential learning 'under more critical control' (Eraut, 1992, p. 8) through codification, teachers, subject to 'managerial disciplines' (see footnote 13, for

the reference), may all too easily be forced to exhibit in their own person ‘the law-like generalizations wanted by government’ (Pring, 2004b, p. 139).¹⁵

Consider how the concept of *evaluation* now functions in our educational vocabulary. Evaluation is no longer used primarily as a means for developing and sharing an understanding of the process of teaching and learning¹⁶— the way a school may ‘speak for itself’, through showing how it measures up to the trust invested in it to promote worthwhile educational activities (MacBeath, 1999, p.6). Evaluation, as it now is understood, has been yoked to the process of external audit inspections of institutions, ‘to evaluate returns on public investment’ (ibid). The worry is whether the activity of evaluating has been reduced to a ranking exercise—to determine how a teacher or her institution ‘performs’ (ibid).

Connected with this, is the further worry whether, because policy makers want short-term answers to justify their decisions (Macbeath, ibid, p. 9), policy language, even when it gives the appearance of being ‘data-driven’, is really ‘data-driving’ (Apthorpe, 1997, p.54).¹⁷ The discourse chosen in policy documents now does more than describe. Its job is also to persuade (Apthorpe, ibid). And the kind of ‘persuasion’ which is at work, *because* it is ideological, may be difficult to resist (see Chapter 2). For information provided by organizational institutions must cohere with standardised audit and appraisals systems,¹⁸ the rationale of which tends not to be open to question:

The combination of an externally imposed... accountability regime and a highly circumscribed strategic environment has meant that governance at all levels has tended to become less about initiative...and more about process and compliance (Shattock, 2006, p.39).

So when educators comply with managerial requests to measure and report on their ‘performance’ in order to demonstrate the ‘effectiveness’ and

¹⁵ This point is relevant to future of the ‘action research’ movement: see [Appendix 3](#), note 15.

¹⁶ See, [Appendix 3](#), note 16, for the reference.

¹⁷ Some academics claim that their research has been discredited because it does not suit the government’s agenda: *Times Higher Education Supplement*, December 1st, 2006, pp. 1, 6-7.

¹⁸ Cp. Elliott and Doherty (2000, p. 217): research should *inform* rather than *displace* the judgement of educationalists.

'quality' of their work, they should not really be surprised to find that such requests take them to a place where they really do not want to be (see Smith, 2001). Where is that? A managerial lifeworld committed to the monitoring of 'short term-targets' or to producing and recording data for 'assessment exercises', 'transparency reviews', 'standardised assessments', 'enterprise audits', 'strategic/development plans', 'marketing strategies' and 'quantified performance indicators', and so on. In that world there is no appeal to further standards that stand above or beside managerial ones. There is little room in such a lifeworld to ask how the efforts of a school relate to *educational* ideals.

Is it surprising if educators who think they are acting diligently by meeting externally-imposed targets may, on some occasions, feel their own agency and professional judgment compromised; or that when managerial targets are in fact met, the 'achievement' actually provides relatively little satisfaction? For, as we are told, the managerial doctrine of 'continuous improvement' carries the message that 'your best is never good enough' and 'satisfaction is the same as complacency' (Bottery, 2004, p. 92).

7.6 Summary

This chapter has been the first part of a study into the logic of the principle of *making the implicit explicit*. The task for the next chapter will be to show that this principle, which grounds the epistemology and methodology of managerialism, is problematic both in its practical effects and in its grounding.

The main aim in this chapter has been to show how the 'lure of the explicit' constantly beckons us like a siren, urging us to make our implicit knowledge explicit. At the beginning of the chapter I spelled out instances when the principle of making the implicit explicit works well and how it might enhance understanding and self-knowledge. But we also explored where the principle might take us, if we follow it unquestioningly. When we try to make the implicit explicit we may in fact distort the thing we least wish to distort. The process of distortion may happen insidiously. First, implicitly understood 'regularities' of organizational practices are 'codified' and turned into

propositional statements and then they are 'translated into rules of action' (Strathern, 2000, p.317)—rules of questionable practical value.

Is it not an irony that the very kind of technical rationalization of knowledge that Schön so fiercely denigrated has now been granted new licence to return in a neo-Taylorist figuration? Moves towards a 'scientific management' of the workplace by Taylorism in the early twentieth century were precisely attempts to *eliminate* uncodified knowledge, to replace the practical knowledge and judgement of individual workers by codification—through 'rules, laws and formulae' (O'Neill, 1998, p.141).

Chapter 8

Return of the lure of the explicit: 'making the implicit explicit' (Part 2)

... The "model lesson" ...is a monument ...of the eagerness of those in authority to secure immediate practical results at any cost...

John Dewey (1964, p. 321)

Educational standards ... The problem is not one of correct policy formation. Policies are relatively easy to formulate and often easier to mandate. *The problem is one of practice.* Good teaching and substantive curricula cannot be mandated; they have to be grown.

Elliot Eisner (2003, p.248)

8.1 Managerial 'expertise'

Now it is time to consider assumption K'', the second of two assumptions that we highlighted in section 7.5, in the last chapter. It is K'' which I suggested grounds the managerial principle of *making the implicit explicit*:

K'' Managing 'know-how' and enhancing it by means of making it more explicit must be an objective of policy.

I suggest we start by examining more closely the epistemology of managerialism, as first outlined in Chapter 3. The analysis we made of the Hatfield rail crash showed how, in accordance with 'new public management' (NPM) principles, the practical knowledge of the original engineers was systematised and distributed across discrete, competing agencies of management. The general idea was to uncouple the basic know-how of the original railway engineers from their so-called 'inefficient' routines. Once the knowledge was 'depersonalised' in this way, managers could fulfil the functions severally assigned to them as per their training across the various agencies of management (to set short/long term targets, implement 'strategic planning', etc). The guiding principle appeared to be to abstract such activities as 'monitoring, control and planning of organisational actions' from the actual execution of these functions (Hopwood, 1984, p.178) and to place them with

designated managers who could then apply their own special expertise. Managerial modes of accountability were then free to work their way systemically through an organisation's practice and be implemented 'on the ground, in every service outlet' (Fergusson, 1994, p.95).

What does such an account tell us about the nature of managerial 'expertise'? Among the most common of the claims that are made about this expertise will be: (i) that practices appropriate for the private sector can be applied to the public sector—that is to say, there is no generic difference between these two spheres; and (ii) that 'efficient management' will make 'effective' organizations—whatever the nature of the organization. As we discussed in Chapter 2, on the basis of these kinds of claims, managers assume they have the *right* to manage (Pollitt, 1990; Sachs, 2003).

The thought seems to be that if a management theory is good, then it should be good for *any* organizational practice, whatever the character and purpose of the practice and whatever the nature of the work that people are recruited to do, be it in a railway, health, prison or emergency service, an educational institution, a post office, and so on. Can we say any more about this kind of 'impersonal' knowledge?

If dispositional capacities and competencies are seen as detachable from the normative contexts which once served to give them significance (Carr, 2000, p.105), then specialised know-how will be seen as needing no particular 'knower'. Following Karl Popper, we could say managerial expertise is driven by an 'epistemology without a knowing subject' (Popper, 1972). For if managers are to analyse, dissect, delegate, devolve or subcontract tasks then the actual work of an organization has to be uncoupled from the experience and character of those in whom practical knowledge and skills reside. Otherwise it cannot be redeployed, as managers think fit. (Notice the assumption here: that after redeployment, that which remains will still carry all the original virtues that once attached to the practitioners' practical knowledge—an assumption which, as we saw in Chapter 3, is highly

contentious. Some practical knowledge, indispensable to the *telos* of the organizational practice, may be destroyed in the reorganization process.)

So what comes next? Once ‘uncoupled’ in the way described above, know-how can then be encapsulated in an explicit, generalizable form (Dunne and Pendlebury, 2003, p. 197) and then it is ready to be devolved. ‘Steering at a distance’ is the metaphor often used to describe this kind of managerial ‘governance’—a form of managing that creates ‘arm’s length agencies’ (Glatter, 2003, p.46).

Perhaps, even more clearly than before, we can see why the idea of *personal knowledge* will be problematic to the theorist of management. For what is now being suggested is that someone’s skill, expertise or competence at doing X is not to be understood as an integral part of a complex norm-governed process and practice (Clarke and Winch, 2006). Such capacities must be seen as ‘transferable’ attributes that will help fulfil a particular task or produce a particular output.

The economic model suggested here is one which ‘idealises’ rational action by abstracting ‘schematically from what people do and from the context’ (Hollis, 1987, p. 169). This process of abstraction enables a person’s practical knowledge to be boned as cleanly as it can be of any ‘personal’ elements it may have. A person’s know-how is then pared down even further to their productive *units* of labour, their measurable ‘inputs’ which (ideally) will produce the desired level of ‘output’—in terms of cost-effectiveness. This is how economically ‘rational’ and ‘efficient’ organizations are meant to run (Katz and Rosen, 1991, p.281).

At this point, it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that, when viewed through the lens of such an economic model, agents who work in managerially run organizations are seen as little more than *fungibles*. There is fungibility between things (commodities) when one ‘commodity is freely exchangeable into another commodity’: ‘*as long as all goods can be bought*

and sold freely on the market, the fact that a transfer comes in an in-kind form is pretty much irrelevant (Katz and Rosen, *ibid*, p.74, original emphasis). In other words, by analogy with this model of commodity value, the logic of 'economic rationality' leads us to conclude that, in so far as organizations are to use resources cost-effectively (and where knowledge is understood in terms of *human resources*) one person is inter-changeable with another. It is not the person that matters, but what that person produces. (Managerial rhetoric: "It's *results* that matter.") What a contrast with an Aristotelian view of rational agency! For an Aristotelian, *the personal* is inseparable from the agential—it is what meaningful agency consists in.

What should be the philosophical response to the economic idea that know-how can be uncoupled from a practitioner and then 're-attached' (Carr, *ibid*) in a newly generalized form, at the discretion of some manager? That such a process is clearly endorsed as good management, illustrates that managerial 'expertise' is itself an example, *par excellence*, of what is prized in management theory: a depersonalised, so-called, 'objective' knowledge. It is one of the many 'abstract systems' (Giddens, 1991) of modernity, free floating, decontextualised, locatable only within the values and principles of effective management. It maintains a validity that is independent of all those who are part of the 'system' (Giddens, *ibid*). It is therefore not surprising that newly appointed managers need not know anything very specific about the nature of the service they will control. This is the case even for educational institutions.

It is now possible for someone without qualified teacher status to become eligible as a school's headteacher, the role now being characterised as that of 'chief executive'.¹ Headteachers are to be chosen for their management ability rather than any formal knowledge of either teaching or of things taught. The expertise of newly appointed managers lies essentially in the fact that they are *qualified to manage* in a *generic* sense. This generic skills transferable to *all*

¹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 1.

domains and has its own standards of competence, quality and excellence.² How is the claim that managerial expertise is said to be ‘universally valid’ (McSweeney, 1996, p.217) justified? A possible answer is *positivism*, which purports to describe the world in non-personal terms.

It is at this point that we see why the principle, *making the implicit explicit*, is so important to managerialism. If *subjectivity* is to be avoided—this is a chief requirement of positivism—then the first order practices of an organization must be made as explicit as possible—for ‘objective’, verification purposes. How else to measure performance and standards and see whether targets are being ‘delivered’?

Once practices are ‘de-personalised’ in accordance with the strictures of positivism, managerial expertise will seek to ‘displace’ the teacher, the nurse, the railway engineer, etc., from their respective specialised, occupational roles and submit each of them to a discipline and expertise that purports to be ‘objective’. In this way, it is argued, the ‘arbitrary judgements’ of professional ‘elites’ or of the ‘mandarins’, characteristic of older modes of administration (McSweeney, *ibid*, p. 214) will be avoided. Such are the claims which apologists for managerialism have been making now for over a half a century. But if *these* are the claims, then managerial expertise must submit itself to the same stern tests that were applied to the previous, now deposed, modes of administration (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Let us start by asking *why*—despite philosophy’s unfavourable assessment of positivism—the belief in managerial expertise is still so persistent. How *can* it persist when the managerialists’ unwavering belief that their own kind of management is the only means by which public accountability can be sustained stands in such tension with empirical evidence which shows that managerial systems of administration are just as prone as other forms of bureaucracy to burgeon, to create powerful and controlling

² See [Appendix 3](#), note 2, for more on the idea of a *generic* skill.

forms of life, to invent their own abuses and be a costly drain on public resources?³

Managerial procedures are still defended and justified—just as they were, decades ago, when they were introduced in the first wave of public service reforms—by reference to politico-economic or fiscal restraints and the supposed need for better forms of bureau-regulation. But has the promise to bring about economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the so-called three ‘E’s’ of good management, been fulfilled? Have the new structural forms of ‘governance’, characteristic of NPM, *decreased* bureaucracy and cost? No. These kinds of structures increase fragmentation and complexity which only results in the need for enhanced supervision, regulation and co-ordination (‘joined up governance’, as described in Chapter 3); this in turn generates new ‘transaction’ costs.⁴ Within the terms of its own criteria of what counts as good management, managerialism cannot be described as a success.

So how has it been possible for the belief in the worth of managerial modes of accountability to persist in the face of empirical evidence which reveals so many problems? It looks as if there must exist *other* arguments for managerial ‘expertise’—arguments, I suggest, so strong that they might be thought to spring from the very nature of practical reasoning, especially instrumental reasoning, *Zweckrationalität*.⁵ So the question becomes: does managerial ‘expertise’ *really* represent the essence of practical rationality and practical know-how?

8.2 The *sui generis* nature of practical knowledge

In the 20th century the most famous attempt to discuss know-how at a general level was that of Gilbert Ryle (1949/1966), in the *Concept of Mind*. Ryle saw himself as pursuing a campaign against the ‘intellectualist legend’

³ See [Appendix 2](#) for details of how costly managerial modes of accountability continue to be.

⁴ Hirst, cited in Glatter (2003), p. 46

⁵ *Zweckrationalität*, an instrumental rationality, derives from Max Weber and is to be distinguished from *Wertrationalität*, ‘substantive’ rationality (Weber, 1978). See [Appendix 3](#), note 5.

that all knowledge is propositional: 'that the agent must go through the internal process of avowing ...certain propositions about what is to be done' (p. 29-30).

'Knowing how', or 'knowing-how-to' (as one might prefer to say), he maintained, is *sui generis*, and irreducible to propositional knowledge (p.32).⁶ When he says (p.32) that 'a soldier does not become a shrewd general merely by endorsing the strategic principles of Clausewitz; he must also be competent to apply them', Ryle is making a general point about what it is to acquire the practical reasoning needed for *know-how*. Such reasoning is not learned, he suggests, by internalising sets of explicitly known principles or by simply accumulating listed 'competences':

Even where efficient practice is the deliberate application of ...prescriptions...putting the prescriptions into practice is not identical with ...grasping the prescriptions (p. 49).

In our present educational climate, it is hard to look at the word 'competence' in a fresh way— or in the way in which Ryle intended it here.⁷ What Ryle was getting at was that practical 'knowing-how-to' will always be more than the satisfaction of a *sum* of descriptions of demonstrably measurable, behavioural criteria (discrete, individuated 'competent' pieces of behaviour).

But the managerialists are not likely to be persuaded by what has been said so far to give up the idea of 'managing know-how' (Boyle, 2000, p.134), and will say:

"You still haven't explained what is wrong with trying to systematize 'know-how'. Doesn't the assembly line show that there is no difficulty *in principle*? Granted that the work of a professional is more complex than that of an assembly line worker, we should still be able to make professional knowledge—and what it is composed

⁶ Cp. Ryle's earlier, seminal piece, 'Knowing How and Knowing That' in *Collected Papers*, Vol. 2 (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1971), 212-25

⁷ See [Appendix 3](#), note 7, for further details on 'competence-based' education.

of—explicit for organizational purposes. Managerial expertise lies precisely in being able to do this kind of thing.”

Clearly the Rylean claims are extremely problematic for managerialists. If a managerial accountability is to function, all forms of *‘knowing how’* that are extant in an organisation will need to be reconceptualised, made explicit and turned into propositional knowledge—through concepts such as ‘units’ ‘elements’ ‘competences’, ‘outcomes’—for strategic planning, data collection, and audit and assessment purposes.

Equally, though, the managerialists’ claims are problematic for Ryle. For in effect, Ryle is extrapolating from Aristotle’s notion of *practical knowledge*. An Aristotelian, as much as a Rylean, stands in contrast with any managerial outlook whose ideal it would be to reduce the activity of teaching to compliance with explicit prescriptions and whose theory of education is based on universally successful, probabilistic generalizations about what is ‘effective’ in classrooms, irrespective of the background of individual pupils.⁸ Whenever background context is acknowledged (as in the idea of ‘value-added’) this may be done only in a ‘tokenistic’ fashion:⁹

...the effectiveness...research tends to ignore or at least oversimplify the socio-economic context within which schools operate. So called effective schools are said to have specific characteristics which are...controllable by ...a good school manager with a strong team of teachers...regardless of the structural or material conditions within which they operate (Gewirtz, 2000, pp.19-20).

So how am I to reply to the managerialists’ proposal which aims to make practical knowledge explicit—purportedly, for ‘spreading good practice’ or for specifying a teacher’s objectives clearly for accountability purposes? *Prima facie*, such things sound incontestable. But, arguing from an Aristotelian-Rylean perspective, let us now consider a teacher who knows how to explain Darwin’s theory of evolution to a class of sixteen year olds. Ryle would not have denied that her knowing-how-to depends crucially for its *exercise* on

⁸ See Appendix 3, note 8, for references to proponents and opponents of the ‘School Effectiveness’ movement.

⁹ Grace, cited in Gewirtz (2000), p.20

propositional knowledge. Nor would he have denied that a teacher who *is* able to teach Darwin's theory to a class of sixteen year olds could in ordinary propositional manner say to a student or assistant teacher whom she was mentoring: "Because the pupils may not have been exposed to the Genesis account of creation, it is important to begin by interesting them in the sorts of things Darwin encountered on the voyage of the Beagle." On another level she might then add, still in propositional mode: "It's important that you watch out for those two boys at the back who usually try to wreck the lesson. It's best to...". Ryle would have allowed indefinitely more propositional claims of this sort.

Do these 'admissions' undermine Ryle's case? The managerialists may be expected to see them as a victory, as establishing *knowing that* as the basic form of rational understanding and demonstrating the reducibility of knowing-how-to. For the teacher's ability to articulate all this advice in this way has the appearance of propositional thought. Her *knowing how to x, y, z...* seems now to have been reduced to *knowing that x, y, z is the case*.

But the managerialists have not understood. For the thing Ryle insists upon is that what the teacher articulates propositionally is *not* replacing, or 'standing in' for her practical knowledge. The availability of the propositional version—the teacher's practical hints on the lesson itself, as well as her tips about how to create a conducive environment for learning—is *parasitic for its relevance and its content on prior practical knowledge that is made available by her own occupational training, formation and experience*. It is only because of such a background that the teacher is in a position to produce countless claims about how to teach to the best of her ability.

In Chapter 6 we saw that a person who has acquired sufficient ethical formation 'can be credited with certain "uncodifiable" reserves of knowledge' (Lovibond, 2002, p. 31). We saw, too, how the kind of 'implicit' knowledge which ethical formation gives to the *phronimos* 'outruns what can be expressed in any finite list of beliefs or principles' (Lovibond, *ibid*, p.62). That is to say,

an agent's formation enables her constantly to specify and re-specify her end for this or that particular context. *Formation*, we concluded—and now we see just how Rylean this conclusion was—is no more equivalent to the acquisition of discretely and explicitly described 'competences', items of knowing-how-to, than it is to the internalization of a list of propositions or prescriptions.

To bring the last claim to life from an educational perspective, consider a check-list of testable competences for teacher 'know-how', comprising such things as: '*cope with mixed ability groups*', '*keep to the objective of the lesson*', '*include time for feedback/plenary*' How can one suppose that the sum of such particular competences can add up to the chief 'competence' that a teacher needs? How can they amount to the ability to enable pupils, in the context of learning, to 'catch on' to whatever is being taught? Something has gone wrong already if the teacher, at the crucial pedagogical moment, is distracted from *that* purpose and activity, by a separate demand to meet a specific target—to demonstrate some aspect of her own 'professional development', perhaps, or to prove that she is adhering to a prescribed way of teaching. Where these demands break in upon the teacher's concentration, coherence is lost between a practitioner's 'knowing-how-to', the activity of the practitioner in a particular context at time *t*, and her implicit knowledge of the ends of that activity at time *t*—the good that is possible *there* and *then* in *that* classroom with *those* children. I hope it is clear now that I am not denying that some propositional, codified knowledge will have its usefulness to practice. But as we saw in Chapter 6, that information cannot contain or lay bare the *whole end* of an activity, the *telos* of an activity—or, what we referred to in that chapter as the agent's *that-for-the sake-of-which*, which will be undertaken 'in the moment of action' (NE 1110a 14).

As if it is their duty, *explicitists* will always try to redescribe in general terms the ends or the know-how of a practitioner explicitly. But, in *general terms*, ends—and notoriously, educational ends—are 'neither clear, fixed, unitary nor evaluatively straightforward' (McLaughlin, 1999, p. 13). That does not mean they are obscure. To a teacher who cares for a student's 'greater good' and who is 'adept at... making particular judgments about when...to

push hard for mastery and when it is better to defer or deflect' (Dunne, 2004, p. 172), they will be as 'clear as daylight'.

Before we proceed any further, here is an interim summary of the place we have reached, concerning Ryle. The Rylean thesis is sometimes expounded as if it were only a grammatical thesis about 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. Ian Rumfitt, whose work we shall be looking at soon, has raised the question whether it does justice to the contribution Ryle has made to philosophy to focus only on the grammar of these terms. Ryle's argument, he claims, should be seen as a metaphysical thesis regarding the nature of practical understanding.

On this interpretation Ryle would have wanted to say that, even where the skilled practitioner is able to offer an endless list of maxims in the grammatical form, "It's best if you ...", "It's useful to remember that", etc., *no* conjunction of these, however long and however detailed will be sufficient for acquiring a particular kind of practical know-how—as if all one needed in order to play the piano was: *this is the way* to strike the piano keys...*this is the way* to keep time...*this is the way* to play the opening of Moonlight Sonata...*this is the way* to...and so on. For propositional knowing *about* how to do X will presuppose practically knowing how to X. It is important to keep apart the following two senses: *knowing how a piano is played* (general, which anyone may read up on) with *knowing how to play the piano* (specific to a person's own know-how).

8.3 Is a sentence that expresses a 'knowing how' verb best construed as a relationship between a *knower* and a *proposition* or a relationship between an *agent* and an *activity*?

Here we return to assumption K' (from 7.5. of the last chapter):

K' The practitioner's practical knowledge ('knowing how') can be re-configured into propositional knowledge suitable for universal dissemination.

As if in response to the *Zeitgeist* of transparency which we discussed in Chapter 3, but without reference to Schön or others who seek to make the

implicit explicit (the '*explicitists*') whom we first discussed in the last chapter, Stanley and Williamson (2001) have recently made the move to *propositionalise* practical knowledge by seeing practical knowledge in reductionist, and not *sui generis* terms. Snowdon (2003) also argues for this position but I shall concentrate only on the argument Stanley and Williamson present. For not only is it expressed in very clear terms, it has also incurred an immediate critical response from Rumfitt (2003).¹⁰ We must weigh these two arguments against each other. Much hangs on whose argument is more plausible. Stanley and Williamson's claim appears to be inimical to the trend of my own argument.

This is how the Stanley-Williamson thesis (henceforth, 'S-W') goes. Knowing how (once it is distinguished from simply 'being able', 'being not prevented', 'having the strength to'...) is a special sort of propositional knowledge:

Knowledge-how is simply a species of knowledge-that (p.411).

S-W seeks to show that all forms of 'knowing-how-to' can be *reduced* to 'knowing that'. Knowing how to play the piano, the S-W thesis would say, is knowing 'under a practical mode of presentation' (p.429) that this or that *way* is how to play the piano. Even though knowledge under a 'practical mode of presentation...entails the possession of certain dispositions', it is still, Stanley and Williamson claim, 'genuine' 'knowledge that' (p. 429).

The boldness of S-W should be noted. For even though S-W concerns the *grammar* of 'knows-how-to' constructions, it soon becomes clear, as Rumfitt points out, that with the S-W thesis, we are presented with a *metaphysical* hypothesis about the nature of practical knowledge—one based on a *linguistic* theory: on the 'semantics of knows how' (Rumfitt, *ibid*, p. 158). The evidence in support of this metaphysical claim:

¹⁰ Rosefeldt (2004) and Carr (1979; 1981), like Rumfitt (2003), do not see 'knowing how' in reductionist terms and are in large agreement with the main conclusion of Ryle's argument.

consists in the existence of sentences each of which is used to attribute knowledge-how and ...which ...will construe its knowledge-verb as expressing a relation between a person and a proposition' (Rumfitt, *ibid*).

Rumfitt is not the only one who is critical of S-W. Winch (2005) questions whether their claim that 'knowing how' be construed in terms of 'knowing that' captures accurately enough the way in which our epistemic concepts—such as *skill, expertise, competence, etc.*—play a central role in our practical activities (Winch, 2005, p.2). These are concepts which belong to our *assessment of an agent's activities*. In order to appreciate the connections between epistemic concepts and human activity, it is much more helpful, as David Carr suggests (1979; 1981a), to see 'knowing how to' verbs as expressing a relationship between an *agent* and an *activity* rather than between a *knower* and a *proposition* (see also Winch, 2005, *ibid*). With this brief introduction to the background issues, relating to the Rylean 'anti-intellectualist' project, let us now see how S-W bears up to analysis.

S-W takes off from the by now familiar case of riding a bicycle. But this example, we are to understand, is expository: the thesis is general and *not* just limited to activities of a physical nature. According to S-W the sentence:

'Hannah knows *how* to ride a bicycle.'

can be unpacked as:

'Hannah knows that w is a way of riding a bicycle.'

S-W construes the 'how' in 'knows how to' as following in the pattern of the 'indirect question' construction. The 'how' is like the 'who' in:

'Hannah knows *who* her uncle is.'

or the 'whom' in:

'Hannah knows *whom* to call for help in a fire.'

So the claim is that the expression 'knows how to ride a bicycle' is 'a linguistic construction involving a question word ('how') and an infinitive which combine to form...an embedded question' (p.133). Just as Hannah knows the answers to the 'embedded' questions: 'Who is my uncle?', or: 'Whom do you

call for help in a fire', she knows the answer to the question: 'What is the way to ride a bicycle?'

But can it be that all there is to practical knowledge is having the answer to some 'embedded how to' question? Let us focus here on how *w* is specified. S-W proposes (p. 428) that there may be no alternative to practical demonstration where you might show the person: "*Like this!*".

Is this convincing? Suppose you show the person in question how to ride a bicycle by mounting the bicycle, pedalling around her, adding a running commentary perhaps on *what the way is to ride*. Does that person know what you mean by "*Like this!*"? If the answer is "Yes", then what shall we say if, despite not being disabled, or ill, or fearful, she still cannot do it herself?

S-W cannot be defended by saying that there is irreducible knowing-how-to concealed in what it takes to understand the ostension of the '*this*'. That would be self-defeating. But S-W can exploit the distinction between knowledge and ability. It can say that she knows how to ride a bicycle but she can't do it for some reason. How plausible though is that? Surely the subject's 'failure' is not physical. Is it not a failure of know-how, the know-how of competence? At this point S-W appears to resort to assertion:

... undoubtedly...there are intricate connections between knowing how and dispositional states. But acknowledging such connections in no way undermines the thesis that knowing-how is a species of knowing-that (p. 429-430).

Stanley and Williamson do express a worry (p. 433), though, that their notion of 'practical modes of presentation' might conceal 'appeal to an unreduced notion of knowing-how'. But this worry is soon dismissed: they are 'not engaged in the reductive project of reducing talk of knowledge-how to talk that does not involve knowledge-how' (pp. 433-434). In reply to this, Ryleans might ask what the reductive project of S-W amounts to. Does the project meet Ryle on the same metaphysical ground? Ryle, after all, held that knowing-how was *logically prior* to knowing-that. What we are missing from S-W is an account of *the source* of the 'practical mode of presentation'. To

assert that: 'It is simply a feature of certain kinds of propositional knowledge that possession of it is related in complex ways to dispositional states' (p. 430) might be said to be question-begging. Exactly how do these 'dispositional states' originate? Might they not involve something Ryle would claim was distinctively practical—'knowing-how-to'?

8.4 Can practical knowledge be *reduced* to propositional knowledge?

These difficulties I pose might not be conclusive against the S-W thesis. If the point at issue has now become obscure, an article by Ian Rumfitt (2003) shows an escape from the immediate impasse. He comes at matters in another way and his insight extends far beyond the case of riding a bicycle—to complex activities we may find in a work situation, and bears equally on pedagogical issues relevant to educational practices.

