LIFE IN A TENURED (CURRICULUM) POSITION
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Significantly, none of the four authors who wrote on this topic in the previous issue of this journal began by working from a definition of curriculum. How can one possibly begin to discuss curriculum theorizing without at least the attempt to establish what it is one is theorizing about? The omission is significant, not because it is in any way a culpability, but because it indicates a particular stance toward both curriculum and theory, underlying which is the assumption that curriculum theorists not only know precisely what curriculum is but also that they all agree upon it, and that thus it is uncontested and unproblematic. Such a view makes it unnecessary to proceed from notions of what it is that has been theorized, hence the omission, in spite of very good evidence to the contrary (Simpson, 1981).

To demonstrate how crucial a point this is, I wish to make my contribution to the debate in terms of my definition of curriculum. I do not ask you to agree with my definition, I ask merely that you consider seriously whether it is an adequate base for my ideas of curriculum theory. So, what is curriculum? Or rather, how should the field be defined? Quite simply, I believe curriculum to be about what is learned, or more precisely, who, with what intention, where does what, with what, how, to whom, with what result? The usual objection I meet with such a definition is that I have merely redefined curriculum to encapsulate the whole of schooling in my own personal coup, a private subversive attempt to take over what should rightly be the field of educology (Christensen 1982). Apart from the fact that such semantic perversions are not something I consentingly engage in, clearly that is not the effect of my definition. Schools are certain things, they are for other things, and they are about yet other things, and it is with all such things that educology must concern itself, as well as what is actually learnt (curriculum).

So much for a general response to the fact that the four papers seemed to present a view of curriculum theory from a similar set of assumptions. I now wish to make a few specific points about the papers before going on to offer an alternative. First, Lannone and Oenauft seem to represent most obviously the view that curriculum theory is a process of theorizing about curriculum, not theorizing curriculum practice. Why else should they adopt as their first criterion an essentially philosophical analysis of general social value questions? We are back with Tyler & Co. when we begin our theorizing, not by asking exactly what it is that characterises school learning, but what is a good society? Exit Lannone and Oenauft with fifteen generations of graduate students from the curriculum field, when the answer is, of course, 43.

Secondly, I would enjoin Pinar to celebrate his colleague's departure from the field rather than to grieve it, because not only do such academics take their generally useless theoretical baggage with them, leaving much more space for real curriculum theory, but the event is itself indicative of a realization that something other than what they have been doing is curriculum; even if the person concerned does not know precisely what that is, they know when they are not doing it, and so a strategic withdrawal to the parental disciplines is both honest and appropriate, and we should therefore congratulate them. Thus I read such a move as heralding a new era in which those who occupy curriculum posts, but who are actually working in other disciplines, recognise the inappropriateness of their theories because they have begun to accept that school learning is very different from other kinds of learning. When such people recognise that it is so different, we may see theories about school learning used to triangulate and transform the theories of the parental and sibling disciplines. It may be too soon to try to look ahead for an instance yet, but I anticipate, for instance, that theorizing the classroom behaviour of children will lead to an inversion of Piaget's stages, and that in a couple of decades we will all wonder
how we could ever have thought other than that the child-like looks similar to some extent to the animal development that is progressively lost as it is replaced by habits, knowledge and experience.

It must be apparent that I found Gough to be nearest to my position, so I would like to develop one of his points, and suggest an alternative to another. First, he makes the point that the field is somehow different if it is engaged in it does not contribute to theory. That is true, but teachers do not contribute for other reasons than a disadvantageous power. It is not that teachers do not theorize because they are in a position to, it is that their theorizing is of a quite different kind from the current theoretical approach, that is, they do not do not count as theorizing because the field is essentially defined by who publishes what about what. It is a vicious circle in which the absence of teachers structures the nature of the field, and the nature of the field as currently developed then determines the continued absence of the teacher.