Rumfitt challenges the S-W treatment of the 'how' in the 'knowing how to' construction. He concedes to S-W that knowing how need not *entail* 'here-and-now' ability (consider broken legs, incapacity at time *t* etc.). But he shows how doubtful it is to assume that 'knowing that' can engage fully with competence. I summarise, below, the main steps of his argument.

In seeking to arbitrate between Ryles's thesis and the thesis of S-W, Rumfitt inquires in what way claims of 'knowing how' are treated in languages other than English. If the S-W thesis were right, Rumfitt suggests, the propositional thesis ought to work for *any* language and not just the peculiarities of the syntax and semantics of ascriptions of practical knowledge in English. But he notes that in French the S-W sentence about Hannah is:

'Hannah *sait monter* à vélo.'

not:

'Hannah *sait comment monter* à vélo'.

Moreover, in Romance, Slavonic, Greek and Latin languages, 'knowledge how' constructions show hardly a trace of the indirect question.

In such languages a speaker attributes practical knowledge by harnessing a 'knowledge' verb directly to a bare infinitive. Rumfitt's charge is that if the S-W thesis works less well for other languages apart from English, this helps vindicate Ryle's thesis. The point here is that Ryle's thesis, although it never said that agent-activity *excludes* the relevance of 'knowing that' constructions from any explanation of what it is to know how to do something, insists, nevertheless, that elucidating 'knowing-how-to' in terms of 'knowing that' fails to mark an important feature of practical knowledge (see also Winch, 2005, p.3).

The picture this suggests for educational issues (and here I go beyond Rumfitt), is that knowledge which is characterised by *savoir + infinitive* construction amounts to more than any occurrent capacity. Whether we are talking about someone learning how to be a teacher or a teacher's own practice in the here-and-now of busy classroom activity, we can see that the know-how which the inexperienced teacher seeks and the know-how which the experienced teacher embodies in her work, is a dispositional sort of knowledge, acquired experientially and contextually—by doing and by 'catching on' and by practising persistently. The practising in question develops and enhances an aspect of the mind, a non-propositional aspect, one that cannot be explicitly laid out beforehand for the person who is learning. And it is this practical grasp that generates maxims in propositional form.

8.5 Choice and decision-making in 'the moment of action'

Yes, the *explicitists* will say, but aren't the managers' recommendations, say, on how 'to measure outcome performance', or how to use a model of 'teaching expertise', simply intended to help the practitioner to enhance practice? My reply is this. Holding on to a commitment that practical knowledge is *sui generis* does not entail a denial of the role that theory, research, hints, techniques, introspection, feedback, or evaluation—even 'feedforwardness' (Beckett and Hager, 2002, p.35)—can play in the

pedagogical requirement that there be *development*. Their usefulness, however, is to be judged case by case by considering how helpful they are to doing the thing in question. Propositional and theoretical knowledge, we can agree, play an important role in informing practical ability (see Winch (2005) on this). What we have seen, though, is that propositional or theoretical forms of knowledge, set out as ‘objectives’ a teacher needs to meet in order to demonstrate ‘good practice’ can only supplement that which they presuppose, the process of *formation*. They will never *add up* to it.

Dunne (1995), whose focus in the quotation below is on the nature of the pedagogical relationship, suggests that one of the difficulties with a model of teaching which stresses ‘behavioural objectives’:

is its exclusiveness of concern with instructional outcomes and its ...neglect of teaching as an engagement or a process...its inattention to the experiential dimension of learning. Framed within this model ...one gets no sense of the pedagogic relationship as setting up a field of psychic tension with its own forces of attraction and repulsion that ...intrinsically affect whatever ‘content’ may loom up within it (Dunne, 1995, p.5).

Consider the implicit knowledge of a head teacher of a large urban school. This is made evident in the way s/he responds in a context-sensitive way to immediate problems that ‘loom up’ in a day’s work, and by her attempts to balance the social and educational needs of the pupils. In the ‘heat’ of any immediate decision making, where these needs converge and threaten conflict, a new ‘leadership-management’ initiative urged upon head teachers by government¹¹ must stay in the ‘cold’. A wise, responsible decision is needed by that head teacher *at that moment* and *for that moment*. As we saw in Chapter 6, there is a point at stake here about how *practical reason* and *judgement*, in what Aristotle calls the ‘moment of action’, must link up with the priority of the particular circumstances in activating the relevant concern with the right end, rendered explicit only *after* the event. For practical reason:

grasps the last and variable fact, i.e. the minor premise [particular fact]. For these variable facts [particulars] are the starting points for the apprehension of the end, since the universals are reached from the particulars...

(Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1143b 1-5)

¹¹ See [Appendix 3](#), note 11.

Let us see now how well the Aristotelian model, with its stress on the important role which the minor premise, ‘the last and variable fact’ (NE 1143b 4), plays in practical reasoning, might apply in a teaching context. In contexts where a teacher’s practical reasoning is not inhibited by managerial ‘objectives’ how would the model work? Does the Aristotelian model leave room for Dunne’s ‘psychic tension’?

To attend to these questions I am going to adapt a particular case study written up by Greta Morine-Dermisher.¹² Whilst trying to preserve the original sense of the original statements made by one teacher (someone called Miss Baker) recorded in Morine-Dermisher’s transcripts, I have taken the liberty of changing some of the actual words used and re-constructing them in order to make apparent how the premises of this teacher’s practical reasoning make oblique reference to *the good* and *the possible* (see discussion of this in Chapter 6, 6.3).

This is the scenario, condensed from the original description to be found in Morine-Dermisher’s account:

Miss Baker notices that Robert is clearly trying to avoid being asked a question in her lesson (The silent message she reads from his downcast face is: “Don’t call on me teacher!”). The boy has recently started to struggle and his grades are slipping. She has not got to the bottom of why this is the case. She now earnestly wants to do the best for Robert. But what is ‘the best’ for this boy right now?

If we reconstruct Miss Baker’s thoughts, we see the role which the minor premise plays in a teacher’s practical reasoning. Miss Baker has to choose the *right* thing to do for the boy—ethically, practically, pedagogically. In an Aristotelian model, unlike a managerial model of ‘teaching practice’, there will be no hard line between these three considerations.

¹² I am drawing here on one of several case studies of a teacher’s beliefs about classroom management and discipline: see Morine-Dermisher (1987), pp.398-399

Here are some of Miss Baker's premises, taken from the transcripts (and amended in the way I have described), which supplied the content of her practical reasoning:

1. It is important not to embarrass pupils (value premise, stating 'the good')
If I call on Robert and he is unclear about this, I will embarrass him
(empirical premise, stating 'the possible')
2. It is important to keep the lesson moving for the sake of the whole class and for what I want to teach (value premise, stating 'the good')
If I call on Robert and he is unclear about this, the class may "fall apart"
(empirical premise, stemming from consideration of 'the possible')

From later transcripts, Morine-Dermisher was able to identify another motivating premise in Miss Baker's reasoning, based on beliefs about *volunteering*:

3. Mostly I like to call on those who raise their hand—for it makes them feel good if they get the answer right (value premise, relating to 'the good')
4. I shall call on Mark who wants to answer; doing this will avoid unnecessarily embarrassing Robert (empirical premise, bearing on 'the possible')

It was her own formation and *Bildung*, fused with her occupational formation, that shaped Miss Baker's idea of what was *good* and what was *possible* in that classroom. This is a teacher seriously engaged in a reflective process of *pedagogic phronesis* (see Chapter 6). Through her practical reasoning she brings her practical, personal and implicit knowledge to this particular context in order to make a decision relevant to that context. Her decisive minor premise, whatever it actually was (this is not clear from the transcripts) leads her, in the end, to ask Mark—*not* Robert—for the answer.

Further analysis of the transcripts might just as easily have shown the many strong influences at work that could have helped form the content of her minor premise. Gingell and Winch (2006), for instance, have argued that in

terms of the practical syllogism, the minor premise of a teacher's reasoning might make reference to a theory informed by research. Perhaps Miss Baker was drawing on a theory of 'self-esteem' she had recently read about. That does not count against anything I have argued for. As Aristotle shows, the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is not so much a distinction between mind and body or thought and action but a distinction between two different sets of concerns (see Carr, 1993, p. 262). Nor is a concern for truth and understanding, the province of theoretical knowledge, irrelevant to *praxis*. Practical 'know-how' must draw on any facts or empirical theories embodied implicitly in *formation* which may appropriately be used for making a wise practical judgment.

So what more can we say about Miss Baker? This teacher was acting in what she considered to be a responsible way. The crucial question here, in view of the argument presented in Chapter 4, where I argued that the links between responsibility and accountability should not be severed, is whether the kind of responsibility which Miss Baker shows in her whole way of being—how she teaches, what she is concerned about etc.—is a suitable candidate for what the notion of *educational accountability* stands for. Well, it has a great deal going for it, I suggest. Here is a sense of *being accountable* which translates into the open-ended nature of *answerability* (thereby encompassing the idea of 'negative responsibility', as discussed in Chapter 4). Her accountability (in this sense), therefore, transcends any legal-contractual responsibilities for which she is formally accountable. It would not be correct to see her formational virtue of responsibility as an 'add-on' to her contractual responsibilities. It is in fact her responsibility which allows her to explore what her contractual responsibilities and accountability ought to be.¹³

Miss Baker, as we see, is trying to embody and promote human good in her thought and actions. Her sense of answerability resides in what she feels is her responsibility for the pupils' well-being—not just pedagogically but in a

¹³ There is much more to be said here about the social and political dimensions of what John White (1976) calls 'teacher accountability'. My focus here, though, is primarily on the structure

broader sense too, one which takes into account their personal needs. In her whole approach and how she reasons, Miss Baker manifests an ethical accountability—*answerability*—pursuing what she thinks the ‘goods’ of education should be for her pupils, even though she is aware that, being ‘diffuse and complex’, those goods may only manifest themselves ‘over a long period of time’—and possibly, in a way ‘quite removed from [what] helped form them’ (Bryk and Schneider, 2002, p.18). In some inarticulate, implicit sense she knows she may never see or evaluate the *long-term* effects of what she says and does but yet she acts as if she will. Her professionalism lies in recognizing there is an ‘ethical demand’ (Løgstrup, 1997) placed on her, unconstrained by time. An educational accountability which focuses on *short-term* policy initiatives is not sufficient for Miss Baker’s sort of *personal* responsibility.

I stress ‘personal’ here because it is in virtue of being the person she is that she acts in the way she does. Michael Fielding (2000), following on from the work of John Macmurry, has brought alive just how important it is—for educational reasons—to respect the integrity of *the personal* in educational life.¹⁴

According to Macmurray, placing emphasis on the notion of the personal does not *ipso facto* de-value the functional, technical or instrumental in life: the relationship between the personal and functional in life is complex and inter-dependent. Fielding appeals to the complexity of the relationship to understand why it is that, even when ‘[t]argets may be reached and scores may rise’, we may still wonder if ‘schools are educational institutions’ (Fielding, 2000, p. 402) and not simply functional places, fit only to help to ensure the country is equipped to compete economically (ibid). If we forsake the personal for the functional then we shall be ‘asking the wrong questions for the wrong reasons’ (ibid). Present accountability practices only make things

of thought and practical reasoning of a teacher who, in the here-and-now of the ‘educational process’ (Bruner, 1996), is responding to her pupils’ educational needs.

¹⁴ The use of ‘personal’ here is not to be confused with the notion of *personalised learning*: see [Appendix 3](#), note 14.

harder for teachers like Miss Baker to cultivate the ‘personal’ in the sense Fielding means.

Weber, as we know, identified any process of rationalization with depersonalisation and oppressive routine (Gerth and Mills, 1970, p.50). In previous chapters we examined the nature of managerial rationalization and the reasons why this kind of rationalization project was introduced to make teachers ‘more professionally accountable’. But now, many years later, we need to press those who are policy makers with the following question: why should it be thought a better form of educational accountability for *management* to replace a teacher’s practical knowledge—her knowing-how-to—by some supposedly universal, *zweckrational*, managerial ‘knowing that’? The thought behind this kind of move seems to be that practical judgement will be assisted if practitioners have some clear, explicit objectives to aim for:

A precise statement of objectives, it [is said], can keep the teacher “on target”. But how can a teacher know that the target set is a desirable or appropriate one? For all its exactness of formulation, how can one avoid its being arbitrary?...[O]ne can do so only through a kind of judgment and good sense that neither depends on nor derives from a commitment to objectives formulation *per se*...Both the pre-specification of objectives ...and subsequent evidence supplied by the approved form of evaluation...leave answers to the teacher’s questions of the form “what shall I do?” massively underdetermined (Dunne, 1993, p. 4).

In contrast to what Dunne describes here, the kind of teaching which an Aristotelian model offers does not start with explicit objectives and finish by proving they have been met. It will need a particular context even to make a start. *Then* it will know where to conclude. Contextualisation is not something *extra* one makes sure is present in order to achieve things in practical terms. It is the *sine qua non* which enables us to *make sense* of what we are trying to do (Carr, 1993, p. 267; Wiggins, 2006, p. 346, note 20):

the goal of practical enquiry or deliberation, is marked by its concern to determine and bring about the *good*....the context in which practical enquiry... operates is essentially an ethical-evaluative one... a teacher’s failure to respect children is not a failure of skill or technique, but a failure of moral attitude or value (Carr, 1993, pp. 263, 267).

So whatever ‘technical virtues’ (Winch, 2002b) may be needed for teachers to apply their technical and theoretical knowledge successfully, room must first be made for *pedagogic phronesis* to be able go to work upon those ‘just-this-moment’ chance events that occur spontaneously in the classroom, to ‘create springboards for significant learning’ (Entwistle et al, 2000, p.19). It is *pedagogic phronesis* that makes constant reference to the ‘end’ in view. Those managers who now circumscribe a teacher’s role should take note of Elliot Eisner’s reminder of just how complex ‘the moment of action’ in teaching can be:

The teacher uses the moment in a situation that is better described as kaleidoscopic than stable. In the very process of teaching and discussing, unexpected opportunities emerge... [this] dynamic and complex process...yields outcomes far too numerous to be specified in behavioural and content terms in advance (Eisner, 2005, p.19).

The *explicitists* may feel uneasy with the idea of ‘outcomes far too numerous to be specified...in advance’. But need they? Consider the problem which arose in Miss Baker’s class, of *a boy who does not want to answer a question*. Why should we be surprised if there are different ways of tackling this problem? Why should we think that something so complex—complex because *that* problem may be masking all sorts of *other* problems (apart from possibly not knowing the answer), to do with motivation, background circumstances, mental or physical health, etc.—can be sorted out by one simple ‘effective’ answer, universally applicable for all contexts?

Those managers who wish to codify (make explicit) the practical knowledge of others for their *own* purposes need to step back from their tendency to simplify—‘to rationalize’—in the sense described above. The reason they do this, we know, is part of the need to demonstrate ‘value-for money’, especially for matters relating to educational accountability. But what does demonstration of ‘value’ really mean in educational contexts? Although ‘education must justify its conduct to those who provide the resources for it’ (Winch, 1997, p. 4), the principle of accountability will call on moral *as well* as financial considerations:

Accountability is not just about the stewardship of money...Those who work in schools and colleges give two most precious assets, their time and their energy... [T]eachers are under an obligation to students and pupils...The government is under an obligation not to waste the time of the teachers...these obligations are moral ones that arise from the same requirement of reciprocal fairness and justice that animates the concern for financial accountability (Winch, *ibid*).

Practical knowledge, in Dunne's words, is like 'a fruit which can grow only in the soil of a person's experience and character' (Dunne, 1993, p.358). So if educational endeavours are initiated or conducted in the light of some conception of a good that is to be achieved, we must also expect there might be very different routes to what is good in the circumstances (Carr, 1993 *ibid*, pp.265-6).

But from the fact that it is possible for different teachers to embody, through formation, their own practical, personal and implicit knowledge in practice, shows that the *pedagogical relationship* between teacher (in a generic sense meaning anyone in a teaching position) and learner should be—when not subject to managerial modes of accountability—'a very personal relation animated by a special quality that spontaneously emerges':

... [It] can neither be managed or trained, nor reduced to any other human interaction.¹⁵

8.6 Conclusion

In our culture of transparency and in an age which is transfixed with quantification and measurement, the thing that struggles for recognition is something that lies partly beyond words. On pain of regress or rendering it inexplicable how anyone ever acts, we must recognise that for any agent in any field there will be a repertoire of teleologically¹⁶ 'basic' acts (Hornsby, 1980, pp. 84-88), where teleologically basic acts are acts one does and *knows how to do* otherwise than on the basis of knowing in what way they are done (*ibid*).

¹⁵ Nohl, cited in van Manen (2003), p. 427; see also Spiecker (1984) who discusses Nohl.

¹⁶ See [Appendix 3](#), note 16, for more on 'teleology'.

How well do theorists of management understand this? Where we are concerned with *practice*, it is the teleologically basic (and not the causally or neuro-physiologically basic) which must concern us (Hornsby, *ibid*, p.104). For human action invites teleological appraisal. In so far as it invites quantitative or statistical understanding, that presupposes the rational appraisal of the end or the goal. It is 'an elementary mistake of the philosophy of psychology', Carr suggests:

to suppose that actions may be identified as neutral causal processes without reference to human purposes, values and goals inherent in the realms of normative discourse...For we can only rationally establish what ...count[s] as coherent instances of good practice in the light of some evaluative perspective on the proper goals of such practice (Carr, 1993, p. 266).

How, then, are we to understand managerialist demands to make explicit what is implicit in a person's practical know-how? Do these demands really flow from the requirements of our public rationality and shared *Zweckrationalität*? It is true that by inventing ends, and the means to achieve them, any conduct, organized under this principle, can become *zweckrational*¹⁷—but the question that stubbornly remains is whether it is right or sensible, or consistent with education itself to impose an educational management model on educational practices.

¹⁷Gellner, cited in MacKenzie (1991), p. 157

Chapter 9

Public trust and accountability: What public? Whose trust? Which accountability?

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men...

Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, Act 1, Scene II. 45

There are many answers to the question: What is the public? Unfortunately many of them are only restatements of the question.

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, p.38

9.1 Introduction

There is nothing in the position I have advocated in previous chapters which discourages either:

(a) the existence of strict, self-regulatory forms of 'internal' accountability tied by law to formal, 'external' bodies who have the authority to advise, to take random samples of work for inspection purposes, and, if necessary, to see that miscreants are 'brought to account' and disputes settled by arbitration; or,

(b) the kind of 'professional development' which welcomes new theoretical frameworks of thought to aid, re-vitalise or enhance practitioners' thinking (see again Chapter 8, **8.2**, **8.5**). From the fact that a neo-Aristotelian conception of 'professional' formation stresses the importance of practical, personal and implicit knowledge, this does not mean that 'a-theoretical' or 'idiosyncratic' forms of knowledge are thereby given endorsement (see Kennedy, 2002, p. 356, on this).

And yet the position I reach is commonly held to be wide open to the charge of leaving servants of the public *unaccountable*: it is irrational (we are told) to entrust important responsibilities to people whose efforts cannot be regulated

or measured by reference to fully explicit performance criteria and indicators, objectives, procedural rules, 'audit' inspections, 'performance reviews', and the like.

In this last chapter, I need to answer these charges and defend the reliance that I build upon the personal virtue of trustworthiness—the formational disposition of one whom it is safe to trust and/or deserves our trust. The main strategy in this chapter is to highlight the disastrous effects on the ideal of public service of (i) *institutionalising distrust*, as the main organising principle for managing public sector services through performance-based policies and (ii) of covering up any gaps and deficiencies that have been created by the managerialisation of our public services by substituting for personal trust an impersonal, institutional, surrogate that bears no relation to the *formational virtue of trustworthiness*. For the trustworthiness of people is that upon which public accountability ultimately depends. The security that regulatory, monitoring and checking devices promise is illusory. No system can be better than the people who work it. That is the one irreducibly ethical dimension to organizational life. Here I echo John Dewey (1927, p.18):

Ultimately all deliberate choices proceed from somebody in particular...all arrangements and plans are made by somebody in the most concrete sense of "somebody"...When the...state is involved in making social arrangements like passing laws, enforcing a contract, conferring a franchise, it still acts through concrete persons. The persons are...officers, representatives of a public and shared interest.¹

The plan of the chapter is as follows: to explore, briefly, what counts now as the 'public face' of accountability, in view of the fact that so many different forms of managerial accountability now exist; to review the criticisms which, several decades ago, were urged against the *public service ethos*, seen by reformers (at the time) as a symbol of an inadequate system of public accountability; to direct some criticism of my own against that which has replaced the public service ethos as a basis for public accountability

¹ Cp. Aristotle, *Politics* 1332a 30-34: 'A city can be virtuous only when its citizens who... share in government are virtuous...'

policies; to examine recent attempts to restore better relations of trust between teachers and government; and lastly, to defend the idea that a public accountability system must find room for servants of the public to be able to develop the formational virtue of 'professional' trustworthiness, worthy of a 'professional' formation.

Even if it seems counter-intuitive to suggest, in a culture in which public trust is said to have eroded (O'Neill, 2002), that we make *trust* rather than *distrust* of others a starting point for understanding how organizations and practices should be managed, I argue that we need to trust *trust*² rather than put our trust in *distrust*, if there is to be any hope of there *being* public trust in a public accountability system.

9.2 Public accountability and the 'Russian doll' effect

In previous chapters we have picked our way carefully through the minefields of managerial rhetoric and the language of NPM. Two noteworthy things stand out from our efforts to circumnavigate those hazards.

(i) First, the relationship between *public accountability*, *educational accountability* and *liberal democracy* is volatile—vulnerable to any political, cultural, economic ideology that happens to define the *Zeitgeist* or grip the democratic will: 'it is hazardous to apply the word 'democratic' to areas of concern about educational accountability without...noting the context and implication of its usage' (Kogan, 1986, p.26). A pro-market ('neo-liberal') form of liberal democracy now affects our understanding of what *counts* as public accountability.

(ii) Secondly, as a consequence of (i), *educational accountability* is always susceptible to politicization. What counts as educational accountability tends to be 'the engine of policy'³ and will turn on the following questions:

² See Gambetta (1988a).

³ Cotter, cited in Preedy et al (2003), p. 53; see also [Appendix 1](#).

By what right, on what conditions and with whose consent are decisions made and actions taken within the schools and colleges... (Kogan, 1998, p.88)?

'Market' or 'managerial' forms of accountability are much more political than their proponents might be prepared to acknowledge. Proposals to 'marketise' and 'managerialize' education are not a neutral answer to Kogan's question.

A few more anomalies to note, before we move on. In Chapter 4 (4.2), we noted the complexity inherent in the notion of *accountability*, a complexity compounded even further by the introduction of 'new public' modes of management (NPM) into our public institutions. As a result of the influence of NPM on public sector policy making and public management practices, many diverse forms of accountability now appear to collapse into each other. Just as with a set of wooden Russian dolls, where each fits into another, until only one remains visible—the largest, standing as the 'public' face for all the others—so we now have differing 'sizes' of public accountability: *market*, *contractual*, *professional*, *managerial*, *democratic*, *stakeholder*, etc. The 'public' face that represents them all and which manifests itself through policy documents is what we now call *public accountability*. From this originates all current orthodoxies held about standards of quality in education and from which we are meant to draw our understanding of *educational* accountability. How rational though, are these standards—do they define a *sine qua non* for public rationality? Do they really help promote the idea of public service and public spirit?

One way in which we might confront some of these questions is to ask why the *public service ethos* was rejected by the early public service reformers. Before its demise, that ethos helped to define the duties, responsibilities and obligations of those who worked in the public sector, as well as the manner in such people conducted themselves. From this flowed a

specific way of interpreting the ideal of public accountability. In the UK, however, from the time of the Fulton Committee enquiry onwards (as discussed in Chapter 2), that interpretation was seen as outdated. The system it represented was said to be inflexible, over-bureaucratized and over-subsidised, unable to meet the new economic fiscal pressures placed on the state to decide how public sector services should be run.

We need not deny that some of these criticisms were justified. But was it a good idea to let *everything* to do with this model of accountability disappear? For as we shall see soon, when we examine it in more detail, the public accountability model based on the public service ethos allowed for a particular notion of public rationality to be valued—one which, in Aristotelian terms, helped direct personal ideals and practical reason (in specific contexts) towards *the good* and *the possible* (in the sense we discussed in Chapter 6).

In trying to identify such merits as were present in the old style of public service, however, I do not take myself to be defending everything that was politically associated with it at the time. Here I echo Whitty's approach (2002, p.21): one might accept that there were 'equity failings' in education prior to the reform movement to introduce markets in education, but instead of *abandoning* systems of education that were based on democratic forms of governance (as Chubb and Moe (1990), in their defence of the marketisation of education recommended) perhaps the alternative, Whitty suggests, should have been to *reform* these failings.

9.3 The rise, fall and death of the old public service ethos

Raymond Plant (2001) writes that the idea of the public service ethos was first applied to the civil service and the administration of the British Empire. But as the role of the state expanded in the late 19th century and the public sector grew, ideas that had been applied to the civil service came to

shape the character of administration in the spheres of health, education and social services.⁴

Plant uses the word 'ethic' interchangeably with 'ethos', perhaps to emphasise the substantial moral grounding and idea of virtuous citizenship embodied in the ideal of professional service. In the following quotation, where he is describing the entry of new recruits into the civil service, we see the appeal made to civic ideals, implicitly saturated with quasi legal-ethical principles:

They would enter the service of the state believing the state to be a body with moral purposes, articulating a sense of the ... public good which they would then pursue in a disinterested way....Public service was an exercise of civic virtue...Allied to this was the idea of professionalism...members of professions saw themselves as being bound together by common professional ties, common experiences...and by common norms...by the ideas of profession and service ...such people have to be trusted as professionals bound by an ethical code or ethos...seeking to do the public good and not recommending schemes which will mean their own enrichment (Plant, 2001, p. 2).

This description tallies very well with the account Martin Lawn (1987, pp. 61-67) gives in his book, *Servants of the State: The Contested Control of Teaching 1900-1930*, of how the teachers came to embrace the public service ethos. Lawn charts the growth of the NUT and the government's attitudes to the teachers' concerns to gain status and better pay. H.A L. Fisher's 1919 Education Bill offered a new, ideal vision of responsibility, situated within a concept of professionalism, with attendant recognition and status (ibid, p.160).

The *Times Educational Supplement* (of 1918) reports that the state expected teachers to perform a civic service:

analogous...to the functions performed by members of the Civil Service ...the State will expect, and will receive from the teaching profession a measure of unstinted and zealous service on behalf of the childhood of the country.⁵

⁴ Plant (2001) draws attention to the influence of thinkers who were concerned about the moral basis for government, such as Jowett, T.H. Green, Toynbee and Tawney.

⁵ Reported in Lawn (1987), p. 67

The important point to emerge from this excursion into history is to note first, that even though motives of self-interest might have underpinned the teachers' fight to establish professional status and 'autonomy',⁶ nevertheless, this strand of self-interest was not at odds with the 'service ethic' that was embraced by the teachers. As Lawn says, a strong union that protected professionalism was *not* in contradiction with a defence of altruism, service and quality in an educational service. Nor was the idea of sacrificing 'immediate personal interests and convenience' necessarily in contradiction with the belief that 'in the long run dedicated commitment and loyal service will be recognized and rewarded' (Fox, 1974, p. 79).

The account Lawn gives reminds one of Hume's insistence that self-interest—Hume called it 'self love'—does *not* necessarily swamp motives of 'benevolence' towards others.⁷ Such a view, of course, stands in stark contrast to the Public Choice Theorists' hypothesis,⁸ that it is *only* self-interest that motivates human agency. According to this view policy makers should treat all people, whether they are politicians, bureaucrats, or ordinary citizens as rational 'maximizers' of their utility (Codd, 1999, p.46). According to this theory of motivation, Julien Le Grand (2003) explains, all people are expected to be 'knaves' at heart, and not 'knights'.⁹

As heirs of Hobbes, the Public Choice theorists saw self-interest as the prime motivating force for human agency. A direct consequence of their influence was that the old public service ethos came to be discredited: even if the civically virtuous existed, there was always the risk of exploitation by 'unvirtuous free riders' (Marquand, 2004, p.97). The notion of collective self-discipline, the basis of the public service ethos, which once served to bolster

⁶ See also John White's account, discussed in Grace (1978, p. 98-99), of how teachers gained autonomy over the curriculum.

⁷ Hume [1739] (1978), *Treatise*, III ii. 2, p.487; Hume [1751] (1962) *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, IX.1, p. 271; Appendix II.

⁸ See O' Neill (1998); Orchard and Stretton (1994); Codd 1999); and Olsen *et al* (2004), for the central assumptions of Public Choice Theory.

⁹ See Appendix 3, note 9.

the professions' credibility, had now 'lost its purchase'; public trust was bound to be betrayed (Marquand, *ibid*).

One other key assumption that helped bolster the Public Choice Theorists' reform agenda was the belief in *methodological individualism*, the theory that all social phenomena are reducible to facts about individual behaviour (Lukes, 1996, p.452). In perfect accord with this belief, there arose (from the field of 'institutional economics') 'principal-agent' theory, concerned with:

the nature of contractual relationships, which govern social co-ordination. In any contractual relationship ...there is a principal, who contracts an agent to provide goods or services (Levacic, 2001).

And once complex social phenomena and human relations were explained in contractual terms or 'elementary units of action' (Scott, 2000), it was then only a short step to saying that such things as the *public good*, *public duty* or even *dedication* made no sense—because normative considerations were deemed irrelevant (Codd, 1999, p.46).

In order to set the tone for the rest of the chapter, this is the right place to note Amartya Sen's rebuke to those economic theorists who claimed to have defined, once and for all, the nature of human psychology. 'This self-interest view of rationality', says Sen, 'involves *inter alia* a rejection of the 'ethics-related' view of motivation' (Sen, 1987, p. 15):

It would be extraordinary if self-interest were not to play quite a major part in a great many decisions...The real issue is whether there is a plurality of motivations, or whether self-interest alone drives human beings (Sen, *ibid*, p. 19).

9.4 'New lamps for old': the old public service ethos is traded in for a new one

In Chapter 2 we discussed the way in which the early public service reformers' rejection of Keynesian, 'welfarist' economic policies, cleared the

ground for NPM and neo-liberal principles to be deployed in the distribution and provision of public services. One of the fall-outs of this change was the assault made on *the professionals* who were said to be guilty of paternalism and elitism with their claims to 'professional autonomy'. They were seen as an impediment to the neo-liberal project. For *no* body or institution should be allowed to be powerful enough to stand between the consumer and market forces.

A view closely related to these charges, which emerged in the late 1970's, was that teachers had abused their 'licensed' autonomy. No longer was the teaching profession to be granted a professional mandate to act on behalf of the state in the best interests of its citizens (Whitty, 2001, pp.160-1). The message that went out to the public, helped by a media 'discourse of derision' (Ball, 1990b, p. 18) was that teachers could not now be trusted. A new 'discursive regime' was established 'and with it, new forms of authority' (Ball, *ibid*).

By the 1980's, distrust of the public services had become the culturally accepted norm. Even in the mid 1990's, when the early reformers' version of neo-liberalism was evolving into a 'Third Way' form of governance (Giddens, 2001), there was no reprieve for the old public service ethos—now just a 'broken reed' (Marquand, 2004, p. 95).

From the account given above, one might have thought that we had seen the last of the public service ethos. After all, haven't we just buried it in the shroud of its own bad reputation? The accusations are familiar: poor management, a culture of welfare dependency, the intransigence of big state monopolistic bureaucracies, professionals who seemed a law unto themselves, and so on. But, emerging like a phoenix out of the ashes of the old public service ethos a brand new public service ethos has arisen! Witness the existence of a booklet entitled, *The Public Service Ethos*, the cover of which I reproduce, below:

Public Administration Select Committee

THE PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE
to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2001-02

First Special Report of Session 2002-03

The Stationery Office Limited

But is this the old public service resurrected—or something else? From this booklet we can extract the rationale of what we shall now need to call the *new* public service ethos:

...The Government sets national standards that really matter to the public, within a clear framework of accountability...This means...hospitals, schools, police forces and local government ...agree [to] tough targets...Conduct is regulated throughout the public services, whoever the provider is. Behaviour therefore is controlled by the conditions set in the regulatory and accountability frameworks and through contracts (pp. 4, 5, 9).

Let us match this extract above, with two other sources, the first of which is a pamphlet entitled: *Advancing a new public service ethos* (2002) by New Local Government Network (NLGN). Here we find:

(i) A direct appeal to a brand new public service ethos:

...driving through a performance and service culture that places the customer at its heart...The challenge for public service reform is...to fundamentally transform the nature of the product so that a new relationship is established between citizens, their services and public bodies...and deliver a transformational service experience with a new public service ethos at its heart (pages 11-12).

(ii) The commercial-contractual nature that underpins the new public service ethos:

...Effective accountability is more likely to be secured ...when partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors is able to encompass:

- A realistic set of commercial relationships and contractual terms (page 19)

(iii) Managerial-audit accountability systems able to 'test' if a public service 'ethos' is present:

Audit and inspection processes should also test for a public service ethos in all public services irrespective of who manages them (pages 19, 24).

My last source for the new idea of public service is the foreword for *Public Private Partnerships: The Government's Approach* (2000):

- (iv) ...to create this new partnership approach we needed a fundamental shift of thinking, putting behind us the ideology and dogma of the past. In the modern world, governments are judged not on what they own, or on how much they spend, but on whether they deliver. In Government, therefore, our focus in all that we do is on outcomes rather than inputs (Page 5).

9.5 Commentary on the new public service ethos: 'citizen-consumers' and the 'consuming' society

The first thing to note is that a citizen, in what John Clarke has dubbed our 'consuming society' (2004b), is now to be equated with a consumer or customer. The hybrid term, 'citizen-consumer' (Clarke, 2004a; Needham, 2003) challenges a distinction once taken for granted: that since the concept of the consumer is tied to the concept of the market, and state provision excludes market provision, citizens cannot be equated with consumers (White, 1994, p.122). *Citizenship* has emerged as co-extensive with *consumership*. Does there remain a legitimate use of the term 'public' when there has been such a 'hollowing out' (Rhodes, 1997, pp.17-18) of the state and the boundaries between public-private¹⁰ have been deliberately blurred? The new public-private 'ethos' aims for a status quo where a government, its state accountability policies and its corporate-market life are virtually indistinguishable. We all live in the same 'discursive space' as the 'state and government agencies' (Giddens, 1994, p.15). Can we make sense of this?

From the various extracts, (i)-(iv), quoted above (at the end of section 9.4), we learn that 'behaviour is controlled' through 'accountability frameworks' and that 'dogma of the past is behind us'. But what is *before* us? This is how the public sector has been described: a series of processes to deliver 'customer-centric set[s] of services'¹¹

Should this way of describing the public sector surprise us? Not really, once we note that NPM is sometimes described as 'reinventing government'.¹² It was always the intention of the public service reformers that the managerial revolution would re-orient professional attitudes around what it means to be a 'public servant'—a term which now turns out to be a misnomer. A more accurate description would be a public service 'provider'.

The contrast with the old public service ethos is stark. According to the precepts upon which it was founded, 'the public domain' was not simply to be equated with what was *provided* in the public sector (Marquand, 2004, p. 26). The public domain was understood in transcendent, ethical terms to allow the civic virtue of public spiritedness to flourish (Marquand, *ibid.*, p. 91). Compare the way in which the new public service ethos now interprets the idea of 'public spirit'. In a section from the publication produced by NLGN (from which we cited earlier, in 9.4) the following 'practical step' is recommended, taking us 'from vision into reality':

The provision of a set of best practice materials to enable organisations engaged in public service to ensure they can draw the right lessons about the operation of a public service ethos (pp.24, 26).

From another source:

Top-down performance management is a key element of the 'self-improving' model of public services...¹³

¹⁰ The principle behind policies of 'privatisation': putting public assets into private ownership creates more powerful incentives for managers to deliver greater efficiency and production.

¹¹ Reported in 'Words of wisdom', *Guardian*, 15th April 2004, p. 15

¹² Osborne and Gaebler, cited in Samier (2003) p. 73

¹³ Reference: Appendix 3, note 13.

We should enquire whether this new version of a public service ethos inspires more public trust in our public institutions than the one that was discarded. Or has public trust been betrayed?

9.6 Trust and betrayal

Dante, who considered the public interest more sacred than the private, counted the kind of deceit manifested by betrayal of public trust as a ‘treachery’, ‘the sin of cold blood’.¹⁴ What is it about the betrayal of public trust that made Dante use the word ‘sin’ here? In calling it ‘treachery’ does he exaggerate? Or does he identify something important about those in whom we have no option but to place our trust? The trust Dante is concerned with is cognate with *trustworthiness*. Betrayal is morally offensive because it is tied up with the value of what has been entrusted—our own well-being.

What is it for a trust to be betrayed? The serious consequences which can attend the violation of trust in private and personal circumstances—depression, grief, suicide—manifest the profound importance of our being able to trust those people to whom we are closest. Human flourishing and well-being depend on non-betrayal of trust. In the face of evidence of betrayed trust, a once-existing-trust turns easily to distrust.

Annette Baier (1992, p.124) suggests it is unlikely that any clear criterion or principle could be used as a ‘magic formula’ for regulating the right mix of trust or suspicion we should hold towards others or how many times betrayal can be sufficiently forgiven for us to start trusting again. Indeed, if forgiveness is impossible and the most that is possible is a ‘re-acceptance’ (Kolnai, 1978, p. 222) (an important element of forgiveness, but not the same as forgiveness), can trust and goodwill be renewed—or will there always be a residual mistrust that lingers? Is there an analogue of the ‘trust-betrayal-mistrust’ patterning which typifies cases of betrayed *personal* trust, for cases of betrayed *public* trust?

¹⁴ See [Appendix 3](#), note 14, for the relevant passage from *The Inferno*.

Let us transfer these questions to the world of education. Here I want to begin by examining two attempts that have been made in the past decade (in the UK) to address the problem of ‘public trust’ in relation to education. They arise from two perspectives—that of the public’s so-called ‘failing confidence in education’ (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998, p. 24), and that of the teachers’ perception that, as a profession, their goodwill had been betrayed.

In 2005, an important olive branch was offered to teachers: a ‘New Relationship’ between inspection teams (Ofsted) and schools.¹⁵ ‘Shorter’, ‘sharper’ and ‘smaller’ are ‘key downsizing elements’ of the new inspection’, explains John McBeath (2006, p. 4).

The rationale of the ‘New Relationship’ is said to be based on the idea of ‘intelligent accountability’, understood by David Bell, once the Head of Ofsted, in the following way: ‘It is time to trust schools more and to draw on the professionalism of teachers’.¹⁶ This statement, though, needs to be weighed against his choice of metaphors: ‘We’re exchanging a searchlight for a laser’.¹⁷

‘Trust’ is one of the main themes of the New Relationship. But has anything of substance changed?¹⁸ Empirical evidence tends to show that the managerialisation of education has in fact intensified. Because inspectors now make greater use of written records and test scores to reach their verdict, rather than rely on classroom observation, the ‘new’ trust granted to schools is only realised through headteachers producing quantities of data of test scores and evaluation records—data that will have to be ‘attainment related, comparative and benchmarked’ (McBeath, 2006, p. 15)—all the hallmarks of

¹⁵ *A New Relationship with Schools: School Improvement Partners’ Brief*, London, DFES/Ofsted, 2005

¹⁶ Extract of Treasury ‘consultation’ paper, reported in *Times Educational Supplement*, February 13th, 2004, p. 8

¹⁷ See the *Times Educational Supplement*, February 13th 2004, p. 22: ‘Will Ofsted shock us or trust us?’

¹⁸ See [Appendix 3](#), note 18, for an assessment by John McBeath (2006)

a managerial form of accountability, with all the attendant disadvantages of stress to teachers which that form of accountability brings.¹⁹

So any optimism conveyed in the rhetoric of trusting teachers more—by granting them more ‘local’ autonomy, ‘empowerment’, ‘self-management’—has to be balanced against the recognition that there is, as yet, no drawing back from the centralised systemic framework on which *the conditions* for trust now depend. In a system which Paul Hoggett (1996, p. 10) characterises, paradoxically, as ‘centralized decentralization’, it is difficult to see what room there is for the democratic ideas of ‘localism’, ‘delegated’ or ‘distributed’ power (Hatcher, 2005).²⁰

The rhetoric of ‘earned autonomy’ which we encountered in Ch. 2 (2.1) is dogged with similar problems. Despite the autonomy and choice that is promised in a discourse of ‘self-management’, those who work and practice in educational organizations, will be subjects ‘to-be-managed’ or ‘to-be appraised’ (Ball, 1990a, p. 123) and should not expect collegial, consultative, high-trust forms of life in schools.²¹ ‘Autonomy’ is in fact only granted when all the top-down initiatives, dependent on Whitehall’s view of good, ‘performing’ schools, are met:

Earned autonomy is located within a context that accepts and works within current state strictures on education—the acceptance of the competitiveness settlement and all that goes with that (Avis, 2005, p. 218).

Since the vanguard speech that Estelle Morris made in 2002 (when Education Secretary), aimed at winning back the teachers’ trust, we might ask: is the ‘New Relationship’ ironing out the problems which Morris’s speech left unresolved?

Apart from addressing issues of teacher recruitment and retention (Bottery, 2003b, p.245), Morris’s speech, entitled *Professionalism and Trust*,

¹⁹ Does ‘having to succeed in terms of performance measures’ (Woods, 2005, p. 37) cause stress amongst teachers? See [Appendix 3](#), note, 19.

²⁰ The Gershon Report (2004): See [Appendix 3](#), note 20.

²¹ See Hargreaves (1991;1999); Fielding (1996;1999); Hatcher (2005)

was intended as a way of healing the damaged relationship of trust between government and teachers—in both directions—that had grown over the many decades of educational reform and continuous policy changes.²²

The opening paragraph of Morris's speech announced that there was now 'a new era of trust in our professionals on the part of Government' (Morris, 2001, p.1). The trust would come from: 'a framework of national priorities, underpinned by a system of national accountability, inspection and intervention to maintain standards' (p5)...This framework has been fundamental in ensuring public confidence in the education service' (p6).

There are problems straightaway. As Mike Bottery (2003b, p.246) points out, the idea of 'trust between the government and teachers' is ambiguous: Morris's speech concerns itself mainly with understanding the relationship *in one direction only*—trust by government of teachers—rather than the trust teachers might have in the government. The speech talks of trust but says nothing of the government itself *being trusted*. Why does this matter?

Trusting someone may 'be little more than a pragmatic calculation' (Bottery, *ibid*). *Being trusted*, however, brings in quite different considerations. For if someone has *been trusted* to do something, this presupposes an implicitly understood judgement about the character and professional integrity of the person. The dynamics of trust are complex here. The trustor trusts that the trustee will be trustworthy.

9.7 Calculating trust and institutionalised distrust: how a spiral of mistrust may be generated

'Game' or 'rational choice' theory attempts to reduce this complexity by transforming inter-personal trust relations into a 'game' of calculation or 'trade-offs' between what one is prepared to risk losing in order to gain advantage over another and what one calculates will at least keep one 'even' with one's competitor. Rational choice theory posits an 'ideal' of rationality: it

²² See [Appendix 3](#), note 22, for more detail.

denies the existence of any kind of action other than the purely calculative, instrumentally motivated (Scott, 2000) as in: 'How can I best advance my material advantage given present conditions?' (Bryk and Schneider, 2004, p.14).

But such a conception of rationality, as Martin Hollis (1987, p. 169) remarks, will have its limitations:

economic models idealise action...they abstract from what people do and from the context...

If we have to resort to (theoretically) idealised 'abstract' models to explain human relations, why not face up to the limitations of such models? These models construct a theory of human psychology and motivation but they ignore the psycho-dynamics that accompany *inter-personal* relations of trust—what John Sydow (2002, p. 46) calls the 'facework' aspect of trust relationships.²³ For one of the things we know is that to be treated *as if* one is not trustworthy—through certain kinds of monitoring and checking actions—can affect behaviour:

theories can become self-fulfilling...we can produce the very behavior (sic) we [fear] in... those around us. So, if we expect people to be untrustworthy, we will closely monitor their behavior, which makes it impossible to develop trust.... [H]ow can I know if you can be trusted unless I provide you an opportunity to show you can be trusted (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006, p. 50)?

The relevance of this to modern performance-based policies should be recognized:

...managerially orchestrated self-inspection is indicative of an organisation which has moved into a state of continuous doubt about the trustworthiness of those engaged in core activities (Elliott, 2001, p.201).

When a low-trust ethos pervades an organization then the scene is set to create a spiral of mistrust, as Patricia White (1993) suggests, between trustor(s) and trustee(s). Sensing that one is distrusted may evoke feelings of frustration, alienation, anger, resentment, indifference, lack of commitment; there may be

²³ See also Luhmann (1979, p.74) on the 'subjective processes' of trust.

‘little mutuality of respect’ (Le Grand, 2003, p.167). Distrust then feeds on distrust:

eventually [she] reacts with distrust on her own part, feeling herself relieved of moral obligation and free to act in her own interest. This reaction further confirms the initial distrust and leads to a downward spiral or a self-fulfilling prophecy which can totally paralyse an organization... (Lane 2002, p.24)

So the aim for any system of accountability must be to stop ‘distrust [from] gaining the upper hand [and] being perceived as a fundamental distrust of the good will of a particular person (White, *ibid*, p.76).²⁴ Any accountability checks that are made on the procedures a school uses (to demonstrate ‘effectiveness’, for example) must not seem over ‘intrusive’ or ‘unfair’ to those of whom an account is expected (Winch, 1997, pp.67, 72):

formal controls instituted to increase performance reliability can undermine trust and interfere with the achievement of the very goals they were put in place to serve...[T]hey communicate distrust (Taschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000, p. 583).

Are we to conclude then that trust builds on trust—that trusting someone is a precondition for that person’s trustworthiness and honesty?²⁵

In the light of this discussion, where we see how easily certain kinds of monitoring and checking procedures ‘are not consistent with trust, but are indicative of mistrust’ (Manson, 2004, p.5), let us now return to Morris’s speech.

Trust, we are told, comes from *confidence in the regulatory and monitoring structures of performance management and of the inspection system*:

‘We do now have an accountable teaching profession. Performance tables, the inspection system, performance management, examination and assessment arrangements, procedures for tackling school weakness, all contribute to the effective accountability of teachers and head teachers... and generate public and Governmental trust in our schools (Morris, 2001, p.26).

²⁴ White (1993) draws an important distinction here: see [Appendix 3](#), note 24.

²⁵ See [Appendix 3](#), note 25, for empirical research relating to this question.

In the last resort, the validity of claims such as these will rest on the public's judgement on the 'performativity' ideal itself, as to how well it provides the trust that it promises. But in the meantime, we should ask: what is the nature of the kind of trust which it is assumed the performativity ideal helps sustain within organizations? Here is one account, from a book entitled, *Trust in Organizations*:

...managers may decide trust is important because it improves the motivation, morale and compliance of subordinates—all of which are in the service of enhanced organizational performance and help advance the manager's own agenda. Thus, as managers, they may be willing to expend a fair share of their discretionary attention resources on "building" relational trust with subordinates. However, this expenditure is justified not on grounds that such trust is intrinsically worthwhile or right but rather on purely calculative grounds: by investing in trust now, they hope to garner enhanced payoffs down the road in terms of lower turnover, absenteeism, shirking, and so on (Kramer, 1996, p.227).

From this extract we see how the virtue of trustworthiness is seen as an economic commodity,²⁶ and how easily, in fact, the notion of 'trust' may be appropriated for political/managerial/economic use. Trust is a means for achieving organizational ends and overcoming 'moral hazard'.²⁷

When trust is understood in such calculative terms, Bottery (2000, p.73) suggests, trust is certainly seen as a 'good thing'—but 'good' only from a 'second-order', economic, rather than a 'first-order', ethical point of view. Sometimes, however, only the 'first-order' kind will do. For when we are concerned about the trustworthiness of a person it is not only a function of calculable risk (see Johnson, 1993, p. 167). In this regard, consider the following definition of trust, where trust is understood in terms of *confidence in the face of risk*:

Trust may be defined as confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (Giddens, 1990, p. 34)

²⁶ See [Appendix 3](#), note 26, for more on this.

²⁷ A 'principal' cannot, without cost, monitor the 'agent's' action and information (Arrow 1985; Pratt and Zaeckhauser (1985).

Here is a helpful definition of trust as a noun, but it leaves out what is so important about *interpersonal trusting*. Once we have the verb, *to trust*, we arrive at the question of what it is *to trust someone* and to take that person as *trustworthy*. In the literature on trust, however, we find a constant slippage between *trust* and *trustworthiness* (see Hardin, 2001, p. 16 on this), one which occurs especially in discussions when trust is understood in economic, calculative or functional terms, something to be contracted for, as in principal-agent institutional economic theory, where transaction costs are seen as the main organizational problem (Lane, 2002). But it is essential to distinguish between these two concepts. *Betrayal* of trust is not a failure of trust *simpliciter*, but rather, a failure of *trustworthiness* (Hardin, *ibid*, p.32) which is a matter of a person's *formational virtues*—their honesty, fidelity, sincerity, integrity. The *value* of trustworthiness cannot be measured by any economic or utilitarian value it might have.

9.8 Trust, naivety and gullibility

It is common ground between the Aristotelian and managers who promote the virtues of performance management that organizations need *vigilance*.²⁸ But what each means by vigilance is quite different. New forms of 'vigilance, surveillance and performance appraisal' (Olssen, 2003, p.200) have been deliberately introduced to replace ordinary vigilance, care and personal responsibility. An Aristotelian form of management built on norms of personal responsibility and trustworthiness does not imply that we should always be trusting. What the Aristotelian adds is the thought that trustworthy persons must be recruited, trained and nourished in such a way that they are able to develop their own 'professional' *phronesis* and trustworthiness, appropriate to their own area of work.

Perhaps, though, in spite of our discussion in the last section, about how low-trust environments may provoke a spiral of mistrust, one residual thought

²⁸ Royal Mail, in an effort to increase security and reliability 'was reviewing its hiring policies and would cut its use of casual staff who are not always properly vetted or trained': *Financial Times*, May 19th, 2004, p.9.

remains: that it is politically naïve to suggest that public accountability can ultimately depend on trusting the practical knowledge of one who appears to be of good character: “It is *still better* to put our faith in a system²⁹ in which legal and work contracts hold people accountable—rather than put our faith in individual people who, after all, are fallible”. Let us deal straightaway with the point about placing trust in contracts, rather than in persons.

Prima facie, the idea of contract is appealing. In its ideal form a contract is a paradigm of an obligation which is freely undertaken: ‘contract is an act of autonomous will...an instrument of mutual benefit’.³⁰ But as Baier (1995, p.117) remarks, even though the ‘beauty of...contract is its explicitness...we can only make explicit provision for such contingencies as we imagine arising’. Gambetta (1988a, p. 221) also sounds a warning note:

Contract shifts the focus of trust on to the efficacy of sanctions, and either our or a third party’s ability to enforce them if a contract is broken.

This raises once more, the question whether ‘contract’ trust really does supersede distrust completely. Or does it steal back surreptitiously? We hear about the cases where the law catches up with all those who do not honour their contracts—but not always, and not always in time. (Think of all the contracts that would have been signed along the route to the eventual disgrace that befell Enron, the U.S. energy corporation, charged, amongst other things, with fraud and conspiracy to pervert justice.) Let us here recall Dewey’s point which I cited at the beginning of this chapter: ‘Ultimately all deliberate choices proceed from somebody in particular’. Contracts cannot infallibly circumnavigate possible betrayals of trust.

It was Durkheim’s insight to see that there is always an element of the *precontractual*³¹ in any contract. Here he was echoing a point made by Hume (1748) in his argument against the 17th century Social Contract theory of political obligation. Contracts themselves are only possible against the

²⁹ The literature on ‘system’ trust is vast. See [Appendix 3](#), note 29.

³⁰ Herbert Spencer, cited in Misztal (1996), p. 36

³¹ Durkheim (1933); see Seligman (1997) for a discussion of this point.

background of non-contractual relations which build and depend on trust (O'Neill, 1998, p.172) Contract as a paradigm of interpersonal trust relations may *limit* distrust but will never *eradicate* the need for trustworthiness in a person.

Now let us deal with the charge of naivety. There is a difference between trust existing in the absence of evidence to the contrary, and *gullibility* which is trust in the presence of evidence to the contrary.³² When charges of naivety are made, perhaps we need to establish whether the charge is really one of gullibility. If it is, then there is confusion. We can be trusting without being credulous. If, *for fear of being naïve*, we gave up altogether on trusting others, we could never learn anything new.³³

Suppose, though, that someone persists in the naivety charge. Then we must ask what we might ask an epistemological sceptic—"What would ever satisfy you?" Imagine we ignore costs and try to set up every monitoring check the human mind could devise, would that ever satisfy? No, how could it? No amount of ingenuity or money poured into making a 'foolproof' system would be able to eradicate or counteract all human weakness or vice—ranging from laziness and incompetence—through deviousness, deception and even malice—to malpractice, corruption or abuse of power. We could never guarantee for certain that someone would not find a way to cheat the system. But is cynicism the only response to make here (Warnock, 1996, p.52)? It is as if the only thing that would satisfy the objector, would be to solve the problem of human imperfection and evil. But why then suppose that a foolproof system could be constructed? Just as you can never please the sceptic, so you can never please the one who accuses you of naivety. These two disputants have much in common.

³² Putnam (2000) p. 136, and note 6, p. 466.

³³ This point bears on Polanyi's view of how scientific progress is made. See [Appendix 3](#), note 33.

A much stronger argument to make against the position that I hold would be to take Hobbes's line and just say outright that what I suggest is based on a faulty hypothesis of human nature: humans cannot be trusted *sufficiently*. We have already discussed Hobbes's views regarding trust in section 9.3, where we noted the legacy he bequeathed to the Public Choice Theorists. What is there to be said to those who are still in thrall to Hobbes?

Here is one answer. The question of *whether to trust* should not be seen as an all or nothing issue (Thomas, 1979, p.100). It is not a question of deciding *in general*, suggests Thomas, whether we ought, as a priority, to prefer *trusting* over relying on the institutional rules, procedures or sanctions of a system. It is a question, rather, whether we can distinguish certain situations in which *trust is appropriate*. To take an all-or-nothing view, he suggests, is the same mistake Hobbes made:

if my trusting someone would threaten my personal security, then I have a reason for not trusting him; but Hobbes's error is to exalt this reason into an over-riding one... Hobbes's main aim was to deliver the individual from... insecurities...But...to constantly maximize [one's] own chances of survival could have the effect of depriving the community... of that which could make the greatest contribution to [its] security, namely the willingness of some...to face ...perils (Thomas, *ibid*, p.98).

People who are impressed with Hobbes's arguments—and who believe that only by means of a strong 'Leviathan' can people be trusted to be accountable—ought to look where their own arguments lead. It is they who are naïve in not following through to the point where Hobbes's argument ultimately leads: totalitarianism either in the form of political power or in the form of performance-based, managerial technologies of audit which challenge agential capacities, authenticity and personal integrity (Zipin and Brennan, 2004, p. 27).

All that is left for the objector at this stage is to hanker for something that is as 'system proof' as it can be, but which does not incur all the 'totalitarian' dangers I have just pointed out:

“*If only* we could get an accountability system set up, with the right kind of rules, regulations, procedural norms and codes of practice, *democratically* approved, and with sanctions and disciplinary measures for those who do not adhere to them, we would have the perfect system. We just need *experts* and *consultants* who can advise how best to put policies into operation with *managers* in charge, to monitor and check. Then we would not have to rely on finding trustworthy people. If we had enough people who are competent and know what is expected of them then we shall catch out those who are not measuring up to what they should be doing or what they should know.”

But what is described here is the public accountability system we now have—*managerialism*! Managerialism is predicated on a logic of *institutionalised distrust and suspicion*: trust is conditional on proving one is not untrustworthy. If we follow this route—if we think that trusting *distrust* rather than trusting *trust* is the best form of public rationality—then, in consistency, we should take everything else that goes with this rationality. We accept managerialism. But note, we should still be left with the ‘problem of trust’. Indeed, we are ready for the ‘spiral of distrust’. Our best course may be to appraise the prospects of ‘trust management’ (Sydow, 2002, p. 54).

When a management system chooses to embrace a Hobbesian version of trust, one that is based on calculation, prudence and self-interest, then it will be no surprise that the only form of motivation which such a system cultivates is one that is dependent on extrinsic rewards, such as *performance-related-pay*. In such a system is there any space for people to be encouraged to exercise ‘negative responsibility’—the kind of responsibility we discussed in Chapter 4—and which we saw has the potential to nurture the virtue of trustworthiness? This is the kind of responsibility that does not depend on

extrinsic motivators. It starts from an attachment to the good at which an activity is aimed (MacIntyre, 1985, p.187).

9.9 The role of *fiduciary* responsibility and trust: closing the gap between trusting someone and wondering whether that trust will be kept

It is the 'gap', across time and space, which gives rise to 'the problem' of trust. For trust needs to start precisely when hard, immediately verifiable evidence is lacking, when there is a time-lag, a 'suspension of account-keeping' (Ensminger, 2001, p.199), before there can be any monitoring of an action (Gambetta, 1988a, p. 217).