Gough goes on to suggest that what is necessary is a practical theory, but significantly he eschews the idea of theoretical theory. One could transform these aspects into theorizing practice and theorizing theory. I suggest we need to theorize our theories in view of the way we have all engaged in this debate. We have all been attempting to practise curriculum theorizing rather than to theorize curriculum theorizing, but it is only through theorizing the way we go about constructing our theories that we will be able to bring to consciousness and hence under our control, our curriculum theories. We should be going back to these basics, so, all the more need to state that other level of theory (metatheory) which forms and informs the construction of the kind of argument which constitutes any empirical theory. Some metatheoretical levels are in fact more of an intuitive and unacknowledged system of personal values, but I can articulate at least one methodological level which informs my own theoretical work. My theory of theory runs something like this:

The human mind can discern regularities in its perception of phenomena, and can cause and connect events, and, given similar causes and contexts upon each occasion, similar effects result, but because the human mind is situated in cultures of its own making, human theories are culture dependent and partial.

This is a theory of theory in that in principle anyway, it is induced from empirical observation rather than a training in the dominant paradigm of social research. One can therefore deduce predictions about, for instance, the predictive capacity of other theories formed in accordance with these theories, and one could have to infinity regress the theory behind the theory to discover that ultimately all theory depends upon assumptions, the human mind is situated in cultures of its own making.

So where does that leave Gough? I suggest that his theorizing of the theorists (and it is wrong to expect teachers to theorize the system rather than their classrooms, partly because teachers know no one else has power in the system) is wrong to expect teachers to theorize the system rather than their classrooms, partly because teachers know no one else has power in the system. The classroom needs a particular kind of critical consciousness to theorize contexts rather than actions, and finally partly because teachers' most immediate concern is with their classroom practice, so that's where they will begin.

Stenhouse (1977) provides as a compelling analogy for classroom theories and practices, the craftsman and the researcher, ... which he uses to suggest an apprenticeship model for the pre-service education of teachers. But the analogy can be used in other ways, most relevantly here as indicative of essential conflicts of interests. The researcher theorizes why it is that the craftsman does certain things to achieve certain results, because he is engaged in collecting information that will enable him to change the materials and products of the craftsman. He will apply his knowledge to produce metals with different characteristics for the craftsman to work on, and will design new products which can be produced using new combinations of the materials and techniques. That kind of theorizing is hardly the kind of craftman could engage in; it's simply not his job. And that's crucially significant, not necessarily, a key difference between teachers and curriculum theorists: at present most of the latter operate on classroom practice and the former on the level of policy development, implementation, dissemination, evaluation, community participation, social reproduction, school organisation, and so on. None of these theories as theories are the primary concern of the classroom teacher. They only become so as and when teachers deal with specific practical problems, in which case the theories do not provide solutions as such, but merely indicate a range of issues and features of a situation which the teacher needs to investigate in order to obtain a good problem solution.

I do not accept the analogy because I do not wish to see teachers limited to a craftsman role. Using Grundy's (1982) characterisation of teacher roles as laboratory, factory, key protector and discipline, I would maintain it without building resentment and further resistance. So another side of this exchange is how the teacher is the one who is being talked to and the one who is being implicated. Very well, I suggest, because by asserting something that is patently untrue, (Rick, is that you making all the noise!), I have had the pupil implicated in the kind of activity and act of knowledge that I have been suggesting. Both these examples are culled from classroom teachers' daily journals (Tripp 1984).

Teacher (T): Rick is that you making all the noise? Rick (R): Yes it is. T: Well then who is making all the noise?

(THe class noise subsides as there is general interest in the two-way interaction between the teacher and Rick).

Silence — the teacher looks at all areas of the classroom.

This extract was from a longer transcription of a classroom exchange which the teacher brought to me saying, 'Well, I recorded something, but I can't think what it was.' When I had the transcript, I thought it needed a particular kind of critical consciousness to theorize contexts rather than actions, and finally partly because teachers' most immediate concern is with their classroom practice, so that's where they will begin.

One way to develop grounded theory is to begin by forming at least some specific hypothesis from a concrete instance (Glaser & Strauss 1967). One reading of the above incident could begin from something we all know: that singing out an individual is one technique of subduing a group, because, as in this case, it turns attention toward a particular individual and therefore limited interaction, which the teacher can control and the outcome of which concerns all the pupils. There are aspects of group behaviour which can be identified. It turns on who is singing the ‘riple effect’, Hargreaves (1972), if different data were available, but the transcript we have enables us to see that the pupil is the one who is being carried in the language. So what happened? There was a lot of noise going on, and the teacher accused one pupil of making all the noise which the pupil promptly denied. The teacher then showed he would pick on someone else, so individually they attended to the teacher. The pupil did not do the one, the effect of which was that the whole class was silenced.