Here is one way in which the 'gap' may be closed which does not take the managerial route. We start with the thought that public trust, like private trust cannot be understood reductively in terms simply of just relying on someone's *knowledge* or *competence performance* (Baier, 1992, p.117). Someone's being publicly accountable is never a simple matter of using knowledge correctly in accordance with a check-list of what is stipulated for a certain task or job. Nor is it even sufficient to say that the person must use knowledge wisely. The important point is that the knowledge must be used not only wisely *but on our behalf*. This introduces the idea of 'fiduciary responsibility'. The fiduciary element involved in trusting others to bear our goodwill in mind, is to give '*discretionary powers to the trusted, to let the trusted decide how, on a given matter, one's welfare is best advanced, to delay the accounting for a while, to be willing to wait to see how the trusted has advanced one's welfare*' (Baier, 1992, p.117, original italics)

We arrive now at the counter-intuitive thought that for someone *to be accountable* we need to be willing ourselves, as Baier suggests, '*to delay the accounting for a while*'.

The idea of 'fiduciary trust' closes the 'delay' gap. For the entry point for trust is where, in spite of lacking epistemic evidence that someone's knowledge is in fact to be used for our benefit, or where the possibility of

checking up might be difficult or precluded, we have, nevertheless, an 'affective attitude of optimism' (Jones, 1996). This sort of 'optimism' sustains human practices—as we learn both from Hume and more recently, from 'social capital' theory³⁴—and is carried implicitly through society in unarticulated beliefs and taken-for-granted confidences. We now see that this sort of optimism underpinned the rationale of the old public service ethos.

A major part of what it meant to be a public servant at the time of the old public service ethos was an expectation that those trusted would carry out their *fiduciary* obligations and responsibilities (Barber, 1983, p. 9). This 'ethic', it was assumed, would enable an agent to transcend the particularism of his or her own situation (Hoggett, 1996, p.14):

The values of the Public Service include the trust that comes from serving others, the sense of obligation that overrides personal interest, the professional commitment to do one's best, the pride associated with working in an esteemed organization, and the stake one acquires from making a career in the Public Service.³⁵

Compare what we have now:

Teachers are inscribed in ...exercises in performativity [as] they attempt to fulfil the... imperatives of competition and target-achievement...The humanistic commitments of the substantive professional—the service ethic—are replaced by the teleological promiscuity of the technical professional—the manager.³⁶

In contrast to the low-trust 'exercises in performativity' described above, stands the 'high trust' form of administration associated with the old public service ethos, when those who worked in the public sector regarded their working relationships as founded on collegiality and high levels of trust (Merson, 2001, p.78). Even if the normative framework which the old public service ethos offered could not guarantee that all within it were trustworthy, it supported a view of civil society that was able to temper any colonising or distorting effects which the corporate capitalism at that time might have

³⁴ See Putnam (1990; 1992); Coleman (1990); Fukuyama (1995).

³⁵ Schick, cited in Codd (1999, p. 49)

³⁶ Ball, cited in Moore (2004), p. 77

inflicted upon public institutions—especially educational ones. Compare what we now have.

Our present, *new* ‘public service ethos’ places high value on ‘the competitive institutional professional’ (Bottery, 2003a, p.204), someone who sees professionalism mainly as ‘the construction of personal portfolios and advancement rather than as being centrally concerned with the good of their institution.’ And yet it advertises the values of the public service ethos! Here we have yet another case of ‘linguistic’ or ‘rhetorical’ robbery (Fielding, 1994; Halliday, 2004). The reformers have helped themselves to everything attractive in the vocabulary of their critics. They have appropriated the words, *public service ethos*, but what is offered is derived from earlier conceptions of an ideal of public service—without the ‘ethic’ that grounded that ideal (see again, 9.4). ‘Linguistic robbery’, Fielding (*ibid*, p.19) says, undermines ‘the credibility of the conceptual story which the stolen language strove to give voice’. Philosophy’s task here is to make sense of the idea of the survival of a concept outside the frame of thought that made it intelligible in the first place.

9.10 Trust and distrust: maintaining an equilibrium

It is true that impersonal formal procedures and some reliance on systems of monitoring can facilitate the growth of confidence and reduce complexity (Kogan 1986, p.38; Luhmann 1979). But it would be a ‘some-all’ fallacy to say that just because *some* forms of institutionalised distrust are useful that means that *all* that is ever needed to ensure better accountability is the installation of ever more sophisticated accountability checks and restraints to enhance trustworthiness.

We can grant that institutionalised distrust has a role in the context of a democratic system—as a legitimate political tool to use if an authority is perceived to be out of reach of accountability. Checks can be made on authority to justify the legitimacy of that authority (White, 1993, p. 75). But any safeguards and controls, instituted by organizations, to counter

'opportunistic behaviour', will need to be balanced against over-regulation. Regulation should control *the exceptions* without burdening *the whole* (Boyfield, 2006, pp.5-6).

It is also important to maintain an equilibrium between trust and distrust if an appropriate sense of self-reliance, self-trust and independence is to flourish (Bowlby, 1994, p.107). So as well as institutionalising forms of democratic distrust, we must, for *equally* good democratic reasons, encourage working environments where people are respected as responsible agents, willing—without manipulation or coercion—to *choose freely to accept certain restraints* (Thomas, 1979, p. 99). Only if such conditions exist is there a chance for public accountability to meet democratic accountability on the same footing.

9.11 Concluding thoughts

So how might we summarise the nature of the relation between public trust and accountability? Let's start with some general thoughts on trust and distrust.

First, we have to accept that trust is a mysterious phenomenon and not something that can be engineered or managed. For absence of trust is not even the same as distrust: trust and distrust are contraries and not contradictories.

Secondly, neo-Aristotelians can be realists as well as idealists. The kind of trust we are concerned with is not the trust that members of a family or life-long friends assume or expect of each other. 'Professional' trustworthiness—although it is open-ended and structurally similar, and will call on moral virtues, such as responsibility, reliability, consistency, honesty, etc., does not need to have the pretensions to full ethical virtue.

Thirdly, the relation between trust and distrust is fragile. It is a well-known phenomenon that lack of trust can fulfil a prediction that something

will not work. The stock market, for instance, can crash as cumulative distrust brings about the very possibility that provoked the distrust. This might be why *trusting* is often described as a 'rational' form of irrationality designed to absorb uncertainty (Luhmann, 1979, pp. 8, 69). It might be the case that the best that can be had is a weakly structured probability (Dunn, 1984). But the fact that it is needed for any inter-personal co-operative human endeavour shows that trusting is in a sense more fundamental and primitive (Williams, 2002, pp. 49, 85) than the moral conventions or positive laws of any society. John Locke, in his study of the nature of political obedience, allowed for the recognition of trustworthiness as a causal pre-condition for the existence of any societal arrangement.³⁷

Fourthly, trustworthiness will tend to flourish as a virtue where there is an initial defeasible presumption of trust. This is why it is important to be aware of the risks when deliberate distrust mechanisms are built administratively into institutional practices, ostensibly for purposes of democratic accountability. Peter Johnson, in his book, *Frames of Deceit*, a study of political and public trust, warns:

... It would be ironic if a preoccupation with the rational basis of system trust resulted only in an encouragement of a more calculating disposition and an inability to act in the public domain unless securely supported by sanctions, insurance policies, or safety procedures (Johnson, 1993, p.171).

As a reminder of just how 'ironic' our present managerial reality is—in the sense of 'ironic' Johnson intends—let us end with an ancient philosophical question, at least two thousand years old. In his *Satires*, Juvenal asked: 'Who guards the guardians?'³⁸

The question goes to the heart of all the matters to do with accountability, trust and distrust that we have touched on this chapter and also to the heart of the question: "Why should we trust the teachers?" The logical problem is obvious. We are led into a regress of distrust once we pose the

³⁷ John Locke [1690] *Second Treatise of Government*, C.B. Macpherson (Ed.) (1980) (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company), IX, 136; XIII, 149

³⁸ '*quis custodiet ipsos custodiet*'?

question. To put in a 'second-order' layer of guardians to guard the 'first-order' ones only raises the same fear—how can *they* be trusted? So how is the regress of distrust to be terminated?

Luhmann suggests that it is only if a question of trust or distrust becomes 'acute' or 'problematic' that we fasten on what we take to be the prominent features in the context. In such circumstances, when selecting the critical variables which signify trust there is an element of *indeterminacy*: 'in the simplifying, in the reduction of complexity, there always lies an unstable, incalculable moment'; there is no way this sort of situation can be predicted; it takes on the character of a 'threshold experience', often as the result of 'a chance first impression' (Luhmann, 1979, pp. 69, 74). If trust between people emerges at all, it emerges implicitly and dynamically in those 'interstitial spaces' (Seligman, 1997, p.25) where roles, responsibilities and expectations meet. So now, knowing that what counts as trustworthiness may in fact only show itself in particular contexts—'in the moment of action'—(Aristotle, NE 1110a 14)—let us ask the question again, but in a slightly different form: *what* guards the guardians?

There is really only one answer: it is 'professional' formation (the close relative of ethical formation)—but not without careful, judicious recruitment and ordinary commonsense vigilance and 'watchfulness' (Dewey, 1927, p. 69)—which guards the guardians. This is what protects the public interest. What else could there be?

Conclusion

HAMM: ... Enough, it's time it ended...
Have you not had enough?
CLOV: ... Yes! ... All life long the same questions...
HAMM: ... But we change! We lose our hair, our teeth!
Our bloom! Our ideals!
CLOV: ... We do what we can...

Endgame, Samuel Beckett

1.

The Aristotelian model of practical rationality, introduced in Chapter 6 by way of contrast to the managerial one, encouraged us to look beyond the achievement of organizational goals as a *sine qua non* of public rationality. The two rival models of practical rationality we have been considering are well characterised by Kemmis (2003, p. 312):

instrumental (technical) reasoning manifests itself in attitudes of *systematisation, regulation, and control*—focussing on the ‘system’ aspects of the social settings involved (...regarded in a rather abstract, generalised and disembedded way). By contrast, practical reason manifests itself in attitudes which value *wise and prudent judgment about what to do in shared social contexts*—focusing on the ‘lifeworld’ aspects of particular settings (understood in a more localised, concrete and historically specific way).

We see now how the argument between the critic of managerialism (‘the critic’) and the apologist for managerialism (‘the apologist’), the two antagonists whom we met in Chapter 1, is clearly a struggle between systemic, means-end reasoning, and contextually-based, practical reasoning. These two forms of rationality draw on different sets of ideals and, importantly, different and incompatible conceptions of human values.

Each will therefore have difficulty engaging with the other, but the apologist—the managerialist—will have the greater difficulty, I think. For the

Aristotelian can at least propose that managerialism be subjected to the same tests by which, when the ‘rationalization’ of the public services was first promoted, other rival conceptions of management were found wanting and displaced. How well does the managerialist agenda live up to the promises it made in the early days of the public service reform movement—the promises to get rid of waste and inefficiency and to install a ‘better managed’ form of public accountability that might be trusted?¹

The Aristotelian may also want to say that in practice the implementation of the managerial model (i) poisons the source of the ethical in human relations, by putting artificial limits on what might be considered appropriate objects of thought and action; (ii) marginalizes any kind of knowledge which is either not verifiable or translatable into some explicit, propositional form; (iii) excludes alternative (i.e., non-managerial) ways of conceiving organizational life; (iv) marketizes that for which no real market is properly imaginable,² with the consequence that ‘standards are often violated... goods usurped [and]...spheres invaded, by powerful men and women’ (Walzer, 1983, p.10)—various politicians, policy-makers and managers, that is—who, acting on behalf of the ‘customer’ have succeeded in replacing the notion of *public spirit* by the ersatz notion of *service provision*.

What is wrong with thinking of oneself as a ‘service provider’? Sen and Williams (1982) suggest that we cannot regard ourselves simply as instruments, conduits to a greater general utility. For what we *do* is always more than we *produce*. The utilitarian or instrumental outlook, wherever it breaks out in social practices, destroys the very networks of responsibility and trust that are required for life to have meaning. It also robs us of ‘notions which utilitarianism can neither accommodate nor explain’ (p. 21).

¹ See [Appendix 2](#) for the costs and excesses of managerialism.

² With a ‘real’ market the customer makes choices on the basis of whatever criteria occur to her. With a notional (or ‘quasi’) market someone else selects the criteria from which the customer then chooses; see [Appendix 1](#) for a brief discussion of this point.

2.

Winch (1996, p.4) says that the ‘principle of accountability’, as it applies to education, is a political as well as moral issue. I have had to sideline many important questions of a political nature that bear on the notion of educational accountability. I have dwelt mostly on ethical questions such as: What does it mean to be educationally accountable as a teacher? Where do one’s responsibilities as a teacher lie in meeting expectations of public accountability? On my view these questions relate to the role which *formation* (and its analogues, *occupational* or *professional formation*, as they figure in an individual teacher’s practice) plays in practical reasoning which is aimed at ends conducive for human flourishing and fulfilment. The *telos* of teaching is to aim at ends conducive to a pupil’s well-being and educational flourishing. I see these as mutually inter-dependent.

In an Aristotelian worldview just as an ‘individual’ cannot be conceived atomistically as the utility-maximizing agent—the construct favoured by adherents of rational choice theory—so a teacher ought not to be construed as an embodiment of that idealised, abstract managerial construct—the *effective teacher*. Any individual, in whatever aspect of life, needs to see herself as rooted in her society or local community *as a citizen*. Aristotle always insists that an individual *qua* citizen is a ‘member of an association’ (*Politics* 1276b 20). ‘We must not think of a citizen as belonging [solely] to himself’ (*Politics* 1337a 27-30) but as one who acts also for the sake of the good of the *polis* (*ibid*, 1252b 29-30).

Here we have the idea of a *collective* being suggested rather than just a *collection* of private individual interests. If our ‘advanced’ liberal societies are not to implode under the pressures of competitive individualism or lack of social cohesion, it is more important than ever, as Chantal Mouffe (1993, p. 33) suggests, to ‘pose once again the question of the common good and that of civic virtue’. The challenge is to do this ‘without postulating a single moral good’ and without ‘forego[ing] the gains of liberalism’ (*ibid*).

So how might Aristotle's idea of civic virtue be made real in the educational world, 2,300 years later? Echoing the kind of 'association'³ which Aristotle describes, Dewey (1899) saw schools as 'embryonic' of community life and 'active with types of occupations that reflect the larger society':

When the school introduces... each child...into membership within... a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and ...with...self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious (Dewey, 1967 [1899], p.29).

Some who are not enamoured with Dewey's views on education may find this a utopian or absurd aspiration. But, without commitment to a complete Deweyan educational vision, or, indeed, to every philosophical assumption upon which that vision is grounded, I suggest we must acknowledge that which is indispensable to us here: namely, schools where there is a concern not only with the cultivation of the entrepreneurial ('self-directed') self but also a concern with the 'larger society'—schools, that is, whose ethos actively encourages pupils to develop *civic dispositions*.

What chance is there now, in our educationally managed classrooms, for such dispositions to develop? It is not good enough for apologists for the status quo to say that such neo-Aristotelian-Deweyan ideas "have no place in this century". Here I challenge those who favour the *marketisation* and *managerialisation* of schools to answer the question why we have so many disaffected children who *should* be in classrooms—as 'members' of a 'little community'—but who choose instead to truant (or if not to truant, then to end up suspended or expelled).⁴ This kind of *disengagement*⁵ that we witness cannot really be what Chubb and Moe (1990) had in mind when they first launched their attack on the old 'democratically' run state bureaucracies and

³ Cp. Dewey's characterisation of democracy as 'a mode of associated living', in Dewey (1916, p. 61)

⁴ See [Appendix 3](#), note 4, for DFES statistics.

⁵ *The Nuffield Review on The Education and Training of 14-19 year olds* seeks to address this problem: see [Appendix 3](#), note 5 for references

sought to introduce a competitive market ethos and new forms of management into schools.⁶

Recently a 'commissioner for children' has been appointed to find out why so many children, faced with the pressures of 'endless testing', are so unhappy.⁷ Let us hope that he will not be prevented from questioning the shift to larger and larger schools;⁸ that he will ask why so many children, brought up in our present, so-called, 'better managed', 'more accountable' educational system are on a road to nowhere except a life loitering in shopping malls, dealing in drugs and the like.⁹ We need to understand why non-success is now interpreted by so many as failure.¹⁰

3.

As a way of addressing the problem of disengagement, truancy, suspensions and disaffection, some policy-makers now recommend that schools offer new freedoms and flexibility to teachers; the curriculum is to be less 'prescriptive' so that pupils will be 'actively and imaginatively engaged in their learning';¹¹ more 'personalised' learning and assessment schemes are recommended. We can only hope that the new rhetoric recommending teachers use their professional judgment to teach in creative ways is not just 'warm words'.¹² The worry is that the new initiatives will remain in the framework of a 'high stakes' public accountability system still driven by the need for teachers to *get results* for publication in the performance 'league' tables.¹³ If there remain 'powers' which not only predetermine 'strategic decisions' (Shattock, 2006, p. 39) but also determine people's standing and

⁶ See [Appendix 3](#), note 6; see also Olssen *et al* (2004) for the changed relationship between democracy and education in a neo-liberal, global economy.

⁷ Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, *Education Guardian*, March 20th 2007, p. 8.

⁸ For details of research relating to school and class size, see [Appendix 3](#), note 8

⁹ Special Report, *The Observer*, 6th May, 2007, pp. 10-11, on an 'estimated 100,000 'invisible' teenage dropouts'.

¹⁰ See Broadfoot (1996, p.5) who discusses pupils' expectations of themselves.

¹¹ Ken Boston, QCA Chief Executive, *Education Guardian*, special report, 3rd April, 2007, p. 1

¹² Fiona Miller, 'Opinion', *Education Guardian*, April 10th, 2007, p. 4 (further comments in [Appendix 3](#), note 12); see also analysis of *Secondary Curriculum Review at Key Stages 3 and 4*, in *Education Guardian*, *op. cit.*

¹³ On 'high stakes', see [Appendix 3](#), note 13.

livelihood then, despite the rhetoric of 'empowerment', 'self-direction', or 'creative leadership', present managerial appraisal schemes will continue to structure agents' motivation and practice very subtly towards economic rationalism and towards the model of pay incentives which those schemes promote. Preedy *et al* (2003, p.9) enlarge on the concern I have just raised:

Meeting government control accountability requirements to demonstrate ongoing improvement in students' attainments may lead schools and colleges to focus on boosting the performance of borderline pass/fail students at the expense of higher and lower attainers...This is likely to challenge...ethical norms... [T]here are ... tensions between external accountability demands focused on student's academic attainment, and internal... accountabilities... norms and values...

Such is the power of the 'external' demands of market and managerial accountability that they have the power to trump whatever 'internal moral conversations'¹⁴ a teacher may be experiencing:

The pressures of performance act back on pedagogy and the curriculum, both narrowing the classroom experience of all students and encouraging teachers to attend specifically to those students likely to 'make a difference' to the aggregate performance figures of the class and the school (Ball, 2001a, p. 52).

In the face of an 'Effectiveness and Performance Review' (Shattock, 2006, p.138ff), it may be difficult for teachers to remember the core values and ideals that first motivated them to want to become teachers.

4.

The assumption that performance-related-pay incentives are effective motivators is in fact a matter of controversy in management literature. Pfeffer and Sutton (2000), for example, argue that they are only effective when performance outcomes are under the direct control of the people who receive the incentives (pp.111-112). If this is not possible then financial incentives can actually undermine motivation. Frustration can set in when people are working in a system that makes it impossible for them to have direct influence to affect outcomes.

¹⁴ Cohen, cited in Montefiore and Vines (1999), p. 7.

A seminal article by the economists Holmstrom and Milgrom (1991),¹⁵ addressing the relationship between *incentives* and *pay structures*, confirms the conclusion arrived at above. Holmstrom and Milgrom distinguish between 'single-task' and 'multi-task' activities. An example of a 'single-task' activity would be a shopkeeper who gives incentives to staff to sell more of product X, to increase profits. Teachers' work is characterised as 'multi-task' because we (as a public) want teachers to do many other things than just maximizing the examination grades of their pupils. To concentrate only on this goal 'would sacrifice such activities as promoting curiosity and creative thinking' (ibid, p. 25).

When people are required to fulfil multiple tasks to complete a job successfully, Holmstrom and Milgrom argue, it is better to pay a fixed wage rather than apply incentive schemes tied to explicit target outcomes. In other words, it is necessary to broaden incentives beyond those generated only through meeting measurable targets, those which are required to implement performance-related-pay.¹⁶ If their conclusion is right, we have an explanation why schools are sometimes called 'results' factories,¹⁷ and why some pupils feel alienated from their own educational experience.

The conclusion Holmstrom and Milgrom reach is in line with the argument of this thesis. All along I have argued that the emphasis now placed on explicitness and transparency (through the managerial demand for pre-specified, explicit targets/objectives/outcomes, etc.) tends to distort motivation and judgement. Framing the *telos* of a practice such as teaching around an agenda designed to meet either managerial or commercially-driven targets, I have argued, has a tendency to undermine the ethical formation of an agent and disrupt the kind of practical reasoning needed to make the best judgement in *praxis*.

¹⁵ See also Prendergast (1999). I am grateful to Dr. David Myatt, Dept. of Economics, Oxford University, for discussions we have had on the subject of *incentives*.

¹⁶ Cp. Luntley (2000) who rejects the idea of relating teachers' 'performance' solely to measurable 'outputs' (in the form of test results).

¹⁷ *The Times*, 12th May, 2007, p.21; and *Times 2, op.cit.*, pp. 8, 9: 'Testing Times'.

Keith Hoskin (1996) writes that the problem with targets is not that goals set as targets are bad, or even—as Goodhart’s Law would predict¹⁸—that, because of the unintended consequences of their *becoming* targets, the measures used to achieve the targets undermine the reason there was for setting the target. The problem, Hoskin says, is that it ‘confirms people in ways of seeing which presume that ‘the target’ is the problem’ (Hoskin, 1996, p. 266). If organizational activities concentrate on goals that are concrete, uncontroversial and easy to operationalize, it will be at the cost of goals that are more abstract and for which success criteria are less clear (Etzioni, 1964; Abrahamsson, 1977).¹⁹

5.

The Aristotelian model of practical rationality I described in Chapter 6 shows us how personal ideals help to give life—and work—‘significance’ (James, 1908, p.265ff), by offering a vision of a *way of being*. There is room in an Aristotelian practical rationality to recognize the worth of civic virtue and to embrace as public goods—‘common goods’ we might say—such things as education or health.

The professions represent the only mechanism we have for collectively providing ourselves with such ‘goods’, suggests Daryl Koehn (1994, p.5), who then goes on to ask: ‘If the professions are not trustworthy, whom shall be trust?’. Koehn’s question resonates with the conclusion I reached in Chapter 9. In that chapter I spent much time arguing why accountability mechanisms which specify precise objectives against which the ‘performance’ of agents is checked, monitored and evaluated (‘institutionalising distrust’, we called it) can become counter-productive. Such mechanisms may undermine the preconditions for trustworthy and honest behaviour. Onora O’Neill in fact argues that the present culture of accountability fosters less, rather than more, trust between the professions and the public, even though the ostensible aim is

¹⁸ See [Appendix 3](#), note 18, for further discussion.

¹⁹ For example, The Police Federation, UK, reports ‘We are making ludicrous arrests just to meet our targets’, *The Times*, May 15th, p. 4.

to make professionals more accountable to the public.²⁰ This disjunction occurs because ‘the real requirements’ of accountability are now *to regulators, to departments of government, to funders...*’ (O’Neill, 2002, p.5), forms of managerial control which may systematically undermine professional judgement. (See also Postema (1980 and 1995) on this).

With O’Neill’s words, we seem to have come full circle: after ‘all our exploring’ we seem to have ‘arrive[d] where we started’.²¹ For in Chapter 1, we were trying to understand the rationale of the concerns of those critics of the status quo who feel that the imposition of managerial forms of accountability undermines their own educational *praxis*. But in our journey to this end-point we have in fact reviewed many things, not least the fragility of the relationship that holds between *accountability, trust* and *responsibility*. We have seen how structures of managerial regulation, once embodied in practices, have the potential to destabilize networks of trust, undermine personal responsibility and pervert the ends of accountability. The formational virtues of *responsibleness* and *trustworthiness*, irreducible to requirements laid out in advance, are easily subverted by managers who insist that educators work to ends which are explicitly demonstrable, ‘systemic and unavailable to question’ (Inglis, 1989, pp.45). What are the chances that under such conditions educators will communicate democratic values to their charges by example (Guttman, 1987)?

6.

Notwithstanding criticisms and controversies surrounding his own definition of a *practice*,²² MacIntyre (1985) highlights just how fragile the relationship between practices and institutions may be— how the ‘goods’ of each may conflict and how ‘a practice to retain its integrity will depend on the way in which the virtues can be ...exercised in sustaining the institutional

²⁰ See Olssen *et al* (2004), p. 196, who discuss O’Neill (2000).

²¹ T.S. Eliot, ‘Little Giddens’, *Four Quartets*

²² See MacIntyre and Dunne (2002); and Special Issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 37 (2), 2003.

forms which are the bearers of the practice' (ibid, p. 195). Managerial mantras, recommendations or guidelines, once *institutionalised*, may lead to rigid structures of regulation, ill-equipped to deal with the *particularities* that arise in specific contexts.

7.

The last thing we need now are 'blue-prints' for a new accountability system. Much better would be to take inspiration from the kind of thought that Richard Elmore (2003, p.15) expresses: 'We didn't simply "discover" accountability with the advent of performance-based accountability policies in the latest era of education reform':

Performance-based accountability polices embody a particular normative view that is just one of many possible versions of accountability vying for the attention of schools and their communities (2003, pp. 14-15).

"Just one of many possible versions of accountability." Let us keep this thought alive as we try, through public debate and local forums,²³ to resist pressure to be 'co-opted into the language and therefore the ideology of management' (Gunter, 1997, p. 86). Do we know why we use words like 'efficiency' and 'cost-effectiveness' in relation to education and do we challenge the use of them (Gunter, *ibid*)? These are precisely the kinds of questions which should surface in forums where teachers meet. Philosophy of education may then play a positive role in helping towards a better theoretical understanding of the practical. As Winch says, philosophy does not always have to be 'destructive'; it can also act as 'advocate and critic' (Winch, 1996, pp.5, 147).

²³ One of the recommendations in the *Nuffield Review* on 14-19 year olds' education and training is that national and local forums take place with teachers: See [Appendix 3](#), note 23 for references.

8.

Before I end I offer two utterances which convey the spirit of each of the rationalities we have considered. We know what different worlds each leads into. The world of education knows by recent experience the troubles of the first.

(a) First, a description given by Anne Storey (2000, p.518) from a 'Technical Consultation' document, the aim of which is to improve the *performance management* process for teachers. There were:

no fewer than 16 criteria laid out as necessary to cross the performance threshold...these were reformulated into five areas of competence, covering subject knowledge, teaching and assessment, pupil progress...wider professional effectiveness (in effect, continuing professional development) and 'professional characteristics' ...Each of the five threshold standard elements are subdivided

(b) Second, comes a different vision of teaching practice, one which complements an Aristotelian model of practical rationality:

There is another view... This view would state that our objectives are only known to us in any complete sense after the completion of our act of instructionObjectives by this rationale are heuristic devices which provide initiating consequences which become altered in the flow of instruction... [T]he teacher...asks a fundamentally different question from "What am I trying to accomplish?" The teacher asks "What am I trying to do?" and out of the doing comes the accomplishment.²⁴

Even if it seems counter-intuitive, policy-makers should consider why (b) might just represent a better form of *educational accountability* than (a).

9.

In so far as a managerial form of rationality requires that practices and ends be made explicit (in the ways I have described in previous chapters) we

²⁴ Macdonald, cited in Eisner (2005), pp. 21-22

have a choice. We can conceive the notion of *public rationality* afresh in order to leave room for the *formation* of persons who will have the capacity to use their practical reason and their personal and implicit knowledge to help shape ends of action that will contribute to a goal—a goal such as *the education of these children I am teaching here and now*. Or we can abandon everything that we might have once expected from an ideal of public rationality.

If we do the second then we will need to search for something philosophically wrong with the following claim that appears as a true insight:

...the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion...

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104a 8-9

10.

So now, who is to have the last word (the critic of, or the apologist for, managerialism)? Do we follow what I have called the 'lure of the explicit', (even though it may lead to a full-blooded managerialism)? Or, as I have argued throughout, do we resist the thought that the more explicit we make our practices the more accountable we shall be? For those who still have their doubts—prefer even now to follow the 'lure of the explicit'—I end with my leitmotif (expressed through Polanyi, 1962, p. 71), in the hope that such doubters will reconsider their stance:

...it is the inarticulate [implicit, non-explicit] which has the last word, unspoken and yet decisive...

APPENDIX 1

Situating the demand for educational change in the politics and economics of the time

I

How was it possible for a culture of 'managerial' and market accountability to eclipse a culture of professional and 'administrative' accountability in education? How did it happen? The kind of culture which was eclipsed was one in which it was taken for granted that:

'schooling ...was based upon an implicit understanding that ...professional autonomy was largely vested in the head teacher as leading professional, while financial, resource and staffing decisions were largely vested in local democracy, through the agency of the local education authority (Grace, 1995, pp.15-16).

At the outset, I must dispel any hope that a simple review of the 'facts' of a particular period of history will provide a definitive answer to the question of how the present 'managerial' form of accountability came about or, indeed, what exactly brought about the demand for educational change in the 1970s.¹ We know there is a connection between these two things but, as Maurice Kogan points out, nothing is clear-cut or 'automatic', when it comes to understanding how educational change might occur: 'Changes occur...when the right configuration of feelings, ideologies and power coincide'.² Such a configuration did occur in the 1980s, in the UK, when the reforming zeal which the Conservatives brought to bear on education saw seventeen pieces of legislation passed.³ Here, ideals of economic liberalism

¹ For a comprehensive, general account of the relation between (i) educational change (ii) how new educational systems evolve and (iii) the nature and restructuring of the state, see Green (1990)

² Kogan, cited in Ball (1990b), p. 16

³ As reported in Chitty, 1999, p.75: the 1944 Act provided the 'corner-stone' for an education system that lasted for more than forty years. In contrast, the Conservatives produced seventeen pieces of legislation in the period of their office (of 1979).

and neo-conservatism fused to form a powerful political alliance against the concentrations of power which were said to exist in large state bureaucracies and in local authorities (hence the rhetoric of ‘rolling back the state’) and against ‘protectionist’ instincts of the professionals. A ‘new public’ management (what came to be abbreviated to NPM—see section II below) of the public sector was to inject new ideas into public sector management, and this ‘injection’ was to be extended to the management of schools:

If a school is to succeed in all its tasks, it needs to...recognise itself [as] more than an agency of the LEA. While the professionalism of its staff is a necessary condition for its success, it is not sufficient on its own...⁴

The White Paper, *Better Schools* (1985), which helped consolidate the requirements of school governance identified in the Education Act (1980), marked the way in which the ‘New Right’ in the 1980s, hoped, through NPM, to revolutionise education and overturn assumptions held sacred ever since the post-war years.

It was in fact the alliance in the 1980s, however strange,⁵ between neo-conservative elements (preservation of tradition, maintaining authority and standards in education) and neo-liberal elements (the link between education and economic growth) within the polity, which helped to embed New Public Management (NPM) so firmly in educational policy in the UK. But, as Olssen *et al* (2004, p.7) remind us, this was not peculiar to the UK. It was a global trend that spread eventually throughout all ‘advanced liberal’ democracies. The societies in which ‘restructuring’ took place had all experienced economic recession and become increasingly uncompetitive in international markets after the oil crisis of 1973. Educational systems and teachers were held to be the cause of economic failure: they were not producing ‘a workforce with the appropriate skills for a rapidly changing world’ (*ibid*, p. 2). *Prima facie*, it may seem strange, as Walter Kickert (1996) remarks, that so many different Western states which differed in ‘economic, socio-political,

⁴ Extract quoted in Morley and Rassool (1999), p. 29

⁵ I say ‘strange’ because most neo-conservatives would probably not have anticipated the amount of state ‘intervention’ which the Ministry of Education at that time was planning. The neo-liberals, meanwhile, were determined for further intervention.

cultural, constitutional and institutional senses' adopted a seemingly similar kind of 'new public management' (NPM) (ibid, p. 168). Kickert has a point, given the 'differences in states, politics, governments and administrations between the United States and Europe, and between the various European countries' (ibid). So why then did this 'global' change sweep through so many countries? Once again, in the literature, we find that the political commentators and historians are loath to pinpoint one cause.

Christopher Hood (1994, p. 6), for example, says that there is no one single accepted reason or 'cause' why NPM—and the managerialism it brought in its wake—'caught on' as a global trend and was universally disseminated throughout 'advanced liberal' societies. It is impossible to be precise about how this global trend started because the final articulation of policy reforms, together with the practical changes brought about by the reforms, are often the result of a 'tortuous and continuing process' (Salter and Tapper, 1981, p.62). This is especially so, when we are considering how specific reforms evolve as a result of the effects of political and ideological influences in education (Grace, 1978).

In so far as we can identify specific reasons why change in the political and economic settlement occurred, what might be the candidates? This period of history is well covered in the literature, but I have chosen a short extract from *Restructuring Schools, Restructuring Teachers* by Woods *et al* (1997), because it is well laid out and offers a fair representation of the kind of reasons which are standardly given in the literature. It is their express aim to situate educational change in a wider perspective.⁶ They draw on Lawton (1992) and the seven 'explanations' which he claims explain 'the roots of reform' (Lawton, ibid, p.1). Here are the reasons they give why political and economic changes were brought to bear on all public institutions in the 1970s, and why it was thought necessary to abandon the social democratic settlement:

⁶ One of the stated aims of Woods *et al* is to consider 'the general historical, political and educational context in which change has taken place (ibid, p. 1).

- A crisis in legitimation: In advanced capitalist economies, there [was] public doubt that educational systems [could] carry out their job adequately.
- Concern about effectiveness; the labour and economic problems of the early 1980s and high level of youth unemployment suggested that educational systems were providing neither an adequate nor relevant education....Western economies were not developing human capital.
- Concern about efficiency; there was increasing evidence that investing more money in education does not necessarily increase educational standards or increase the Gross National Product.
- The managerial revolution: The 'traditional bureaucracy with its emphasis on centralised decision making, control, uniformity, close supervision and commitment to standard operating procedures'⁷ is associated with inefficiency. The key to improvement is seen to be the application of more management and management systems. Rather than bureaucratic, the new manager is the autonomous and entrepreneurial school-based leader.
- A populist movement: There [was] a groundswell of popular support for ideas concerning parents having a greater control over, and choice in, the education of their children....
- A crisis in capitalism: Western democracies [were perceived at that time as]...facing an accumulation crisis. Drives for profitability involve[d] an emphasis on the public sector using resources efficiently and effectively in the context of cuts in public finance and expenditure.
- Provider capture: Professions such as medicine, teaching and the law have hitherto enjoyed a relatively large measure of professional autonomy and control. Critics argue that the sole providers of a service, such as teachers, accrue more benefits than their customers. Restructuring aims to redistribute benefits from the provider to the client.

From this list we see also the emergence of a new social attitude, which Christopher Winch puts down to the development of new democratic ways of thinking: a 'decline in deference towards professional people on the part of the general public'—'less preparedness to assume they always know best' (Winch, 1996, p. 3). This was already apparent from the 1960s. With such deference removed, it was easy for values of private enterprise—which promoted 'empowerment' and 'entrepreneurship'—to supersede the professional and administrative forms of accountability associated with the

⁷ Here Woods *et al* cite Lawton (1992), p.145.

social democratic post-war 'settlement'. Politicians of a neo-liberal persuasion, taking advantage of these general dissatisfactions with the post-war political 'settlement', were able to win the political argument: (i) the social democratic 'settlement' had failed to live up to its aspirations; (ii) the Keynesian economic response to issues surrounding questions of public accountability as an answer to welfare provision and public service policy had to be rejected.

James Callaghan's Ruskin speech, together with the Great Debate which followed it and the Government Green Paper, *Education in Schools* (Cmnd 6869) all played their part, Stephen Ball (1999, p. 58) suggests, in a 'deconstructive/reconstructive' process: the deliberate creation of a new settlement to replace the old consensus that once existed in education. There was still a consensus *about* professionalism, but not about what professionals *should stand for*. One of the complaints of the 'New Right' was that the old settlement had perpetuated a bias towards pupils being directed towards the academic and a bias against choosing careers in science and engineering; it identified the old settlement with 'progressivism'. Such a pedagogic ideology, it was said, had the effect of leaving school leavers unprepared or unmotivated for the self-discipline of employment or for the technical demands of the workplace.

At this point in the story, we should turn to Stuart Maclure (1987, p. 357). Maclure explains why, as Woods *et al* put it, a 'populist' movement grew which voiced discontent with education (as it was then) perceived:

...the high hopes and ideals of the 1950s for education became diverted in the 1960s. Some of the idealism went into the comprehensive school debate...Some of it went into the effort to reform the curriculum...behind concepts like 'discovery learning' and 'child-centred education'... [but]... [i]t is clear that the end of the 1960s marked the end of the post-war era and the beginning of a watershed decade dominated by the price of oil, inflation, unemployment...For education, the watershed started a little earlier with the first of the Black Papers (1969) which, whatever their manifest short-comings, undoubtedly exposed a nerve. They revealed how wide was the gap between the liberal education establishment and a large section of ordinary, conventionally reactionary, middle and working class opinion. The Callaghan initiative of 1976...and the Great Debate [were] no more than a working-out of the sea change which the Black Papers initiated. In policy terms there is a very clear line to be traced from the Yellow Book of 1976 to *Better Schools* (DES) in 1985. All the essentials

were in place quite early on—the idea of a core (or national) curriculum, examination reform, more national direction, better management of teachers under contract, tighter controls of standards, better preparation for work...’ (Maclure, *ibid*, p. 337).

In *Management for the Public Domain*, Ranson and Stewart (1994) explain why the idealism of the post-war years was ‘diverted’:

The postwar social democratic state provided opportunities that reflected the requirements of justice, emphasised personal development, rewarded meritocratic achievement and diffused power within the polity. Yet in spite of ...undoubted achievements[,] the crises of the 1970s brought into sharper focus than hitherto the limitations of the democratic order... Even those committed to the success of the social democratic project ...acknowledged the need for reform...there still remained poverty...with the children of the service class benefiting much more than working class; and the inability to acknowledge and respond to other inequalities in society—of gender, race, disability and sexuality’ (Ranson and Stewart, *ibid*, p. 10-11).

These questions which Ranson and Stewart discuss, concerning ‘distributive’ or ‘social’ justice, are explored by Ruth Jonathan (1997) in her book, *Illusory Freedoms: Liberalism, Education and the Market*. She argues that, even though the social democratic settlement *was* concerned with questions of distributive justice (*ibid*, p. 18), the question of ‘central’ political control over how education was *managed* was not, at that time, ‘a priority’ (*ibid*). Where issues of social justice were concerned, the ‘primary purpose of the educational changes then proposed was to remove barriers to participation for less advantaged members of society’: ‘Changes in access to education, to facilitate movement within that social structure, were the primary focus of reform’ (*ibid*, p. 19):

...at the end of the second world war in the UK the 1944 Education Act was conceived not only as an important element of the welfare state, but also as an instrument for expressing the new social order’s values and achieving its goals’ (Jonathan, *ibid*, p. 17)... [But] [t]here was no attempt at political control of educational content, partly because ...centrally-directed changes in structure and ethos were seen not as the business of government in a liberal democracy. Any structural change to the constitution of society was to result incrementally from the twin workings of social mobility and the enhanced prosperity and rational autonomy which [it was assumed] more fairly distributed educational experiences and consequent life-chances world bring (Jonathan, *ibid*, pp. 18-19).

So participation in education was one thing; the aims of education were a second thing; but the political-cum-bureaucratic control of the educational

content was a third and different thing. To the extent that there is an argument that leads from the 1944 Education Act, through 1964 (Anthony Crosland's circular to local authorities asking for their plans for comprehensivisation) to the 1988 Education Act which reflects new neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideas, ideals and ideologies, it has its full share of non-sequitur.

Here, at the next stage, we come to the complex, contradictory character of educational reform policies, now implemented in accordance with neo-liberal economic precepts—the contradictory processes of centralization and decentralization, both at work at the same time. On the one hand decentralization policies initiated the Local Management of schools (LMS) (see Ball, 1994)—where schools were set up as independent budget holders (Woods *et al*, *ibid*, pp. 2-3). Such policies were in total accord with neo-liberal philosophy. For, as Christopher Winch says, (1996, pp.2-3): 'Neo-liberals believe that the role of governments should be kept to a minimum and that, wherever possible, both public and private goods should be provided by the market'. But now, on the other hand, we have to take into account the perceived need for the role of strong central control over policy, too. Right from the start, the Education Reform Act (1988) meant a large amount of centralization (through a mandated National Curriculum, a system of testing and, eventually, later on, a complex system of inspection) was needed.

This *systemic* tension, at the heart of our present accountability system and inherent in the 'deregulatory' principles which neo-liberal marketisation policies promote, of course, is well noted in the literature: decentralised 'production' or 'delivery' occurs within a framework of highly centralised decision-making (Walker, 1990, p. 84):

Central ...regulations [do] not entirely disappear... [Whilst there is] greater discretion and flexibility ... [those who work in and for the public sector] are now ...subject to a more thorough and demanding accountability regime; hence the priority... given to value for money, results, performance, outcomes and effectiveness' (Aucoin, 1990, p.199)

Here we see why so many critics of the status quo claimed that the early neo-liberal rhetoric of ‘rolling back of the state’ was a ‘myth’ (Smyth and Dow, 1998, p.292) or an ‘illusion’ (Jonathan, 1997):

[Deregulation is] not so much a withdrawal as the emergence of a new form of intervention, whereby new means and new areas are penetrated by the state, while others are deregulated and transferred to the market.⁸

Before we end this section, we should note Mike Bottery’s (1998) observation about the way in which ‘markets’ in education have been promoted. He points out how far removed from Hayek’s own ideal of the market is the ‘quasi’ market we now have—a centrally engineered notion of ‘markets’ which now defines our educational culture. Bottery records a shift from the *early* pioneering days of neo-liberal reform where neoclassical economists such as Hayek and Friedman helped bring about the demise of Keynesian ‘demand’ economy in the 1980s, all the way to a *newer* phase, one which developed in the 1990s and was associated with the promotion of ‘quasi’ markets in the public sector. His point is this. While there may have been *real* market-influenced reforms in the early 1980s:

the 1990s [were] characterized increasingly by any market orientation in education...and indeed in any other area of the welfare state in the UK, being only part of a wider aim. Market proposals [became] then, little more than a ploy to increase ‘productivity’ and responsiveness of professionals and other workers, through an encouragement among ‘producers’ for a more entrepreneurial attitude, and through the threat of the downside of market logic—the loss of occupation. The market, according to this view, is increasingly no more than a means to an end, not the defining character of how services should be run. Thus the second and more important aim is that of keeping a strong hold on policy direction, an aim which runs counter to free market arguments. If, as some free market ideologues argue (Hayek...Friedman...Tooley) [that] the purpose of the market is ultimately moral, through the dispersal of power, and the generation of greater individual freedom, this second aim is in complete opposition, and is much the stronger of the two (Bottery, 1998, p. 11).

Bottery’s point is important. It highlights that which is so problematic in the notion of ‘markets in education’. Against everything Hayek advocated, the neo-liberal state ‘actively constructs the market’ (Olssen *et al*, 2004, p. 172). Here we note the sharp difference between what we may think of as ‘classical’ liberalism and neo-liberalism. *Classical* liberalism, unlike *neo*-liberalism,

⁸ Castells, cited in Smyth and Dow (1998), p.292

represents a negative conception of state power: 'no state intervention other than to minimize market distortion'. But for the neo-liberal, on the other hand, the role of the state is a 'mediator...of the successful operation of the market'. The neo-liberal state *must* intervene to the extent it has to *create* individuals who are enterprising and competitive (Olssen, 2003, p.199; Olssen *et al*, 2004, pp.137). That is not the only difference. A market, as idealised by freemarketeers, leaves the criteria of choice to the customer. A quasi-market pre-determines the criteria of choice for the customer.

In this thesis, my contention is that it is the interventionist philosophy of the 'quasi' market which has given us our present problems of 'managerial' accountability and undermined professional and practical judgement. But to point out, as I have done, the problems and negative aspects of 'quasi' markets does not *ipso facto* commit me to a stance of advocating 'real' markets in education. That is another question. Politically, idealistically and ideologically I am opposed to such a stance, encouraged in this by Thomas Babbington, Lord Macaulay and the inspiring speech he gave in the House of Commons on April 19th, 1847, in defence of a universal, state funded education system.

(The reader may like to refer to Appendix 3, longer note 3 (c), which can be found under the first section, 'Introduction', where some recent criticisms and critique of the notion of 'markets' in education are discussed briefly.)

II

New Public Management (NPM): some supplementary notes to the description of NPM already given in section IV of the Introduction to this thesis

In the **Introduction** to the thesis, where I provided some notes on NPM, I wanted to show the close relation that exists between the terms 'NPM' and

'managerialism'. Space permitted only a minimal discussion of NPM there. In this section of the Appendix we shall look at some further characteristics of NPM.

For seminal accounts of how new public *management* differs from earlier, older, public *administration* models see Dunleavy and Hood (1994), Ferlie et al (1996), Hood (1992), Pollitt (1990), Ranson and Stewart (1994); see also Rhodes (1997) for the relation NPM has to managerialism; Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p. 69) provide a useful table showing three ideal types of managerialism.

First, some distinctions:-

(i) NPM is a complex phenomenon that has evolved over time, incorporating and encompassing various aspects of organizational and management or 'rational agency' theories, often in tension with each other. Coming on top of the methodological and theoretical tensions which exist between neo-Taylorist management practices and Human Resource Management (HRM) models (developed in reaction against rigid, Taylorist management control and regulation strategies), there are at least *four* overlapping but separate models of NPM (see Willmott (2002), p. 67 who identifies 'Efficiency Drive', 'Downsizing and Decentralization', 'In Search of Excellence' and 'Public Service Orientation' models.)

(ii) Janet Newman (2005, p. 86) sees the shift towards reliance on managerialism and marketisation, the twin elements of NPM, as collapsing into different 'dynamics':

- the privatisation of public goods;
- the introduction of market-type principles into public service;
- the processes of contracting for goods or services;
- the introduction of concepts of choice and consumerism into welfare services;
- the shifting processes of commodification....

So marketisation enables public sector organizations—and this includes educational organizations—to place themselves in competition with each other, ‘either for users, contracts or prestige’ (Newman, *ibid*, p. 89).

With these complexities before us—the four different models, as described in (i), and the different ‘dynamics’, as described in (ii)—it will be no surprise to learn that some commentators argue that it is ‘simplistic and overdetermined’ to think there can be ‘universal convergence on an agreed new public management model’ (Ferlie *et al*, 1996). Ranson and Stewart (1994, pp. 30-31) appear to agree with this assessment. They argue that the reason for the plurality of meanings associated with NPM is the ‘multiplicity of approaches’ to ‘understanding the public sector and its management’: there is no ‘conclusive synthesis available’:

The field is fragmented along the fault-lines of separate academic disciplines. Public administration...organisational analysts...management consultants...economists... historians...Each discipline provides its own questions, concepts and analytical perspectives...

But, in spite of the difficulties of giving any precise definition of NPM (we noted this in the **Introduction** to the thesis) it is reasonably safe to make the following generalizations:-

- (a) According to Mary Langan (2000, p.158): ‘After a number of false starts and hesitant beginnings in various public services in the 1980s, ‘the New Public Management’ really took shape in the 1990s. It was already well established before Labour came to power in May 1997. The ideological impetus of ‘the New Public Management’ came from the US, in the form of Osborne and Gaebler’s 1992 book *Reinventing Government*, which...effectively transfers private sector managerial ideas about quality into the context of public administration (see also Michael Power (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), especially p.43, on this).

(b) NPM is usually taken to mean the application of market mechanisms to the task of reorganizing key aspects of the public sector—including public welfare, the civil service, education, transport, housing, health, prisons, social care, etc. In education, as in other public services, the adoption of NPM within public policy formation has been a key element in the ‘modernizing’ agenda that has injected private sector values and new theories of institutional and management organization theories into the public sector.⁹

(c) One consequence of (b) is that the distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ were deliberately blurred through the following kinds of processes (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994, p.9):

- Disaggregating separable functions into contractual or quasi-market forms, particularly by introducing purchaser/provider distinctions, replacing previously unified functional planning-and provision structures.
- Opening up provider roles to competitions between agencies or between agencies, firms and not-for-profit bodies.

(d) As a consequence of (c), it is widely agreed amongst commentators that NPM is a useful shorthand term for the set of broadly similar forms of public sector restructuring doctrines which dominated the bureaucratic reform agendas in many OECD group of countries¹⁰ from the late 1970s to 1980s (Hood, 1991; see also Aucoin, 1990; Pollitt, 1990). As Christopher Hood writes, ‘NPM was presented as a framework of general applicability, a ‘public management for all seasons’. The idea was allowed to grow that there was just ‘one kind of accounting applicable to all sorts of organizations’—whether public or private—and what was considered to be a ‘requisite’ for ‘effective management’ was a managerial one (Mc Sweeney, 1996, p. 209).

The claim to universality was laid out in two ways:

⁹ See Rhodes (2003) and Meyer and Rowan (1991).

¹⁰ Lawton (1992), p.140, provides some detail: ‘...at the national level in the UK...and New Zealand...at the state level in the USA (e.g., Kentucky)...and Australia (e.g., Victoria...), and at the district level in Canada (e.g. Edmonton...) and the USA (e.g., Florida...)

First, much the same set of received doctrines was advanced as a means to solve 'management ills' in many different contexts—different organizations, policy fields, levels of government, countries...Second, NPM was claimed to be an 'apolitical' framework within which many different values could be pursued effectively...a neutral and all-purpose instrument... (Hood, 1991, p.8)

In the light of (d), what justified the claim that NPM was 'neutral' or 'apolitical'?

The standard answer advocates of NPM will give is this: Whereas 'bureau-professionalism', offered the pursuit of the 'public good' based on the application of substantive, 'service specific' forms of knowledge, the newer 'new public', 'managerial' way of doing things, by contrast, offered forms of 'expert' knowledge that positioned managers as 'neutral' and 'impersonal', indifferent 'between different ...occupational interests' (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.66). And once freed from the old welfare bureaucratic 'monopolies', NPM policies could be articulated and disseminated throughout the services (Common, 1995, pp.136-7) in the name of 'neutral' organizational objectives of increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness. 'New public' managers promised to make 'the best use of public resources': 'competing values could be reduced to alternative sets of options and costs...assessed against their contribution to the organization's performance' (Clarke and Newman, *ibid*). I have traced the relationship between this style of management and the cult of managerial transparency (Chapter 3) and have argued that these claims of objectivity and neutrality are hollow. And [Appendix 2](#) which discusses the scale of expense incurred by managerial modes of accountability raises the real question of just how cost-effective the 'new public' way of doing things actually is.

III

One last thought, on the notion of educational change. In this thesis I have argued that with managerialism (as I put it in the **Introduction**), we are

'up against' something very new. My line of argument has been that it misrepresents the problems we face to see them as stemming from excessive bureaucracy—or 'red tape' as the media like to call it. The problems which a managerial mode of accountability brings, I have argued, cannot be solved by a simplistic new form of 'rationalization'—by, say, cutting out a few targets (see **Postscript** to the **Introduction** of the thesis on this). I argue that it is the special kind of practical rationality by which 'new public' managers work which is at the heart of the problem.

In **Chapter 2**, I argued that managerialism is, in fact, a new phenomenon, bearing all the hallmarks of an ideology. However, one day at the Institute of Education, Professor Richard Aldrich put it to me that when trying to assess historical events it is essential to take into account the *continuities* in history as well as *the changes*. So now, in the light of this observation I need to qualify and explain how my own argument bears on this point.

The eclipse of one model of management ('Old Public Administration') by another ('New Public Management') reflects a crucial bit of history where we can legitimately pinpoint *change*. But it could be argued that the educational changes which came about in Britain, as a result of the 1980s expansion of NPM principles into educational establishments, represented a *continuity* of ideas and ideals that had never died. They simply received a new gloss and interpretation. So the thought might be that, however radical the new managerial-efficiency modes of accountability might seem, they share in an old efficiency ideal of 'value for money'. For *already*, in the early part of the 20th century, in the U.S.A. (as we discussed in Chapter 1), Taylorist ideas of 'scientific management' were introduced into schools to make the teachers work 'more efficiently'. (See Raymond Callahan (1964), *Education and The Cult of Efficiency*, pp. 81-82 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press) on this.) We also need to remember that, until 1926, there had also been in Britain a 'high degree of control' by government over the teachers, with such things as 'payment by results'. This was before the era of a

'relatively high degree of autonomy' was ushered in, which we associate with the post-war period of teaching: see Grace (1978) on this.

Here, however, I must refer the reader to **Chapter 3**, section **3.4** (p.89) of the thesis, where I argue that, despite any resemblance, however striking, between Taylorism and present-day management practices—micro-management practices, etc.—they are not on the same footing. Micro-management pushes Taylorism, I argued in that chapter, into a completely different normative framework from any that Frederick W. Taylor himself ever intended. In a context where the end of production was beyond argument, Taylor initially sought to manage the bodily movements of the worker. Present managerial-audit technologies seek, however, in the name of ends that are not beyond argument and which depend for their shaping on the thoughts of those who labour in the enterprise, 'to know and manage the psyche of the individual in the enterprise' (Miller and O'Leary, 1994, p. 106). In view of this marked difference, it is neither mysterious nor far-fetched for commentators of the status quo to see modern, neo-Taylorist-inspired management practices intent on 'governing the soul' (Rose, 1990).

APPENDIX 2

The rise of corporate professionalism, the costs of management consultancy and the extravagance of some managerial initiatives

Over four decades or so the champions of the 'new public' form of management have claimed that it is a more cost-effective mode of administration—gives 'value for money'—than that which pre-existed it and was superseded by it. It lies outside my brief to respond in depth to this claim or see how it might relate to education. In this appendix I offer only some notes, gathered over the years of my own research, from articles and books which have reported on the rising costs of managerial initiatives or consultancy fees. The only aim is to signal the urgent need to assess the claims that have been made of 'cost-effectiveness'.

General costs of management consultancy within the public sector: some examples

David Craig (2006) in *Plundering the Private Sector* (London: Constable) provides a full account of the extent to which the management of the public sector has been 'handed over' to private consultants, at an estimated cost of £70bn (£20bn for management consultants and £50bn for IT systems consultants). He provides a critique of 'the shift towards corporate professionalism' and the rise and costs of 'consulting advice in the public sector': 'In 2003 the total revenue of the ten top consulting firms world wide stood at over \$51billion, while...the workforce of the top 30 management consulting firms worldwide rose from just over 100,000 in 1995 to 450,000 in 2003.'

Craig also highlights some of the unethical, tragic and nonsensical sides of this profligacy. Here is one example: 'As British soldiers died in Iraq through lack of proper protective equipment, the Ministry of Defence has paid millions of pounds to PricewaterhouseCoopers and McKinsey for their

[advice] about... 'how to improve the procurement and supply of military equipment' (p.5).

Craig's projections are borne out by the Management Consultancies Association which 'collects billing information from its members who account for 70-80 per cent of the UK industry': see 'Public sector consultants to cost £20bn', *Financial Times*, August 7th, 2006, p.3. There are also reports about 'management inflation'. The latest Labour Force Survey shows that, 'at 4million, the UK's managerial workforce is now the largest occupational group in Britain', *The Observer*, 22nd May 2005, p10. A report from Public Bodies Directory 2006 shows 882 different bodies, now costing £124bn, are advising the government: 'Taxpayers foot huge bill for 'quango state'', *Sunday Telegraph*, September 24th, 2006, pp. 1, 13 and 'Whitehall advisors cost £2bn', *Financial Times*, June 19th, p.5.

The numbers of managers are multiplying, but are there enough people doing anything productive? Simon Caulkin writes: '...the GMB has drawn attention to the fact that one in seven of all UK employees is a manager or senior official.' For an in-depth analysis of this new phenomenon, and the growth of MBAs in Business and Management courses, see 'A heap big pile of chiefs', *The Observer*, 22nd May 2005, p. 10

In education there is now a plethora of quangos whose costs are in the millions. Take, as an example, The Learning and Skills Council which spent £54.4m making its own staff redundant. A further £61.9m was spent in the year before its launch to wind up its predecessor, the national network of Training and Enterprise Councils (source, *Education Guardian*, May 15th, 2007, p. 2).

On 10th April, 2002, at a lecture entitled, 'Learning technologies' given at the Royal Society of Arts, Professor Tim Brighouse reported that: £500m was allocated for OFSTED, per annum and £72m, for QCA, per annum.

But these kinds of costs are spread right across the whole public sector and are not peculiar to education. See, in this regard: M. Kipping, I. Kirkpatrick and D. Muzio (2006) who write that 'there is growing evidence that consultants have given flawed advice without being punished for it. In the UK it is estimated that ongoing efforts to computerise the NHS may now cost £30billion, five times the projected cost, while £450 million was spent on a system for the Child Support Agency that does not work'.¹ Their source for this information: N. Cohen, 'Natural born billers', *Observer*, 19th June, 2005. This assessment is borne out by the following report that 'the CSA will have cost more than £850 million by the time the ailing operation is scrapped', *The Times*, July 5th, 2007, p. 24.