So much for a possible mechanism whereby the whole class is silenced by a single exchange with a single pupil. This is an interaction which has not produced much research from the Sociologists of Education. But there is also language in which the interaction was transacted. Very well, to study, it shows that there is more to discipline than maintaining it. How the pupils feel about being disciplined is the key characteristic, having to do with whether the pupils respect the teacher, how they will respond next time, and so on. Considering the key role of code, craft, professional and discipline, it is in order to maintain it without building resentment and further resistance. So another side of this exchange is how the teacher is the one who is being talked to and the one who is being implicated. Very well, I suggest, because by asserting something that is patently untrue, (Rick, is that you making all the noise!), I have had the pupil implicated in the kind of activity and act of knowledge that I have been suggesting. Both these examples are culled from classroom teachers' daily journals (Tripp 1984).

I have chosen the second example to emphasise the fact that I would not wish to assert that all of the theorising of the pupil could be written off as deny, even if he were a prominent noise maker, because a single pupil could only contribute to whole class noise. The accuracy of the student had the same effect as if it had been true, but because it quite clearly wasn't, the teacher did not then have to alter his assumption. The teacher then deliberately continued to assert that there must be one person making all the noise and that he must be the one. This threatened the pupil, who aside from this was told that the both the class was silenced, and apparently simply because the teacher structured a false accusation around the word 'all'.

I used this example from the many I have collected over the past three years (Tripp 1984), because it is interesting as an illustration of the problem of theory and practice in curriculum. The analysis is just, that is, on going. To continue practical work until some kind of generalisation is made. Theory can produce 'tips for teachers' or the 'sure-fire lessons' so beloved of methods theorists (who often manage to pass themselves off for curriculum theorists). Theory always raises questions which are answered only in the empirical world of practice. In the above case, for instance, a teacher could hardly take a law of classroom interaction 'fact' that a single pupil 'makes all the noise' or 'by making all the noise' 'produces silence, and use it elsewhere and elsewhere. The analysis is a moderately penetrating description of what is happening and what cannot be replicated with certainty. However, such a description of a single incident can affect practice through a process of 'spin'. The importance of language and face-saving let-out for pupils. It is such general features of a particular situation which can be used on other occasions as diagnostic questions. When silence was or was not efficiently and painlessly achieved, the teacher can ask if the pupil understands the language, the let-out or the containment to a simple interaction, or the let-out or interactivity key features of a subsequent situation similar in certain respects. They cannot simply go around saying 'I have a let-out for this' as makes such instances work when, where and how requires collection and analysis of many more which, if properly understood, would enable some general prediction of outcomes, a key characteristic of an adequate theory (Tripp 1984).

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unlikely that we would have been able to pick out this incident as an illustration of the theory, were we working from the general theory to the specifics of practice. Of course, teachers cannot yet be expected to know all the theories which might help explain their practice, but we, as academics and in-service facilitators, should, and it is our most important role to make such ‘grand’ theories available to teachers so it can inform their practice.

But the important point of this example is that a theory of the parental disciplines can be used, when suitably transformed, to aid the generation of genuine curriculum theory. Thus, still within the social theory, following Giddens (1972) new rule for sociological method (A.1), we know that the conditions which render such reproductive theory true have been produced by the activities of humans. Transferring that notion into education, it is therefore possible for a single teacher in any one particular classroom to render the general theory untrue by transforming the conditions. If it is possible for one teacher, it is possible for more, and it is thus the specific concern of curriculum theorists (as opposed to social theorists) to explain with predictive validity how that might be done. Thus the macro-social theory is not merely imported into curriculum study, for were that to be done in this instance the incident of copying would merely be a minute accretion of data supporting social but not educational or curriculum theory. The social theory must be transformed if it is to become a part of curriculum theory, and thus it should be taken merely for its problematic origin. It is only in such ways that the field will develop.

Conclusion
Curriculum theorizing is a matter of practice which precedes curriculum theory. As yet we have no specific curriculum theories, because we have inadequately engaged in the only legitimate form of curriculum theorizing: that which articulates for teachers the theories they do or could operate by.

References