Peter Wilby examines what lies behind the 'modernisation' of the public sector: 'The NHS, the Benefits Agency, magistrates courts and other arms of the state have been "modernised" under the supervision of consultants, with dubious results and at an estimated cost of £70b. No wonder that, just before the 2005 election, a top consultant, writing in his trade magazine, advised colleagues to follow their wallets and vote Labour', 'Business wields more power over Labour than the unions ever did', *The Guardian*, July 19th, 2006.

The subject of 'modernisation' is also part of a long letter to *The Guardian*, written by many top trade union leaders: 'Of course we need to improve and modernise the quality and accountability of our public services. But transferring large portions of the public sector to private companies is not

¹ 'Overly controlled or out of control? Management consultants and the new corporate professionalism', in John Craig (2006), *Production Values: Futures for professionalism* (London: Demos), p.161.

modernisation, it is turning back the clock a 100 years or more'. See 'Balance sheet on public service reform', *The Guardian*, June 27th, 2006, p. 31.

An investigation, undertaken by *The Guardian* on the cost of consultancy fees for advising government departments shows: 'a disturbing picture of millions of pounds wasted on controversial or abandoned schemes and huge differentials in pay between civil servants and consultants brought in to do similar jobs...Revenue and Customs is paying £750 a day to consultants to design IT schemes alongside civil servants doing the same work for £120 a day...', see 'Labour's £2bn army of consultants', *The Guardian*, 2nd September, 2006, p. 1

Examples of the cost to the taxpayer of PFIs/ PPPs

Reported in: B. Regan (2007) 'Campaigning Against Neo-liberal Education in Britain', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 5 (1) at: <http://www.jceps.com/?pageID=article&articleID=82>

'Although the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) had been introduced under the Conservative Government it was not until the election of the New Labour Government in 1997 that it really took off. The PFI, also called the Public Private Partnerships (PPP), initially a scheme whereby private contractors could bid for capital building programmes and then contract for the operation and maintenance of the buildings for a period up to 35 years, ... later evolved and the capital building aspect of a contract [was] dispensed with. The budget for Education in Britain in 1997-98 was £39 billion. The estimated value of the replacement of the Education "estate", which included approximately 24, 000 schools, was put at around £58 billion.'

Regan, in the article cited above, gives a detailed analysis of the financial and human costs involved in one highly controversial and contested PFI scheme, involving Pimlico School in Westminster, London. The proposal, Regan

reports, was 'at the outset a classic PFI, a DBFO scheme—Design, Build, Finance and Operate. The intention was to pull the school down over a period of time and to replace it with a totally new one. The project had certain added attractions—selling off an acre of land and building about 200 dwellings....those who won the contract would be able to ...look at alternative uses for the school premises...The contract would be for a period of around 35 years'. Regan reports on the hostility to the proposal. Many could not understand why they had to "sacrifice a quarter of our playgrounds for housing". Parents and teachers and representatives of the Local Education Authority 'took their responsibilities to the school extremely seriously'. They asked: 'What the cost of the proposal would be? What would happen to the children in the school whilst the new one was being built...? What would be the costs of a refurbishment as opposed to a complete refurbishment?' The local residents who didn't want to lose 'open space' also joined in the protest and, eventually, the Government and the local Westminster City Council conceded defeat. This campaign has inspired others 'who have faced the relentless march of privatisation'.

The UK government outsourcing market is predicted to grow from just under £45 billion in 2005 to more than £67 billion by 2006/7. This is reported by Keith Boyfield in his book review of S. Goldsmith and W. Eggers (2004) *Governing by Network: the New Shape of the Public Sector*, in *Public Space*, 2006, vol. 2, p.86.

Critique of PFIs

(i) Allyson Pollock, a leading critic of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes has shown how and why the costs of PFI projects tend to escalate dramatically from the initial 'outline business case' to the final figure and how the tax payer is tied into thirty year contracts. (The source is Craig (2006) *op. cit.* p.141); see also Pollock's analysis of PFI's in *The Guardian*, February 11th, p. 26, 2004: '...the government...is guaranteeing the private sector a

steady stream of income for 30 years...This is a dream scenario for the private sector, with the government acting as tax collector...’.

(ii) The problems which Pollock outlines here are confirmed in a report compiled by Martin Wainwright and Polly Curtis, *Education Guardian*, January, 23rd, 2007, p.3. They write that the government’s aim to renew buildings using private finance is proving complex and hard to manage: ‘There is growing disquiet over Building Schools for the Future (BSF), the £45bn programme to rebuild or refurbish very secondary school and half of all primaries in England by 2020...Tim Byles, the chief executive of Partnership for Schools, the body set up to run BSF, admitted plans were “overambitious and not deliverable”....One head...[asked] “Why would we want to not be in control of our buildings?”...[at this point, Wainwright and Curtis give the reason why the headteacher asked this]: To tie in with another of the government’s programmes, extended school days with after-hours activities, schools need to be able to use their buildings for much longer than in the past. Yet in PFI schemes schools do not own their buildings, and can sometimes end up having to compete with, say, the local amateur dramatics group that the building owners have chosen to rent it to in the evenings.’

(iii) Simon Jenkins (*Evening Standard*, 2nd June, 2005, p.13: ‘Madness of giant schemes’) is critical of the management of the financing of public buildings through the private sector. He writes about the collapse of a £1bn private finance scheme for the plans to extend the hospital, St Mary’s, Paddington: ‘This is a project so big and so complicated that it loses track of its original purpose and simply eats more money, not least on fees. Current examples have included the Dome, Wembley Stadium and the Olympics site...You have to buy into the whole thing and, once there, you are trapped. There is no flexibility and no backtracking.’

(iv) Here are some more examples of bad management, poor co-ordination, excessive costs and lack of transparency (honest accounting methods) displayed in PFI schemes:-

(a) Metronet consortium (five engineering companies which are meant to manage the tube network) which has entered into a thirty year PPP has admitted that its total 'cost overrun' by 2010 is likely to be £750 million. As a result of Metronet's 'baleful management', 'lines have cost an average of £7.5 million instead of the £2million originally put in the bid documents...' (*Evening Standard*, June 2nd, 2005, p. 13).

(b)... 'continuing signalling collapses and train failures...materials being delivered to the wrong place...a digger broke down...the Government is stuck with its 30-year deals with both Metronet and Tube Lines. The companies and the shareholders have a nice little earner...' (*Evening Standard*, 24th November, 2006).

(c) A letter, signed by several industrial trade union leaders, as well as Steve Sinnot from the NUT, writes about the waste of public funds: 'despite PFI having been proved to be much more expensive than the conventional means of funding projects in the public sector, this year the government has gone ahead with an announcement of £26bn expansion of PFI schemes. In the civil service, £1.75bn has been spent on private-sector consultants, while thousands of frontline staff have lost their jobs.' *The Guardian*, June 27th, 2006, p. 31.

(d) An investigation carried out by *The Times Educational Supplement*, May 11th, 2007, p. 10, entitled 'The Bridge to nowhere and other PFI gaffes', reports headteachers worrying that 'steep rises in management fees will put pupils' education in jeopardy'. This problem was also reported, a week later, in an article: 'Hefty PFI fees rise hits schools', in *The Times*, Public Agenda, p. 6, May 11th, 2007.

(e) 'Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deals don't appear to add up whether you look at the books for the public or private sector. The National Audit Office questions the number of PFI deals that do not appear in any accounts...The present rules are criticised for tempting firms to come up with deals that can be kept off the books rather than those that provide the best value for money', *The Times*, 'Public Agenda', 27th February, 2007, p. 4.

The Academies

(i) Academy schools could do better', *The Times*, February 23rd, 2007, p. 25: a report from the National Audit Office criticises overrunning costs. 'Costs are overrunning by £3million in each of 17 of the first 26 academies.'

(ii) As reported in *The Independent*, 10th May, 2007, p.23:

'The government has been accused of wasting more than £20m on hiring consultants to evaluate city academies. Teachers' leaders argued that the money—when coupled with the £28m spent taking non-teaching project managers to plan the programme—could have been used to build two new schools. Alternatively, it could have been spent on paying the wages of £1,300 teachers for a year...on average ministers had spent £500, 000 on each of the 46 academies which have so far been set up—the equivalent of hiring at least a dozen teachers in each of the schools.'

(iii) Letter signed by Steve Sinnott (NUT general secretary), Professor Stephen Ball (Institute of Education) and Melissa Benn (educational journalist) to *The Guardian* (January 18th, 2007, p. 33), questioning the rationale of transferring more than £14bn worth of publicly owned resources into the hands of private sponsors.

Conclusion

Without the claims that managerialists and their champions have made concerning the cost-effectiveness of their proposals and of their purported 'expertise' (see **Chapters 2 and 3**), they would never have prevailed or been listened to. When shall we know if their claims were true or false?

APPENDIX 3

Longer Notes

This appendix consists of longer notes. They are additional to the notes given in the text. These longer notes correspond exactly to the footnote numbers given, sequentially, in the chapters in the main body of the thesis. The text is complete without them.

Introduction

3. (a) Managerialism has not gone without its critics, in both non-empirical and empirical forms of critical research: the former type of critique concerns questions about *value*, such as the ethical and democratic paucity of managerialism in a market-based, 'enterprise' conception of education. Empirical research of a sociological nature will often turn on questions about *policy matters*, regarding the impact that internal markets have on educational practice and curriculum (see (c), below). One very important area of research of an empirical nature relates to *the validity of the principle of 'value-added' in public league tables* for assessing and rating pupils' and schools' achievement: see H. Goldstein (2001) *League tables and Schooling* and H. Goldstein (2003) *Education For All: the globalisation of learning targets*, in *Research Intelligence*, January, 2003.

Related to these issues about 'performance' league tables is critique aimed at the 'school effectiveness' movement (SEM) and its 'operational arm' (Morley and Rassool, 1999, p. 1), namely, the 'school improvement' movement. A collection of articles in White and Barber (1997) and Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) are good introductions to this field of critique. See Mortimore (1992) in Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) who sets out the main issues at stake in this debate—between those like David Reynolds, who claims there is a body of knowledge in 'effective' teaching which will help schools to establish 'guidelines' on best teaching practice, and those who doubt this is possible. See also Morley and Rassool (1999) for their critique of SEM; they trace the development of 'school effectiveness' as a movement and how the notion of 'effectiveness' has become a dominant discourse in theories of educational change today. See also Pring (2004b), Standish (2001) and Winch (1997) who situate the research fields of 'school effectiveness' and 'school improvement' in the context of wider considerations of the role of research in relation to education.

(b) A body of critique exists which has given voice to the following concerns: that the present 'positivist' or behaviourist' emphasis now placed on valuing the explicitly observable (in terms of 'competency' for assessment of standards and accreditation purposes) leads easily to a reductionist, narrow, mechanistic view of knowledge, teaching and learning and that the rise of competencies and standards as assessment tools allows knowledge to become easily equated with public tests for knowledge: see, for example, Carr (1993); Gipps (1994); Hyland (1994; 2006); Pring (2004b); Whitty and Barnett (1993); that if education is driven in a technicist-instrumentalist 'social market' direction, it will either threaten the emancipatory potential in education: see Barnett (1994) p.55; Giroux (2003a; 2003b); Kemmis (2003); or else sacrifice any aspiration, drawn from a liberal education tradition, to promote a pupil's/student's *general understanding*: see Bruner (1996); Bailey (1989); Davis (1998); Hyland (1997); Ryan (1999). Related to such issues are the following further concerns: any educational system which gives primacy to teaching strategies which demand precision and pre-scribed 'outcomes' fails to engage with the ethical dimension of education: see Campbell (2003); Carr (2000); Goodland, Soder and Sirotnik (1990); Pring (2001b; 2004b); or the dynamics of cognitive and motivational processes in the learning-teaching situation: see S.

Jarvela (1996) 'New models of teacher-student interaction: A critical review', in *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, XI (3), 249-268); or might even fail in achieving the implementation of its intended outcomes.

Andrew Davis, for many years now, has been presenting arguments against criterion-referenced assessment testing. The charge he makes is that present educational objectives will actually fail in their broad aims. He argues that present practices encourage only 'teaching to the test', to satisfy the government's need to provide statistical evidence that standards are rising, but they cannot test for a 'rich' concept of knowledge, which, he says, is still needed in employment. 'Rich' is to be understood in terms of a holistically structured network of interconnected understood beliefs; pupils now only acquire a 'thin' sort of knowledge, sufficient only for pupils to pass one-off tests. Although targeted standards might in this way be achieved, the question remains how sufficient those standards are and whether the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils now obtain will *transfer* into employment: see A. Davis (1999) *Educational Assessment: a critique of current policy*, p. 2, in J. White (Ed.) *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Impact Series*; see also A. Davis (1998) *The Limits of Educational Assessment* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers).

(c) (i) There exist many different genres of critique, regarding the issue of 'markets' in education. Marxian-inspired theses will see the market as inadequate either for redressing disadvantage, inequalities or of preventing the reproduction of advantage in society; or of its working in the interests of the least powerful: see Apple (1996; 2001); Ball (1994); Giroux (2004); Mahoney, Menter and Hextall (2003); Needham (2003); Power, Halpin and Whitty (1997); Rikowski (2002); Whitty (1997) for a range of views.

For those who see the market as a social mechanism for undermining the notion of the common good or of education's being conceived as a 'public' good and not a 'private' good, there will be difficulties in accepting—as some promarketeers, such as Tooley (1995;1997) accept—that *market accountability* can, straightforwardly, be equated with *democratic accountability* (see Grace 1989; 1994; 1995, on this). Critics who object to schools 'entering' the market see any attempt to make this kind of equation as undermining older, traditional democratic ideals, ideals which Chubb and Moe (1990, p.197), in their valorisation of markets in education, are so scathing about as a basis for conceptualising education (see this [Appendix](#), note 6, given in **Conclusion**, for a brief summary of the argument which Chubb and Moe gave.)

Here is Ted Wragg, a vocal critic of the marketisation of education, commenting in his own inimitable way (from 'The Market is coming to get you', *Education Guardian*, November 1st, 2005, p.4):

'Schools as businesses? ... How about schools as schools, educating and serving the whole community... Simple.'

Beneath this quip lies a serious dispute between those who see the market as a vehicle for promoting democratic accountability and those who see it as detrimental to the social fabric upon which democratic ideals rest. Any attempt to understand the notion of educational accountability in terms of market accountability leads very quickly into an ideological dispute regarding the relation between education and democracy.

(ii) A collection of essays which provide a philosophical overview of the various types critiques that have been made against markets in education can be found in Bridges and McLaughlin (1994). For sociological analyses which help situate the marketisation movement in education in the UK in relation to the broader, global movement of marketisation practices, see Power, Halpin and Whitty (1997) and Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995); see also Lawton (1992), pp.150-151 who points out the way in which different political stances influence the content of critique: 'conservatives' who worry about the possibility of 'social fragmentation'; 'far left' critics concerned about 'inequalities' that result when market mechanisms directly influence school selection and enable middle class families, having 'greater personal and family resources', to make better informed decisions' to exercise their school choice; 'mid-left' critics who *do* support diversity but argue that the decentralization processes at work reflect 'utilitarian assumptions of human capital theory'.

(d) There is one other kind of critique worth mentioning, one that draws on the work of Michel Foucault. Foucauldian critique is especially powerful when directed at the 'performativity' criterion now so deeply embodied in educational practices. Many of the articles in *The Performing School*, edited by Gleeson and Husbands (2001), draw on Foucauldian thought. Stephen Ball's (1990) *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge* (London: Routledge) identifies three key elements in Foucault's thought: the relation between knowledge, power and identity.

In this genre of critique, the metaphors of 'surveillance' and 'discipline' are often used by those critical of performance management techniques. For instance, Stephen Ball (1990a, pp. 6-7) describes these techniques as modes of surveillance and technologies of discipline. Ball sees ('new public') management, as it operates in education, as 'a paradigm case of a disciplinary technology': 'management operates to control, classify, and contain teachers' work....'

In the same vein, according to Codd (1999, p. 49), performance management and appraisal systems, the direct consequences of managerialist theory, are seen as little better than 'surveillance' methods which try to 'maximize performance'. Sharon Gewirtz (2002, p.74) also draws on the idea of 'discipline': What appears to be different in this '*post-welfarist*' era, she suggests, is the particular *intensification* of a teacher's work beyond the duties of teaching. It is:

the nature of the tasks that are absorbing increased quantities of teacher time...and the climate of surveillance within which those tasks have to be carried out. The growing emphasis on formalised assessment, target-setting and performance monitoring is generating huge amounts of paperwork.

Critics in this genre emphasise the prominence of two trends—(i) of increasing managerial regulation and (ii) of work incentives introduced to adopt disciplines of entrepreneurial forms of 'responsibilization'—both of which have fused together to create an intensive system of performativity:

the rituals and routines of performance surveillance bite deeply into the attitudes, practices and identities of state professionals. Performativity works from the outside in, through regulations, controls and pressures, but also from the inside out, colonizing lives and producing new subjectivities...Such performativity, experienced as a regime of externally imposed controls, generates identities disciplined by targets, indicators, measures, and records of performance (Ranson, 2003, p. 469).

This idea of *being governed yet governing ourselves* at the same time is echoed in the work of Nicolas Rose (1999), author of *Governing the Soul*. Rose's thesis extends the worries which both Ranson and Ball share. The evangelical 'managerial doctrines of excellence' which all of us are exhorted to build into our very beings—into our 'souls', he says—are intended to make us believe that we can all become 'entrepreneurially successful' and 'self-realizing', if only we learn 'the skills of self-presentation, self-direction, and self-management'. Quoting Rose, Ball (2001a, pp.213-15) sees the continual pressure to be 'disciplined' in this way as 'practices through which we act upon ourselves and one another in order to make us particular kinds of being'. He extends Lyotard's idea of *performativity*—as 'optimising ... performance by maximizing outputs (benefits) and minimizing inputs (costs)' to include the idea of a 'perverse form of response', which he calls *fabrication*. 'Personal and institutional' fabrications occur as result of the demands now made on educationalists to provide:

feedback and accountability towards their institutions, through performance management, quality assurance...productivity agreements...it is important to recognize the extent to which these activities enter into our everyday relations. These are most apparent in the pressures on individuals, formalised by appraisals, annual reviews and data bases, to make their contribution to the performativity of the unit...There is the possibility that commitment, judgement and authenticity within practices are sacrificed for impression and performance.

5. Acting in the 'public interest' is not to be construed here in the narrow, technical sense used by some economists—as just the 'utility' sum of individual preference-interests—but as a much broader one, in the way Brian Barry (1965, p.190) proposes, equivalent in meaning to: 'those interests which people have in common *qua* members of the public'.

6. Christopher Winch and John Gingell (2004, p. 53), drawing on Robin Alexander's work, suggest that:

Part of the problem... is that what is meant by 'good practice' depends largely upon the authorities you consult.

They list 'four distinct and possibly divergent, accounts of good practice'. In large agreement with Alexander's analysis, the conclusion is:

We can make no assessment of what is good practice, what constitutes good teaching, independently of knowing the purposes that the education on offer is supposed to serve and the content of such an education. Aims determine means and without a discussion of the former we can have no sensible discussion of the latter (*ibid*).

Chapter 1

3. Sources for all the quotations given in the list of 'concerns' in **Section 1.1**:-

(i) 'School's 'pillar' brought down by 'bunch of bureaucrats'', *Times Educational Supplement*, 28th February, 2003

(ii) MacBeath *et al* (2005), p.31

(iii) MacBeath, *op. cit.*

(iv) Original quotation in: P. Sikes, 'Teachers' lives and teaching performance', in Gleeson and Husbands (2001) and further discussed in Cribb and Ball (2005), p. 122

(v) 'They could learn a thing or two from colleges', *Education Guardian*, March 7th 2006, p.9

(vi) 'Look back in anger', *Education Guardian*, August 8th, 2006, p.1.

(vii) 'Too happy being number two', *Education Guardian*, March 21st, 2006, p.3

(viii) *Education Guardian, op. cit.*, p.3; see also 'Where are all the head teachers?', *The Guardian G2*, 13th March, 2006, p.3

(ix) 'Another go at duplication', *Education Guardian*, February 21st, 2006, p.9

(x) Letter to the Editor, *The Guardian*, p. 31, February 22nd, 2006

(xi) 'Primary results fall well short of official targets', *The Independent*, 8th August, 2005, p.9

(xii) 'True crime: Sats are killing our stories', *Education Guardian* November 8th, 2005, p.5: children's authors express views on the present practice of 'cutting up' the text of stories for test purposes

7. Some critics who point out the 'narrowing' effects of present educational management practices or the 'narrowing discourse' of managerialism: Gleeson and Husbands (2003), p.509; Thrupp and Willmott (2003), p. 123; Reay and Williams, cited in Fielding (2001), p. 147.

8. For analysis, discussion and critique of the way in which the concept of *the good teacher* has been 're-constructed' in dominant discourses used in teacher education and educational management policies, see Fitzclarence *et al* (1995); Gewirtz (2002); Gleeson and Husbands (2001); Mahoney and Hextall (2000); Moore (2004); Shain and Gleeson (1999); Smyth and Shacklock (1998); Woods *et al* (1997).

10. Thrupp and Willmott (2003), for example, identify at least two kinds of *apologism*—'subtle' and 'overt'. For 'overt apologists' the aim has always been how to restructure educational institutions so that 'they fit the... technologies of neo-liberal and managerial

reform' (2003, *ibid*, p. 60). Others identify the 'strategic compliers' (Shain and Gleeson, 1999, pp. 456-461) or 'surviving conformists' (Woods *et al*, 1997, p. 65). These are people who are indeed critical of the 'new realism', and only cope by 'working the system'.

11. By the 'hollowing out' of the state Rhodes (1997) is referring to the changes that have taken place since the advent of NPM modes of *governance*: central government's authority, autonomy and powers are now dispersed through the role which devolution (as neo-liberalism understands that term), plays in the face of the perceived pressures of consumerism, globalisation, marketisation and privatisation.

12. 'Managerialization', suggest Clarke *et al* (1994, p.4), 'constitutes the means through which the structure and culture of public services is... recast. In doing so it seeks to introduce new orientations, remodels existing relations of power and affects who and where social policy choices are made. This is why [it is said that] the new public sector management matters'

13. (a) The 'key' elements of neo-liberalism are usually given as: minimal government ('deregulation' or 'government at a distance', as it is sometimes called), market fundamentalism, and a belief in the values and priorities of 'new public management' techniques which 'go hand in hand with quasi-markets'. See: Power, Halpin and Whitty (1997); for broader issues that relate to neo-liberal thought see O'Neill (1998) who discusses the neo-liberal belief in individualism (as opposed to collectivism); the belief that the market can serve as arbiter of how public goods should be distributed (as opposed to a belief in 'welfarism'); approval of the idea that standards of quality within the public sector can be raised by market competition.

(b) Notwithstanding a clear similarity between neo- and classical liberal discourse, the two cannot be seen as identical, argue Olssen *et al* (2004, pp.136ff.): 'Whereas classical liberalism represents a negative conception of state power, in that the individual was taken as an object to be freed from the interventions of the state, neo-liberalism has come to represent a positive conception of the state's role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation...In neo-liberalism the state seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur.'

(c) See also their account (Olssen *et al*, *ibid*. 167ff) of Foucault's analysis of how neo-liberalism differs from classical liberalism: 'the traditional distinction between a sphere of natural liberty and a sphere of government intervention no longer holds; for the market order and competition are engineered by the practices of government. Both the state and the market are on this conception artificial; and both presuppose each other. In Foucault's view such a conception means that the principle of *laissez-faire*, which can be traced back to a distinction between culture (artificial state) and nature (the self-regulating market), no longer holds.'

14. 'Advanced liberalism' is a term now used as a way to distinguish the status quo from that which once existed, viz., a social democratic political settlement and encapsulates all the different stages which the political ideology of neo-liberalism has gone through, right up to more recent incarnations of it (as in 'The Third Way', or 'New Welfarism'). Even though the main excesses of neo-conservative freemarket influences on neo-liberal economic thought in the 1980s have been curbed, the *raison d'être* of the preferred economic model for all 'advanced liberal democracies' is still to promote the 'drive of global capital for continued growth and expansion' (Bottery, 2004, p.85). See the collection of essays in Barry, Osborne, and Rose (1996) which discuss 'advanced liberal governance.'

16. It has been argued that the 'modernizing' project, associated with New Labour's 'Third Way/New Welfare' public service reforms is to be located ideologically between neo-liberalism, conservatism and socialism—'though not equidistant from all three': Freedon, cited in Fergusson (2000), p. 202. However ideologically elusive the 'Third Way' position is,

it is widely agreed that what it stands for indicates a change in political priorities since the first wave of modernization swept through the early decades of the 'New Right' public service reforms in the 1980s-1990s; see Clarke *et al* (2000); Ranson (2003); Giddens (1994); Powell (1999).

28. See National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (2002) Professional Qualification for Headship, development materials pack. *Development Stage Unit 1.1 Developing a strategic educational vision* (Nottingham: NCSL); see also Ofsted (2003) *Inspecting Schools: Framework for inspecting schools*.

29. Within the framework of his own version of pragmatism ('pragmatism'), Peirce emphasises the connection between ideas and practice and between belief and habits (Scheffler, 1974, p. 20). There needs to be an 'irritation', a breakdown in prior habits, before the process of critical inquiry can begin.

32. L. A. Reid makes the following distinction: whereas an emotion or sensation can be considered to be 'episodic', 'feeling [on the other hand] is coterminous with waking consciousness' (Reid, 2003, p. 242). *Feeling* (in this latter sense) then, can be considered just as much a 'cognitive' activity as 'sensing, perceiving, conating, being interested...' (ibid).

33. Frankfurt (1987a) takes this idea of Williams even further: it is only by paying attention to what we are concerned about that we are able to articulate that which we think we are *fully responsible for doing*, that which we can 'identify' with and do 'purposefully' (Frankfurt, 1987a, p83). In Frankfurt (1987b) the notion of 'identification' is explored further. Frankfurt differentiates between those beliefs and concerns which occupy an 'arbitrary' status in our psychic make-up and those which become 'wholehearted' *commitments*. Another way of putting this is to say that the concern about what one feels is *worth* 'taking a stand on' is the starting point for knowing which values one 'owns', what beliefs one holds and which 'cluster of attachments and projects' matter (Taylor, 1989, p. 27).

34. We can of course turn our own reflections, desires, beliefs and attitudes into objects of reflection, to form a 'self-conscious kind' of 'additional information' and then once faced with the 'new data provided by reflection' call into question our reasons for how to act with others (Nagel, 1996, p. 200). So self-critique may give rise to self-doubt. A once-strongly held belief may be shed. But here we are trying to understand the special status which certain values have in defining the core of a person's individuality—namely, those values which provide for the possibility of our acting in a way that generates a certain degree of *integration* within our volitional make-up (Anderson, 2003). Torn from these values, or forced to abandon them—or allowing ourselves to be manipulated—undermines our self-respect (Govier, 1993, p. 110), 'integrity', and sense of self.

35. Burbules (2003) suggests that '*the condition of doubt itself contains educational potential*' (original emphasis). In the moment when the slave experiences *aporia*, 'a misconception has been exposed, stripped away...a... terrain now exists for the reconstruction of ...knowledge' (ibid, p. 159). In such moments doubt serves 'as an opportunity to learn' (ibid, p. 158).

36. Deweyan inquiry stresses the 'transactional' and 'open-ended' nature of inquiry: inquiry 'institutes new environing conditions that occasion new problems': see Schön, in Scott (2003) where Dewey's work is discussed.

37. For Peirce (1887, p.68), Cartesian 'doubt' is a deliberate form of self-deception, not a real doubt. Taking a fallibilist-pragmatist epistemological stance, the aim is to replace real doubt by settled beliefs which may then eventually need to be revised (Hookway, 1985).

Chapter 2

6. Managerial 'rationalization': the replacement of 'professional values and needs led policies' with 'rationalistic management, designed to achieve economy and efficiency' (Rhodes, 1997,

p. 92); Bottery (2004, pp. 79-84) compares Weberian, Taylorist and neo-liberal forms of rationalization: he traces how both Weberian (bureaucratic means-end efficiency) and Taylorist ('scientific management') conceptions of 'rationalization', together with the demands of neo-liberal market economic forms of rationalization (standardisation to allow for comparisons between nation states to be made, through, for example international league tables) have combined to bring into being a universally applicable 'predominant mode of organization'. A 'rationally' managed organization is one which uses explicit goals against which performance may be measured, the measurement of which can be used in a future planning process; see also T. Bush *et al* (1999) *Educational Management: redefining theory, policy and practice* pp. 16-17 (London: Paul Chapman & Sage Publications), who appear to agree with Bottery's analysis: the establishment of 'cyclic systems of audit, planning, prioritising, implementing and evaluating' is characteristic of the kind of rational planning process used by the Audit Commission (1993) and the National Audit Office (1996).

19. Was Callaghan's speech intended as a way the Labour government might regain the political ground from the New Right Conservative politics (Ball, 1990b, p. 22)? See Stephen Ball's account (*ibid*) of how the Conservatives felt that their ideas had been appropriated from the first of the *Black Papers* (1969) which preceded Callaghan's speech. Callaghan felt that the education system at that time was not providing industry with pupils numerate and skilled sufficiently in science and technology (Phillips and Furlong, 2001, pp. 6-8). 'Public interest is strong and legitimate and will be satisfied. We spend £6 billion a year on education. So there will be discussion...parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of higher education and both sides of industry, together with the Government, all have an important part to play in formulating and expressing the purpose of education and the standards that we need' (as cited in Furlong, 2001, p.13)

23. See also 'Why have adults suddenly decided to stay away from colleges?', *The Guardian*, (*Education Guardian: Further*), June 12th, 2007, p.9:-

'Some adult education colleges have cut adult courses 'regardless of demand. These "planned reductions" have been in distance learning, in courses that aren't include in the National Qualifications Framework and thus don't attract public subsidy, in language and leisure courses, and in short courses...One principal told researchers that concentrating on ...other categories that attracted 100% public subsidy minimised financial risk for his college'; ;

24. (a) Under the caption, 'Efficiency to Deliver' for instance, in a DfES *Departmental Report* (HM Government *Departmental Report*, (2006), p. 95), we learn that 'as part of the programme of 'efficiency' the Department plans to:

Enable front-line professionals in schools, colleges and higher education institutions to use their time more productively. This will generate over 40 per cent of efficiency gains...

(b) Consider the following quotation from Pat Cooney, head teacher of St. Marie's School, Knowlsey, Liverpool, reported in *The Guardian*, Special Supplement on *The Skills Factor: 'The mark of the best'*, September 26th 2006, p.3, whose school was awarded a national qualification—the 'Quality Mark'— after achieving ten 'key quality mark elements':

"The award is an enabler...It features in every school improvement plan. We feel it makes us more able to reach national ...targets and if we are meeting the 10 elements we feel we are doing a good job."

In the quotation above, we see how easily the 'emancipatory' and 'empowerment' discourses of Human Resource Management (see Clarke and Newman 1997; Thrupp and Willmott 2003—compounded by the mechanistic policy discourses, representing *knowledge* (even 'professional' knowledge) as discrete, achievable 'units' and 'elements'—appear to have so easily insinuated themselves into the thought-processes of this head teacher.

40. Streeck (1992) reports on management controls (in German industry) that have been compatible with democratic lines of accountability in organizations. In Germany, around the same period in which managerialism was gaining ground in most Anglophone countries, a policy of *mitbestimmung* (co-determination) was introduced to improve industrial and employment relations. Managerial responsibilities were taken over by representatives of the workforce and the idea of 'parity co-determination' was seen to be *not* incompatible with a market economy. Neither did this mode of management and control interfere with efficiency and profitability.

Chapter 3

2. (a) Michael Polanyi uses the term 'tacit knowledge' or ('knowing') to refer to the kinds of things which cannot be articulated explicitly in speech—things we know, but are unable to tell. What is meant by that is that we cannot articulate, in precise terms, how we manage to achieve many of the skills we do have. In *Personal Knowledge* examples are given to help elucidate 'tacit' or inarticulate knowledge—recognition of a face, a pianist's playing, a radiologist's interpreting an X-Ray, a blind man's use of a stick. These are illustrations to show that tacit knowledge is to be understood in *relational and not substantial terms*, as being part of a triadic and dynamic relationship (A 'attends' from B to C) between two poles of knowledge, *focal and subsidiary*: there is a 'double intentionality' going on (see R.T. Allen (1998) Polanyi, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol.7, page 490, (London and New York, Routledge). For example, we can be '*focally aware* of a stereo-image, by being *subsidiarily aware* of the two separate pictures' (Polanyi, 1969b, p.316).

Our explicit awareness (our *focal* awareness) is always founded in and carried by the tacit acceptance of something not explicit (a *subsidiary* awareness), which binds us contextually to and within our world. There is, therefore, Polanyi claims, an inarticulate aspect of learning; grasping 'clues' as to what human action and language mean is part of the development of understanding and will rely on what Polanyi refers to as 'the unspecifiable subsidiary elements' present in perception (Polanyi, 1962, p.88). 'Clues', for Polanyi, are things used as such and not observed in themselves. The focal/subsidiary distinction transcends the explicit/tacit distinction. To conceptualise tacit knowledge as a shadowy version of explicit, propositional knowledge, a 'product' that accumulates over time, and which, through a process of developing critical reflection can be extracted deep from the recesses of the mind to become explicit, would be to misrepresent Polanyi. Tacit knowledge must not be understood as an implicit version of potentially codifiable, explicit propositional knowledge.

It would be more accurate to suggest that Polanyi wants us to think of tacit knowledge as a *presupposition* for learning; it is a heuristic process, an activity of discovery, being part of a 'tacit integration' (see Polanyi (1969a, pp. 126,128,144). It is the *act of integration*, not a form of knowledge *per se* that is 'unspecifiable' for Polanyi (1969a:126). This process of 'integration' applies to all claims to knowledge, not just perceptual knowledge; it is an active tacit organizing of 'subsidiary' 'clues' into a meaningful 'focal' 'whole': we can notice 'particulars' *focally*, or '*subsidiarily in terms of their participation in a whole*' (Polanyi, 1969a, p.128): And this 'fusion' of clues...*is not a deduction but an integration*' (Polanyi, 1969b, p.316).

Tacit *knowing*, therefore, always needs a 'knower', one who takes part in a one-way relational activity of discovery (see Allen, 1998, p.490). It is 'one-way' because whereas explicit inference is 'reversible' (we can go back to certain premises 'it is difficult to find our way back to the clues...we either cannot trace or cannot experience in themselves at all; they are largely submerged, unspecifiable.' A process of *disintegration* will in fact occur if attempts are made to reverse the process of tacit integration. For then as '*a comprehensive entity*' will be reduced to '*its...fragments*' (Polanyi, 1969b, pp. 316-317) (He cites the pianist who might become momentarily 'paralysed' if he were to look at his fingers while playing.)

(b) Polanyi's notion of 'tacit knowing' does not restrict the notion of implicit knowledge to that which is *unconscious*. His account of it can only be fully understood when it is situated in his own wider research area to do with elucidating the kind of intellectual faith that underpins all mathematical and scientific knowledge. Explicit knowledge for him is underpinned, *necessarily*, by 'tacit' knowing. See Grene (1996a, pp. 23-4) for a discussion of Polanyi's interest in 'Meno's question': how can we seek what we do not already know, for either we will not recognise it or we know it already; Grene links this question to the interest Polanyi had in how it is possible that we advance to discover the unknown. In *The Tacit Dimension*, Polanyi distinguishes the functional, phenomenal, semantic and ontological import of tacit knowing (see Grene (1969a), p. xv, Introduction, who summarises Polanyi's position).

(c) Polanyi claimed that a rationalist, impersonal, objective conception of knowledge cannot do justice to how we are to understand the concepts of discovery and inquiry, learning, and human knowledge. See Grene (1996a) for Polanyi's views on 'objective' knowledge. Far from our knowledge being conceived as impersonal, his claim is that when we learn, or make a discovery there is an implicit level of articulation going on as well as an explicit one. Acquiring knowledge is therefore in this sense highly personal—a *personal* knowledge (as described in his seminal book, *Personal Knowledge*). Its implicit base, since it is not verbalised or articulated cannot be formulated to become impersonalised. Only what is explicit and codifiable can be formulised to transfer in a neutral impersonal way between people.

An important part of Polanyi's aim, Prosch (1986, p. 98) suggests, was to show the inadequacy of positivism as a universal epistemology. But for Polanyi any critique of positivism and the notion of *purely* 'objective' knowledge does not mean we are thrown back on having *only* 'subjective' knowledge. The idea of *personal* knowledge for him is to bridge the gap between these two polarities and to destroy the abstract dichotomy of the objective-subjective. Polanyi's central thesis is that *no* knowledge is or can be wholly *focal* in the way the positivists suggest (Grene, 1996a, pp. 23-25).

13. Two companies were responsible for passenger trains; Railtrack, answerable to the Regulator, ran the signalling and owned the line; the line was maintained and repaired by a firm of civil engineers, who had a contract with Railtrack; another engineering firm had a contract for track replacement.

18. Examples of managerial incompetence reported in the media: (i) 'Lessons from previous crashes have not been learned': *The Guardian*, 27th April, 2007, p.1; (ii) The UK underground transport system suffered a 'contracting impasse' as a result of 'multi-tiered' management lines: 'An army of lawyers had to read 2m words of the PPP agreement' to release the engineers needed to get a closed line moving again: *The Guardian* 18th October 2005; Leader, p.30 and reports, pp.13, 29.

20. (a) For Janet Newman (2000, p. 55) joined-up government 'is likely to remain an aspiration'. Newman wonders how rationalizing different agencies as 'partners' in 'joined-up' government will avoid creating tensions in practice. For although the idea of 'intra-organizational collaboration' signifies:

shared values, the establishment of common agendas and goals, the reality tends to be very different.... the discourse itself serves to create an illusory unity which masks the need to engage with ...divergent interest and conflicting goals...

(Newman, *op.cit.* pp. 54-55).

(b) There is evidence that Newman's fears are justified. Anxieties about the latest round of NHS managerial reorganization reveal a tension between the desire for public service reorganization which leads to fragmentation, on the one hand, and new initiatives to create

joined-up services, on the other: 'Why demoralise people providing health services in the community who are fed up with reorganisations and may chose to retire rather than go through another? Why order new PCTs (primary care trusts) to withdraw from services when there are not, as yet, alternative providers? And why fragment services among many contractors when the goal was to bind services together to provide better patient pathways?', *Guardian Society*, October 5th, 2005, p 7

(c) With respect to problems of co-ordination that refer specifically to education, The Teaching and Learning Research Programme, in conjunction with the ERSC, write: 'national government agencies, including OFSTED, NCSL, QCA and TTA, as well as the DfES (itself)...need to align their policies appropriately...[A]fter many years of rather different performance drivers, the challenge of achieving smooth integration across these agencies and their policies and their practices remains considerable'. See A. Pollard and M. James (Eds.) *Personalised Learning: A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme*, Autumn, 2004.

22. The UK government outsourcing market is predicted to grow from just under £45 billion in 2005 to more than £67 billion by 2006/7: reported by Keith Boyfield in his book review of S. Goldsmith and W. Eggers (2004) *Governing by Network: the New Shape of the Public Sector*, in *Public Space*, 2006, vol. 2, p.86.

25. (a) Haridimos Tsoukas (1994, p.6) reports:

'Every year...each local authority in the UK has to publish ...152 performance indicators covering a wide variety of issues of local concern...The Audit Commission will collate the information nationally and produce a national league table...the objective of this exercise is to make councils' performance transparent and thus offer them an incentive to improve their services. The idea is that an informed electorate would be able to use their votes to reprimand underperforming councils...

So far so good, but what is underestimated ...is the internal relationship between a policy-maker's view of a social system and the latter's behaviour. Indicators are supposed to reflect and reveal a true and objective reality (i.e. councils' performance). But what is often ignored is that the very same reality is crucially shaped by the indicators...Councils are bound to want to look good in the league table for how else can local politicians confront the criticism of their opponents—numbers matter in politics! Wanting to look good in the league table, councils may thus choose to abandon sensible policies if they think they do not give councils enough of a high profile, opting instead for policies which will enhance a council's standing in the league table.

Imagine ...the case of a council in which elderly residents would rather have a deep freeze and a microwave than have their food delivered to them daily by home helps. 'If the authority responds to what people want and cuts down on home helps it will look terrible in the league table which merely asks how many home helps there are per thousand of the population. It could...hire more home helps simply for the sake of appearances.' [Here Tsoukas is quoting Margaret Hodge, vice-chairman of the association of Metropolitan Authorities, as quoted in *The Independent*, 11th September, 1992].

(b) With regard to school performance 'league' tables, Onora O'Neill, criticises the way school 'league tables', with their 'bogus units of measurement', are compiled: see: 'Enough point scoring', *Education Guardian*, October 25th, 2005, p.3; see also, 'Row takes shine off GCSE achievement', *The Guardian* 21st October 2005, p. 14: a report of GCSE results published in school league tables showed that (i.) 'at one in six of the schools that had better overall results in 2004 than in 2001, English and maths attainment was actually worse'; the tables disguised the fact that English and Maths did not need to be included in the five 'good' GCSEs at grades A*-C, the number a school needs for gaining points on the table; and (ii.) 'schools have taken advantage of intermediate GNVQs—which currently count as four higher

grade GCSEs. So pupils need only the equivalent of one other qualification to meet the benchmark'.

27. (a) An extensive literature has grown up in the field of cognitive psychology relating to the subject of implicit knowledge and efforts made in laboratory conditions with the aim of trying to make people articulate what they know implicitly. Until the early 1980s it was still counted a heresy, in some circles, to think that there *was* implicit knowledge, reports Peter Tomlinson (1999b). But, by the 1990s 'it had become an intensively researched field' (Tomlinson, *ibid*, p.410). There is now wide acceptance amongst psychologists that there is such a thing and the research in this field attempts to clarify the difference between 'explicit or conscious thinking and implicit or unconscious thinking', see: D. Berry (1994), p. 147, 'Implicit and Explicit Learning of Complex Tasks', in N. Ellis (Ed.) *Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages* (London and New York: Academic Press). So although the notion of implicit knowledge is generally endorsed by cognitive psychologists there tends to be a dominant research paradigm in this field which restricts the *explicit-implicit* distinction to correspond to the *conscious-unconscious* distinction.

(b) Empirical research into understanding the *explicit-implicit* distinction better tends to limit analysis and discussion to laboratory-based experiments (often with 'professionals' as volunteers) where perception, learning and memory task are the focus of research. These are subject areas which are seen as part of a wider research field concerned with establishing the kind of knowledge that might be accessible or inaccessible to consciousness: see A. Reber (1993) *Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge*, pp. 16-23 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), whose book explores the findings of cognitive scientists who have made implicit learning and memory a focus of empirical interest. His thesis is that, while important differences must be acknowledged between reflective and non-reflective aspects of cognition, explicit and implicit learning is best viewed not as 'independent processes', but as 'interactive' and 'co-operative' processes.

(c) For approximately thirty years now workers in the field of artificial intelligence have striven to create representations of the implicit knowledge of professional expertise. The result has been the development of 'knowledge elicitation' as an area of research, devoted to developing methods of characterizing what experts know. According to Eraut (1994, p.15), their work reveals how much professional knowledge is not amenable to capture for representation in computerized formats. 'One of its best established findings ... is that people *do not know what they know*'.

Claxton (2000, pp. 35-37) reports on research which has shown that making people articulate explicitly what they comprehend implicitly can retard the development of expertise. See also Tomlinson (1999a and 1999b).

(d) A collection of essays which relates to these sorts of issues, together with useful references to some of the key researchers in this field can be found in: Ellis (1994) *op.cit*, above; Berry and Dienes (1993) *Implicit Learning* (Hove, UK and Hillsdale, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated); Reber (1993) *Implicit Learning and Tacit Knowledge: An Essay on the Cognitive Unconscious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Other studies, of an empirical nature, to do with artificial grammar learning and the application of rules in cognition can be found in: 'A theory of implicit and explicit knowledge', by Z. Dienes and J. Perner, *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* (1999) Vol. 22, 735-808; and D. Berry (1997)(Ed.) *How Implicit is Implicit Learning?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). For empirical work specifically related to education and which draws on this field of cognitive psychology and aims to elucidate the nature of conscious reflection or implicit cognitive thought processes considered necessary for 'initial teacher preparation', see Tomlinson (1999a) and (1999b).

Chapter 4

1. 'Accountability' or 'being accountable' Wagner (1989, p.7) writes, graduated in the 1600s, from the world of pure financial accountancy, where it would have the sense of: 'reckon, count, calculate', to mean: 'to render an account of, to explain and to answer for'; see also Hoskins (1996): according to 'available historical record', before the 19th century, '[t]here appears to have been an absence of systematic shaping and controlling activity' and 'no quantifiers accounting for human performance—though there was much accounting for goods and objects, which took place ...where people were answerable for the discharge of certain charges ...and in that sense were subject to *responsibility*...'

Boland and Schultze (1996), tracing the etymology of the word, 'account', show how the idea of 'giving an account' encompasses two quite different elements—'narration' and 'computational'—derived from: (i) 'story-telling' (Old French, *a conter*, meaning, *to tell a story*) and (ii) 'calculation' (late Latin, *acomputare*, meaning to *compute*). So the expression 'giving an account' embodies these two residual elements of meaning, namely, 'the giving of an account as in narration of what transpired and the giving of an account as in a reckoning ... (a calculation of net balances of events in a transaction form)' (Boland and Schultze 1996, p.62-63).

According to Hoskins (1996, p. 275), at some point in the development of the etymology of accountability, the notion of 'reckoning'—rendering an account—was extended from its use in the world of accountancy to include the idea of 'stewardship': 'an accounting for how you have...used the things with which you have been charged...goods, money or powers': 'through the eighteenth century the dominant form of operative power relations was that of stewardship, and the form of one's responsibility was to be answerable after the fact...(Hoskins, *ibid*).

The general notion of *responsibilities* helps broker a link between responsibility and accountability:

Accountability is the capacity and willingness to give explanations for conduct...how one has discharged one's responsibilities (Boland and Schultze 1996, p.62).

8. Notes on *responsibility*, *irresponsibility* and *non-responsibility*:-

(i) What is the difference between 'irresponsibility', and not 'non-responsibility'? The term 'irresponsibility', not 'non-responsibility', is commonly taken as an antonym for 'responsibility', the latter being reserved for those who, for some reason, are incapacitated or are prevented from having the capacity for conduct which can be assessed for praise or blame, such as children or those who are confirmed as insane. See Gaden (1999) for further discussion on this.

(ii) B. Williams (1993), *Shame and Necessity* (Oxford: University of California Press) writes that although one can identify four 'basic elements of any conception of responsibility' which are 'cause, intention, state and response', 'there is not and never could be just one appropriate way of adjusting these elements to one another'. (The 'elements' are explained as follows: (p.55) 'that in virtue of what he did, someone brought about a bad state of affairs; that he did or did not intend that state of affairs; that he was or was not in a normal state of mind when he brought it about; and that it is his business, if anyone's, to make up for it'.)

14. Descartes' criterion of 'clearness and distinctness': Rule III of his *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*:

In the subjects we propose to investigate, our inquiries should be directed...not to what we ourselves conjecture, but to what we can clearly and distinctly behold and with certainty deduce; for knowledge is not won in any other way.

Can the legacy of Cartesian rationalism be detected in recommended 'guidelines' for Ofsted school inspections (used by inspectors as criteria for assessing standards in teaching)? Consider the use of such phrases as 'leave no doubt' (see *Inspecting Subjects, 3-11 Guidance for Inspectors and Schools*, OFSTED (2000), p. 6), or, 'clear and unequivocal interpretation' (*Handbook for Inspecting Primary and Nursery Schools*, OFSTED (2000), p.23).

15. *The Republic* stipulates that to have 'real' knowledge of something (*episteme*) is to be able to 'give an account' of it: we only have a rational grasp on something when we can *articulate* it. The ancient Greek word for 'reason' (*logos*) has in its range of meanings, 'speech' and 'account'.

Chapter 5

1. How are we to understand the Aristotelian idea of 'the-that-for-the-sake-of-which'? David Wiggins (2006, pp. 237-238) helps explain, *inter alia*, the relation that an agent's understanding of the 'that for the sake of which' has to the agent's implicit grasp of the good in a particular context. An agent's grasp of the-that-for-the-sake-of-which' (in the case of this or that action, in this or that context) is related to an agent's practical (incompletely verbalized) grasp of the good in actions:

'...within the sphere of the ethical and the practical, it is the capacity for appreciation of what matters in this or that situation *as given* which is the starting point for understanding the 'that for the sake of which' the practically wise person acts...it is not by following verbal instructions so much as living and doing and engaging with the practically wise and virtuous that anyone can enter into whole spirit in which ... precepts of experience are to be understood. Only by drawing on some such understanding of the 'that for the sake of which' will anyone subjugate the indefiniteness of the subject-matter of the practical or impose upon any part of it a shape that is faithful to an ethical aim. It is an understanding of the *spirit* into which the agent is to act.'

2. For a general introduction to Aristotle's concept of *the voluntary* and its relation to *responsibility* see 'Introduction' in Schoeman (1987); and Lucas (1993), p.274ff:

According to Lucas, Aristotle reckons that the ascription of responsibility for an action can be defeated in two ways:

- (a) that what was done was done through compulsion
- (b) it was done through ignorance

The relationship between *the possible* and *the voluntary* is discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, Ch. 1: a 'moving principle' can only be a starting point for action if there exists 'in us', 'the power to do or not to do' (NE 1110a 17; NE 1113b 17-21), by which Aristotle means it is only if choice *is* voluntary—and not 'involuntary', 'under compulsion' or done through 'ignorance'—(NE 1109b 31-1110a 1-2) that it becomes appropriate to praise or blame (NE 1109b 31); 'the terms... 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' must be used with reference to the moment of action' (NE 1110a 13-15). In the *Eudemian Ethics* (EE) there is further elucidation of what is meant by not acting 'under compulsion' and 'the moving principle is in the man himself' (NE 1113b 8 -1114a 4):

'within the continent and the incontinent man it is his own impulse that drives him... so neither is under compulsion...each would be acting voluntarily, and would not be forced to act. For we call force that external starting-point of change which impedes or generates change against impulse ...but when the starting-point is within, it is not under compulsion' (EE 1224b 8-14)

3. (a) In theoretical reasoning, *arche* will be translated as rational principle (NE 1140b 32-5; 1141a 8; 1150a 5). In the case with which we are concerned, to do with practical reason, the *arche* is the origin ("originating cause") for action. It lies in the agent's grasp of 'the-that-for-

the-sake-of-which', the end for which the agent is to act here (NE 1140b 16-20). It is difficult for the person who is 'ruined by pleasure or pain' (NE 1140b 17-19) to get the right sort of starting points. (Cp. NE 1095b 5-10). The passage at NE 1140b 16-20, prompts the thought that *arche* in Aristotle sometimes means *the that-for-the-sake-of-which* action is to be attempted *here*, that is, in a *specific* context, and sometimes it means the *general* source for the determinations in context of this, that or other *that-for-the-sake-of-which*.

(b) For Aristotle, in order to get the right starting points 'there must be a gradual development of good habits of feelings' (Burnyeat, p. 1980, p. 70), an education of the emotions (NE 1104b 12-13; 1105b 20-21; 1106b 20-22); in this connection, see White (1984) who discusses how 'educating the emotions' is relevant to moral education.

(c) Some references for *arche/archai*—'starting-point(s)' to be found in the text of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) are given below. (Although set out separately, close examination of the text will reveal how closely inter-related the various senses can be):-

(i) as imparted by habituation: NE 1095b 6-8

(ii) as seen by one in the role of philosopher: NE 1098 b

(iii) as an originating cause of action ('choice'): NE 1139a 33-34; 1140b 15-19

(iv) man himself as an agent of action: NE 1110a 15-17; NE 1113b 17-21; 1139 b 4-5; 1140b 19-20; (Cp. *Eudemian Ethics* 1224b 8-14: see [note 3](#), above, on *the voluntary*)

(v) where originating cause and *telos* converge: NE 1140b 16

6. The following definition, cited in Nordenbo (2002), p. 347, illustrates the relation between *formation* and *Bildung* and the way in which both these terms can stand for either a *process* or the *outcome* of that process: 'Like the Latin *forma* (*Gestalt*) and *formatio* (*Gestaltung*)—the English *form/formation*, the French *formel/formation*—*Bildung* refers to the actual *process of development* as well as its *...form*'. See also Lovibond (2002) whose account of the development of ethical formation involves a process towards a *state of being*.

7. (a) The term *Bildung* has a rich historical and metaphysical heritage, but as many scholars of the subject remark, there is no exact English translation of *Bildung*: see John Hardcastle (2007) on the complexity of the term, how it came to stand for powerful educational, pedagogical and ethical humanist ideals and carried with it the idea of something radically creative—a 'self-activated humanizing process' (Hardcastle, *ibid*). Hardcastle traces the way von Humboldt gained inspiration from some of the key figures of the German Enlightenment—Kant, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Fichte. For a general introduction to the notion of *Bildung*, see Løvlie and Standish (2002) 'Introduction': *Bildung* and the idea of a liberal education', Special issue on 'Bildung', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36 (3) 317-375.

(b) It is important to make clear that the appeal I make to the idea of *Bildung* is not in the sense the term 'education' might have been understood, at various times in the 18th and 19th century, namely, to mean a person's cultural initiation into an education based around certain canonical texts—in the way we might think of someone's acquiring a *liberal education*. In this tradition, although 'education of the self' is seen as a process, the 'education' so acquired and visualised will have a definite end-point. Such a point will be reached when someone becomes *gebildet* through various forms of education and experience, both formal and informal: see Winch (2006a, p. 392).

The sense in which I use the term *Bildung* carries a far wider and more complex sense of 'educational'—one which has no definite 'end-point'. This sense is captured in ideas such as 'self-formation', or 'potential to fulfil oneself'—and can be found in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and by others associated with the German Romantic idealist humanist movement. This sense has been taken up in more recent times by others, such as Gadamer who rejects the Hegelian idea of *Bildung* as 'cultivation' into something 'absolute' (something 'made perfect' or 'brought to completion'). On this see J. Cleary's and P. Hogan's

helpful analysis of Gadamer's notion of *Bildung* in: 'The Reciprocal Character of Self-Education: Introductory Comments on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Address 'Education is Self-Education', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 35 (4), 2001, pp. 525-538); see also Masschelein (2004) for his account of *Bildung* in the sense of being free from constraint in the sense of 'self-determination' or 'emancipation'; and Nordenbo (2002).

(c) *Bildung*, in the sense just described, is usually taken to include the following ideas: 'self-cultivation' or 'self-activity', ideas which, in time, have been extended to include the ideas, 'coming-in-to-form', 'second-nature' or 'formation' (see (d) below) or 'self-education/discovery' (Gadamer, *op.cit*) then evolved. A good overview of the many different meanings of *Bildung* which bear on issues relevant to topics discussed in the philosophy of education can be found in two separate special issues devoted entirely to the subject of *Bildung*: see *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 2002, 36 (3), and *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2003, 25 (2). For my purposes, though, there is more than is needed in many of these articles to make the points I am concerned with about *Bildung*—such things as how we understand public accountability, public spiritedness or the conditions under which a responsible and trustworthy professional and occupational formation may best develop. In so far as I am talking about educational accountability my interest in *Bildung* focuses on the idea that the possibility of all these kinds of things (accountability, public spiritedness, responsibility and trustworthiness in occupational and professional work) originates with *Bildung*—when this is understood as an aspect of character development (see (d) below).

(d) In *Mind and World* John McDowell (1996) seeks a way of reconciling how 'the space of reasons' and 'the space of causes' may be unproblematically related; the kind of naturalism he favours enables him to argue that we work our way in to the space of reasons by the process of upbringing, which he describes as *Bildung*: 'The resulting habits of thought and action are second nature' (page 84). McDowell shows how well the idea of *Bildung* can be harnessed to good effect in the Aristotelian theory of the way acquiring ethical virtue is integral to practical knowledge and human flourishing.

Although she does not set out to discuss *Bildung* as such, endorsement by Sabina Lovibond (2002) of McDowell's idea of the way 'habits of thought and action' become 'second nature' complements her own account of the journey an agent can make towards *ethical formation*—the journey which plays a crucial and integrative part of developing (the Aristotelian notion) *phronesis* (practical wisdom).

9. Sometimes *eudaimonia* is translated either as 'happiness/pleasure' or 'flourishing'. To avoid any confusion with utilitarian conceptions of happiness or pleasure, I use 'flourishing'. Key passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics* can be found at: 1095a 18-20; 1097a 39-1098a 20. I am using the *Nicomachean Ethics* as the main text for interpreting 'eudaimonia'. But scholars' debates turn on (i.) two possible conflicting conceptions of *eudaimonia* in the Aristotelian corpus: *theoria* (contemplation) in the *Eudemian Ethics* or *phronesis* (acting in accordance with virtue, practical wisdom) in the *Nicomachean Ethics*; (ii.) the relation *eudaimonia* has to 'the good life' (1140a 25-30) and the 'ergon' (function) of man (1097b 22-1098a 20); (iii.) what 'the good life' itself means: either 'the life of the good man' or 'the life good for man'. See essays written by Thomas Nagel, John McDowell, David Wiggins and Kathleen Wilkes in Rorty (1980).

12. Koehn (1994) and Freidson (1994; 2001) offer a fair representation of the kinds of issues at stake in disputes about the nature of *professional knowledge* and provide useful references. Gunter (2001) discusses many issues ranging from the possible 'proletarianisation' (p.144-5) of teachers to the 'powerful deprofessionalising and reprofessionalising forces' now 'working alongside each other' (p.145), arguing that 'enhanced professionalisation' has led to loss of 'authentic professional autonomy' and 'professional judgement', understood in the traditional sense (pp. 112,144); see also Cribb (1998). Bottery (1998) traces the historical development of the notion of professionalism over the last hundred years, from the advent of early industrialization in the 19th century to the present modern 'contracting welfare state'. The notion of professional action as the exercise of discretionary judgement is well brought out in

Schön (1983) and also in Carr (1995;2000), Hargreaves (2000), Kogan (1989), Luntley (2000), Pring (2004a), Shain and Gleeson (1999), Winch and Foreman-Peck (2000) and Winch (2004), all of whom situate the discussion in the context of education and the professionalism of teachers. But, as Hargreaves (1994), p.19, note 1, says, such a notion of *professionalism* is very different from the more conventional one that is grounded in notions of esoteric knowledge, specialist expertise and public status, a notion which attracts accusations from some quarters, of professions being merely 'ideological monopolies' (see Koehn, *op cit.*, p.3).

13. The Aristotelian scholars to whom I am indebted are: (i) Terence McLaughlin whose conversations I had with him, about *pedagogic phronesis*, helped shape the arguments of Chapters 5 and 6 (see also acknowledgements at the front of the thesis); (ii) Elizabeth Anscombe (1981) who emphasises the perception/discernment —*aesthesis*—of an agent in a specific context that is recorded in the minor premise of the agent's practical syllogism; see Anscombe's discussion (1981, p. 69) of Aristotle's claim that '...choice (*prohairesis*) does not exist without intellect and judgement, nor yet without moral character' (NE 1139a 32-33) (Anscombe's emphasis). (iii) David Wiggins (1980;1998), who effectively continues and develops that theme; (iv) Myles Burnyeat (1980), who helpfully explains the crucial role of *ethismos* (ethical formation) in the development of the intellectual virtue, *phronesis*, practical knowledge; (v) Sabina Lovibond (2002), who draws attention to the close relationship between *ethismos* and *phronesis* and also to the element of uncodifiable knowledge which lies latent in both of these ideas; and (vi) John McDowell (1996, p. 88) who, in drawing on the German idea of *Bildung*, helps to explain how the 'second nature' that develops through a human being's upbringing (*Erziehung*), is not a 'mysterious gift from outside nature', but an 'actualisation of some of the potentialities we are born with'.

15. Skirbekk (1983) explains how the notion of *praxeology* relates to *practice*: 'those features of day-to-day activities without which those activities could not retain their identity...[a] search ...quite different from an empirical review ... Our concern is with the basic structure of these activities...features seen as constitutive—as a *sine qua non*—of the activities in question' (p.118).

Chapter 6

1. Cp. D. W. Ross (1931) who translates the lines from the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b 7- 8; 1098b 3-4, as follows:

... the fact is the starting point and if this is sufficiently plain to him, he will not at the start need the reason as well; and the man who has been well brought up has or can easily get starting points...Now of first principles we see some by induction, some by perception, some by a certain habituation, and others too in other ways.

What is 'the that' (as Burnyeat (1980) translates *to hoti*), or 'the fact' (as Ross (1931) translates *to hoti*) in this context? In general terms, knowledge of 'the that' can be understood as knowledge of the ways in which one should act in particular circumstances. But someone who is learning 'the that' is still under instruction, and has yet to discover 'an independent understanding of what in human life is fulfilling and satisfying' (Tobin 1989, p.203). Knowing 'the that' is prerequisite for coming to understand (at a later stage of ethical formation) *the reason* why it is worth engaging in virtuous ways for their own sakes. These stages are not reversible.

3. Commentary and translations of these passages from Book 3 of *The Nicomachean Ethics* are standardly given in terms of 'means' and 'ends'. But care is needed here to avoid misinterpreting Aristotle as if he were talking solely about an instrumental, causally efficacious kind of reasoning ('means-end technical rationality'). Many misinterpretations, suggests David Wiggins, rests on a mistranslation of the Greek words, *ta pros to telos*. For the Greek preposition, *pros* ('towards'), covers both causal and constitutive or specificatory relations between the end in question and the steps taken towards it. See Wiggins (1980)

'Deliberation and Practical Reason', in Rorty (1980) and Wiggins (1998, p.220); Cp. also Wiggins, 'Incommensurability: Four proposals', in Chang (Ed.)(1997), p. 62: 'For an Aristotelian, the idea that a self-contained part of the concept of rationality can be bitten off...in value-free fashion as the rationality of means, leaving the rest, that is, ends, to the taste and formation of individual agents, is a ... gratuitous delusion...'

9. On the practical syllogism: see NE 1141b 16-22, for Aristotle's own example of how practical reasoning (about what sorts of meats are digestible) and *phronesis* are related. The classic place where examples of the practical syllogism are given is in Chapter 7, *De Motu Animalium*, where Aristotle discusses how one may be moved to action by what one sees to be the case; see also Raz (1978) for a selection of essays on the nature of practical reasoning; and Carr (1981b) who endorses the Aristotelian thesis that practical reasoning is concerned with inferences that lead to action rather than merely to 'the formation of intentions' (p.646).

11. It is in the act of noticing what is salient that the possibility of actualising some good or avoiding some evil is made apparent to the agent: the minor premise of a practical syllogism 'arises out of...one's perceptions, concerns, and appreciations', from what strikes one as being 'in the situation [the] most salient feature of the context in which [one] has to act' (Wiggins, 1980, p.234).

14. How far did Aristotle come to explicitly acknowledging the idea of implicit knowledge?

There are many references which can be found in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (e.g. 1104a 3-5; 1109 b21-5; 1112b 3-10; 1137b 18-20, 29-32; 1143b 4-5, 11-14) which show the emphasis Aristotle places on that which cannot be made more explicit than the subject matter demands or where, in certain practical connections or contexts, there is no need for explicit articulation. We have clear evidence, too, of the emphasis which he places on the minor premise as the starting point for the practical syllogism (1143b 1-4), a premise which issues from the process of ethical formation, itself irreducible to explicit articulation. But it may be said he was not completely consistent.

Consider this passage:

Now virtue makes the choice right, but the question of the things which should naturally be done to carry out our choice belongs not to virtue but to another faculty,There is a faculty which is called cleverness and this is [the faculty by which we] are able to do the things that tend towards the mark we have set before ourselves and to hit it Practical wisdom is not [itself to be equated with] this faculty but it does not exist without this faculty. And this eye of the soul acquires its formed state not without the aid of virtue, as has been said and is plain. For the syllogisms which deal with acts to be done... involve a starting point (*arche*), viz. 'since the end, (i.e. what is best, is of such and such nature), whatever it may be (let it for the sake of the argument be what we please [whatever])'. But this is not evident except to the good man; for wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting points of action. Therefore it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good. (1144a 18-1144a 36).

Almost everything here is compatible and harmonizes with the account I have given of Aristotle's doctrine except one thing—namely the seeming attempt to imagine a practical syllogism with a *major premise* instead of a minor premise as its starting point, a major premise which appears to be expressive of the inclusive *that-for-the-sake-of-which*, that (in Chapter 6 I argue) is fixed by formation. Did Aristotle really think such a thing could be put into words? He does not try to state a major premise of this sort or give an example here. If it seems in this particular text that he contemplates that's being done, then, drawing on the work of Anscombe (1981) and of Wiggins (1980), already discussed in the argument in Chapter 6, my case for the interpretation of the other passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics* which I have cited in that chapter rests on the fact that he is departing here from the model of practical wisdom he expounds at NE 1143b1-3 and on the superior workability of the model that has the agent begin with the premise of the possible, the *minor premise*.

17. Implicit in Winch's argument is a rejection of an Oakeshottian interpretation of 'technical knowledge', to mean simply the rigid applications of instructions (see Oakeshott, 1962). Drawing on Joseph Dunne's analysis of the Aristotelian notion of *techné* (Dunne, 2003, Ch. 10), 'assured technique', Winch argues, has affinities with *phronesis*, for it will depend just as much on situational awareness, flexibility and sensitivity to materials used (Winch, 2004, p.188;2006, p.59)

20. MacIntyre (1988): 'The connection between the preferences expressed in the premises of a non-Aristotelian kind of reasoning...is... looser...than that between the premises of an Aristotelian practical syllogism and the action which is its conclusion (p. 340)...'Even when someone has rehearsed all the premises of some piece of practical reasoning ...the question of whether or not he or she is going to act accordingly is still open. Hence between the rehearsal of the premise and the ensuing action there characteristically has to intervene a decision....[S]uch premises logically terminate not in some action as their conclusion, but in a practical judgement of the form "So I should do so and so". The decision whether to act in accordance with this judgement is not made simply by arriving at this conclusion.' (p. 341).

21. 'The structures of a particular type of environment...produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*...adapted to their goals without a conscious aiming at ends', 'collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72)

22. 'NHS chief admits flawed accounting behind deficits', *The Guardian*, December 12th, 2006, p.13 'The cycle of cover-ups and failure that costs us millions', *The Times*, September 19th, 2006, p. 4; The National Audit Office brands the Department for Education as "unfit for purpose" and of being 'the worst department...in getting value for money from outside consultants', see 'Education department accused of failing to collect reliable data', *The Guardian*, December 19th 2006, p. 10: 'We cannot disguise our concern as to the fitness for purpose of the organisation': Barry Sheerman, Commons education committee chair, on Ofsted, reported in *EducationGuardian*, July 17th, 2007; see also Appendix 2 for details of the costs of management consultancy projects.

Chapter 7

3. The Action Research movement held that teachers would be able to both improve their own teaching practice and also take an active role in contributing to educational research through critical scrutiny of, and reflection on, their tacitly held 'theories' and values. See Stenhouse (1975); Carr and Kemmis (1986); Carr (1989); Elliott (1991); Winch and Foreman-Peck (2000). The discourse of the 'reflective practitioner' marries well with the philosophy of Action Research: in the role of 'reflective practitioners', teachers are encouraged to take part in a process of self-evaluation which, it is said, not only enhances expertise (Eraut, 1994, p. 236), but simultaneously improves professional practice (Carr, 1989, *ibid*).

5. The distinction we intuitively draw between (i) implicit and explicit knowledge does not come to terms fully with the complexity of either the distinction between (ii) articulate and inarticulate knowledge, or between (iii) non-propositional and propositional knowledge. Neat correspondences cannot to be found mainly because (ii) and (iii) are themselves also subject to the same problem which (i) raises. These forms of knowledge cannot be represented in linear terms. This means it is impossible to individuate clear demarcations between one type of knowledge and another.

8. See Eraut (1994, p.15) who draws out some careful distinctions between 'awareness of', 'critical scrutiny of' and 'ability to articulate' implicit knowledge. See also Molander (1992): 'Instead of talking about the impossibility of description or articulation', it is generally better to talk about the 'inexhaustibility of reality' (Molander, *ibid*, p. 15). 'No description and no

presentation *exhausts* a particular body of professional knowledge', he suggests. But there are other activities where although it may be 'quite correct to say that "I cannot describe how one does this"... [w]hat the person most probably means is that she cannot describe...[the activity] in such a way that the person she addresses *understands* and *can do the same*' (Molander, *ibid*).

9. Michael Luntley (2003, p. 171), interpreting this passage from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, suggests that whereas what we come to know through 'a theoretical articulation of how things are' may be 'capable of full and explicit articulation', what one learns experientially is only possible by learning to 'tune one's attitude to what the teacher points out'—and this is *not* capable of full articulation. This latter kind of knowledge makes sense only within the context of a particular 'form of life' where 'what you learn is judgement, not technique' (*ibid*).

15. The original ideal behind the 'action research' movement—for teachers to be 'active partners' in their own research—see **note 3** above for this chapter—has had to come to terms with political trends that are more compatible with a managerial and neo-liberal agenda (Papastephanou, 2006, p. 192). Ironically, what is now referred to as 'action research' may in fact be 'indistinguishable from the positivistic, single-item cause-effect research' which the action research movement sought to replace (Adelman, 1989, p.177). For the movement has become susceptible to 'domestication'— 'a tool offered to teachers for the purpose of realising government policy intentions' (Bridges, cited in Papastephanou, 2006, p.197).

16. 'Assessment Use in Learning and Teaching', *The National School Improvement Network Research Matters*, No. 12, Autumn, 2000, p.1, Institute of Education, London University.

Chapter 8

1. The Association of School and College Leaders understands this as part of the government's project to 'branch out into a variety of non-education services for their local community': see *Financial Times*, July 25th, 2006, p.3: 'Schools will hire private sector 'chief executives'; Sir Cyril Taylor, quoted in *Financial Times*, *op. cit*: 'Business techniques ... [and] business sponsors...are ...helping to bring management ethos and objectives into our schools'.

2. Does the notion of a generic skill—just cut loose from specific contexts—make sense? The trouble with the notion of a 'generic skill', David Carr suggests (1993, p.260), is 'precisely that it confuses or misconstrues the idea of *capacity*. A capacity is something whose normative nature requires explaining ...in terms more appropriate to a disposition':

...goals of planning and organizational skill cannot be understood as bare causally effective dispositions stripped of the...evaluative perspectives which are needed to determine that this behaviour here is evidence of good rather than bad, effective rather than ineffective, innovative rather than routine...activity.

5. Quoting from T. Adorno's and M. Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) Peter Dews (1998) explains Weber's notion of *zweckrational*: 'the capacity to maximize efficiency in the control of objective processes through a knowledge of the determinants of such processes'. According to Daws, Weber believed that it is the *institutionalization* of this rationality which leads to the 'totally administered society'. See also Weber's own account (1964, p. 115): 'a rational orientation to a system of discrete individual ends (*zweckrational*)... through expectations as to the behaviour of objects in the external situation and of other human individuals, making use of these expectations as 'conditions' or 'means' for the successful attainment of the actor's own rationally chosen ends....'

7. The idea of 'competence-based education' features predominantly in certain domains of vocational or professional education and training. A large literature as well as substantial critique can be found on the subject of *competence*, especially its relevance to NVQ training. For the claim that 'competence' models are either located firmly within technically

rational, managerial approaches or else grounded in behaviourist learning theories, see for example Hyland (1994); see Hodkinson and Issitt (1995) for a selection of essays on the subject; and Carr (1993) who distinguishes normative from technical senses of competence. See also the longer note **3(b)**, given for the first entry, **Introduction**, above, in [this Appendix](#): critique of the 'competency' movement is situated in the context of 'positivist' or 'behaviourist' forms of assessment of knowledge.

8. For a general account of the 'School Effectiveness' and 'School Improvement' movements, both of which explicitly endorse the idea that universally successful, probabilistic generalizations can be made about what is 'effective' in classrooms, see Thrupp and Willmott (2003). See also Pring (2000), p. 23; Standish (2000), pp.162-163; Elliott and Doherty (2001), pp. 213-219; and essays by Fielding, Mortimore and Winch, in White and Barber (1997), all of whom discuss the work of key proponents of these movements.

11. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL), where headteachers receive training to become 'leaders' issues a 16-page instruction manual which articulates the government's vision of leadership, reported in *Times Educational Supplement*, January 14th, Leader, "Ministerial diktat will stifle heads", p. 22.

14. *Personalised learning*: a recent educational policy initiative for schools comprising five key teaching components, see:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/five/>

accessed on July 17th, 2007.

16. 'Teleological', as I use the word here, coheres with Dorothy Emmett's meaning of 'purposive behaviour'. See Emmett (1972), especially, her chapter, 'Purpose'. Emmett (1972, p.50) draws attention to the ambiguity of the word, 'teleology' owing to the fact that 'end' 'as a translation of *telos* and *teleios* covers both senses ambiguously.' One sense derives from the original Greek roots of the notion *teleios* ('completion'), as in 'the completion or end of a process, for instance where a plant or an animal is fully grown'. Another sense is where 'end' connotes the notion of a 'purpose', 'as something about which there can be deliberation (*boulesis*), or which is effected by conscious choice.' (*prohairesis*).

Chapter 9

9. Le Grand (2003) makes use of Hume's declaration that '...every man ought to be considered to be a *knave*...'. But see John O'Neill (1998, p.172), who claims most commentators ignore the context in which Hume made this comment and hence misinterpret him.

13. A discussion paper from the prime minister's 'strategy unit', reported by Peter Mortimore: 'How to fly high and leave no child behind', *EducationGuardian*, February 6th, 2007, p.4.

14. See J. Sinclair (1978) *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 414-418: 'those guilty...will be doomed for eternity to have their souls disabled and numbed by ice...a ...more paralysing sin than all the forms of violence or of simple fraud, and it is its own penalty, in the numbing, hardening and disabling of the soul with cold...clamped in the ice.'

18. However welcome the gesture of goodwill this New Relationship is, John McBeath says, it is important to understand the political and economic context in which it is set: 'Drastic reductions' in the Ofsted budget...specified the need for 'light touch inspection' (McBeath, 2006, p.2). McBeath wonders whether the New Relationship still represents values that reflect a contested notion of accountability (McBeath *et al*, 2005, p.41).

19. (a) On the specific subject of stress, see J. Dunham & V. Varma (1998) (Eds.) *Stress in teachers—past present and future* (London: Whurr); for surveys and reports see: 'Heads will roll', a study on recruitment and retention in the teaching profession, *Guardian Education*, January, 23rd, 2001, pp.8-9; 'Suicidal teachers turn to helpline', a report on teacher stress in *Times Educational Supplement*, February, 2nd, 2001; 'Stress among teachers is everyone's concern', *Guardian Education*, June 20th, 2006, p. 6., which reports that 302,300 teachers in England in 2005 took time off for stress-related 'occupational' ill health reasons (56% of the workforce) and that, according to the National Association of Headteachers, large numbers of headteachers are volunteering to take early retirement (despite losing pension benefits) rather than continuing in stressful jobs; in 'They rely too much on statistics', *The Independent*, 1st February, 2007, p. 10, a primary school head who suffered a 'stress-related' breakdown writes, "The short, sharp two-day inspection regime relied ...heavily on statistics on school performance given by the head...."; A teacher who is now on a 'Fast Track' teaching programme, as part of her promotion to the senior management team, when asked how 'today's performance-driven school environment affect[s] new senior management', replied: "It's variable, but a lot of the time I'm very stressed.": full report, *EducationGuardian*, June 12th, 2007, p.5.

(b) The articles, referenced below, focus on problems of low teacher morale, 'initiative overload', poor teacher recruitment and retention:-

(i) 'A third of teachers plan to quit', and 'Workload hits teacher morale', *The Guardian*, January 7th 2003, pp. 1 and 8.

(ii) 'Another strategic missile', *Guardian Education*, January 14th, 2003, p. 2.

(iii) Head teacher, Mike Kent (*Times Educational Supplement*, Friday, 28th January 2005, p. 4) comments on the cycle of 'pass the pile of paper game' which goes on in schools:

'detailed lesson plans for every lesson are handed into the deputy every week. The deputy doesn't have time to teach any more...She hasn't time. She just looks through piles of planning sheets, writes comments on them, and passes them back. When the teachers have taught the lessons, they have to write a critical appraisal of them, and give them back to the deputy.'

(c) In spite of efforts by the DES to address problems such as the kind of cycle of paper-passing that is described here, there seems little chance of such managerial practices being curtailed. Without any recognition of irony or even of the paradox embodied in a new initiative that is reported in the circular, *Tackling the Workload*, a 'workforce agreement monitoring group', has been created. The brief of this group is to supply 'helpful advisory documents and supporting development material'. Not only that, a 'national remodelling team' will be 'monitoring compliance', and Ofsted, in school inspections, will also be able to monitor progress of the agreement.

20. Conflict may arise between meeting central targets and local demand. The Treasury 'consultation' document, *The Gershon Report*, warns that performance management systems of accountability have weighed down 'front line' staff with bureaucracy and distracted attention from key priorities: see *Financial Times* March 18th 2004, p. 13, and May 12th, 2004, p. 3; see also *Financial Times* June 17th 2004, p. 2.

Where horizontal forms of co-ordination exist, they are still subordinate to vertical, coercive hierarchies of power which lock schools into a government agenda based on the neo-liberal global discourse of 'performance management'. 'Performance management', ostensibly a 'democratising discourse', 'disguises how circuits of power operate' (Alexander, 2004). Headteachers are held accountable for meeting government targets. And teachers' progression up the salary scale will be dependent on a headteacher's judgement that there has

been 'satisfactory' performance with respect to achieving those targets (Hatcher, 2005, pp.255, 260).

22. From the teachers' perspective there was a legacy of *mistrust of government*—of the 'dismissive and dishonest...portrayal of schools and of the profession' and also of the 'sense of threat' to which the public accountability policies subjected them (McBeath *et al* 2005, pp.40-41). But on the other side, there was the legacy of *mistrust of teachers*—the idea that teachers themselves had somehow betrayed public trust and needed to be made accountable.

24. As Patricia White (1993, p.76) says, the place of distrust in institutions is not altogether 'unproblematic'. Consider first the monitoring and protective devices that are put in place within an institution. There can be confusion between two sorts of distrust, one directed at a person or system: 'fundamental' and 'procedural'. The former will question the goodwill of the person (Baier, 1986; 1995), or the fundamental aim or end of a system. The latter, 'procedural distrust', is not directed at the person's good will, or the values which ground the system, but at the competence, say, of the person, or an institution or system—not its broad aims, but its means or procedures.

25. Bryk and Schneider (2004) found that:

Regardless of how much formal power attaches to any given role in a school community, all participants remain dependent on others to achieve desired outcomes...These structural dependences create a sense of mutual vulnerability for all...Consequently, deliberate actions taken by any one party to reduce this sense of vulnerability in others can go along way towards building trust within the community (ibid., p.125).

Taschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000, p. 584) also cite empirical research that demonstrates the significant role that trust plays in enhancing the ethos of a school. A climate of trust is related to:

Productive communication...participative decision processes, and to organizational participants' willingness to go beyond the minimum requirements of their job descriptions.

26. Those working from a perspective of 'principal-agent' institutional economic theory understand trust as an 'economic commodity', whose 'absence gives rise to the need for costly monitoring,' (Levacic, 2001); see also Dasgupta, 'Trust as a Commodity', in Gambetta (1988b).

29. One question which arises in the literature and bears on the argument of this chapter is: how easily trust in *systems* translates into the trustworthiness of *persons*. From the literature we do not get an unequivocal answer. The complication is that impersonal or 'system' trust cannot be understood as a form of trust co-ordinate with what I have called a norm of trustworthiness. It is not to be thought of as trust at a 'higher' level than 'personal' trust (Luhmann, 1979; Giddens, 1990; Shapiro, 1987). System trust is a totally different kind of trust, its main feature being that it has a 'complexity-reducing' function (Luhmann, *ibid*).

Whether we are thinking of systems as *abstract* systems (Giddens, 1990) (e.g., money, political legitimacy, technical or professional knowledge), or else of systems as *societal institutions* (Barber, 1983) (e.g., legal, educational or political institutions), it is usually agreed that 'system' trust acts as 'lubricant' for business transactions or 'governance mechanisms' and will be dependent on formal, legitimated structures (Lane, 2002, pp. 7, 15). The only thing that can peg down 'system' trust will be contracts which threaten sanctions for those who do not keep to the rules of the system. To enact this effectively there will need to be precise (regardless of cost) specification of terms, controls, regulations and monitoring— notions that complement a performance management system of accountability.

33. How do we go about deciding which things it is reasonable to accept as true when we want to learn anything? See Foley (2001) and Lehrer (1997) on the notion of 'self-trust': a

fiduciary, tacit element is always involved when we accept the epistemic authority of others. This is especially so in scientific research (see here Polanyi, 1946): when I say that I trust someone's evidence, a leap of epistemological faith is made.

Conclusion

3. (a) The following is a miscellaneous collection of commentaries on the latest (provisional) statistics available: see 'Fines don't stop truant', Public Agenda, *The Times*, 23rd January 2007, p. 6; 'A failing approach to a complex problem', *The Independent*, 23rd January, 2007, p.26; see also, *The Times*, February 5th, 2007, p. 1, where it is reported that Britain has one of the worst drop-out rates at secondary school stage among industrialised countries; statistics regarding truancy in England's secondary schools: '43,000 pupils skipped secondary school every day last year', *Observer*, 15th April, 2007, p.14; the figure of 389,560 suspensions is up from 344,510 on the previous year, see commentary in *The Guardian*, April 14th 2007, p.4; primaries accounted for 43,720 suspensions, with 1090 involving children under 11, *The Times*, April, 20, 2007, p. 27; see also 'Academies exclude more pupils', Public Agenda, *The Times*, 23rd January 2007, p. 6.

(b) A communication received from the DfES, 10th May 2007, regarding 'permanent' and 'fixed term' exclusions:-

'The latest available information on *exclusions* relates to the 2004/05 academic year. Information that we do have regarding permanent and fixed term exclusions by age of excluded pupil shows that there were 100 permanent exclusions of pupils aged under 6 and 3,110 fixed period exclusions of pupils aged under 6. For more information use the following link':

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000662/index.shtml>

'Information relating to 2005/06 will not be released until later in 2007.' Provisional statistics for 'unauthorized absences' and suspensions between 2005- 2006 can be found at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFRs000679/index.shtml>

5. *The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training, England and Wales Annual Report 2004-05: Aims, Learning and Curriculum (Summary)* considers it necessary to 'ensure teacher education and training gives insight into the problem of the disengaged' (p. 6). Access on line: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

6. Chubb and Moe remind us, in their seminal study of the marketisation of American schools (1990, p. 197), that schools have always been held accountable. The difference *now*, with the advent of market accountability, is that 'in a reformist atmosphere centred on academic excellence, public officials increasingly [demand] concrete evidence of results'. The development of markets in schools, they argued, fosters responsiveness to consumer demand, provides freedom of choice between alternatives and ensures the elimination of unwanted schools through natural selection (ibid, 32-33). The neo-Darwinian idea here is that no one will want a school that gets bad results and such schools will 'fail'. In this way, it is claimed, standards of public accountability will be maintained.

8. There is a growing body of research on the issue of school/class size and links to truancy:-

A survey carried out in April, 2007, showed that not only pupils but teachers are 'overwhelmed' by large numbers—they are unable to form good relations with the pupils. Temporary exclusions were reported as running at nearly 10% of pupils in secondary schools with more than 1000 pupils, compared with 3% in those with 1000 or fewer children: reported by Francis Gilbert, *The Times*, 1st June, 2007, p. 23.

Research carried out at the Institute of Education, London University found that 'class size makes a difference': classes should be reduced if the programmes introducing 'personalised' learning is to work. Access the article online at:

http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/928536/small_really_is_better_class_sizes_should_be_reduced_because/index.html

Peck and Foreman-Peck (2005) criticise the Audit Commission's (2002) defence that 'larger schools' should be promoted; see also a study carried out for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which found that 'small institutions...tend to produce happy students', 'Public Agenda', *The Times*, November 21st, 2006.

For a favourable report on an experiment in an academy in the UK, to 'house' four small schools under one roof, an idea inspired by a US scheme, see 'Quarterly results', *EducationGuardian*, 12th December, 2006.

12. According to Fiona Miller ('Opinion', *Education Guardian*, April 10th, 2007, p. 4), words such as 'personalisation' and 'choice', used to describe programmes aimed at meeting the challenge of pupil disengagement mask the reality of the task they face':

rising standards but ever-widening gaps in achieving; 11% of 17-year olds many of them with social, emotional and behavioural problems, in no form of education or training; more than 200,000 14-to 17-year olds criminalised within the past year (up 26% over three years); 3000 of them in penal custody...

13. See Gillborn and Youdell (2000) who highlight the pressure on teachers to focus on students who are close to passing tests, in effect, neglecting the ones predicted least likely to pass; see Davis (2006); and also Hursh (2005, p. 608) for an analysis of the effects of 'high-stakes' testing in the USA: 'schools face severe penalties for failing sufficiently to increase test scores...'

The pressures on teachers to obtain the required grades can lead to 'cheating' by teachers of students' course work to make the grades of their students appear better: 'Teacher cheated for pupils...', *The Times*, July 18th 2007, p. 27

18. Goodhart's Law: the idea originates with C. Goodhart (1989) *Money, Information and Uncertainty* (Macmillan, London). 'Goodhart's Law, as originally defined by Goodhart, says Keith Hoskin (1999, p. 279-280), 'referred only...to the money beloved of monetarists [and stated] that, as soon as a particular instrument or asset is publicly defined as money in order to enable monetary control, it will cease to be used as money and be replaced by substitutes which will enable evasion of that control...No matter: the susceptibility of the initial formulation to such more general redefinition only confirms the truth of the underlying insight'.

23. *The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training: Curriculum for the 21st Century, The need to develop a deeper national debate*, p. 2. Access on line at: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

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