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ADULT LEARNING AS A LIFELONG CONCERN: INTERVIEW WITH PETER JARVIS

This interview took place in Brno on March 23, 2015, during a visiting lecture at the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. The interviewers were Milada Rabušicová and Jan Nehyba.

You are a man of many fields: a theorist of adult education, sociologist, economist, theologian, and Utopian idealist. What do you consider yourself most of all?

Actually it's quite a difficult question. I started as a theologian, and then I moved on to teaching the history of religion; then I moved into education and I did two first degrees, the first in theology, the second in sociology; then I did a master's degree in the sociology of religion and a doctorate in business studies – economics. My doctorate was in the sociology professions and I did it in the school of business. I suppose I would call myself a sociologist. I am not now a member of the British Sociological Association, but I am a member of other societies of social sciences. So yes, a sociologist more than a theologian. But I am still ordained as a minister. I've never resigned my ordination, just my job.

How did your studies of all these fields (sociology, economics, pedagogy, and theology) influence your approach to adult education? You mentioned previously that the field of education is not just one discipline.

My background I think is very important for education, because to limit education to one discipline is fundamentally a too-limiting ethic.

When I was young, we used to say “study singles.” I did in a sense, but it's incomplete. Having two studies in theology and sociology makes you aware just what's likely in between. So I just followed my interest. As I got into learning theory, I got to realize that “there's a bit of philosophy here, a bit of psychology there” and so I just kept reading and reading. I think basically

it would be wrong to talk about learning in any one discipline. I don't know if you know the English expression "Jack of all trades, master of none"? I am a Jack of all trades, but I'm not a master of any one, any longer (*laughing*).

A lot of your writings, to be precise 37 per cent, were published after 2000. As such, they are the works of a mature author. Is adult education a field for ripe men, for personalities with certain wisdom?

If I look back at my career, I've got two purple patches in which I've written a lot of books very quickly. At the end of the 80s, I wrote about five books in about six years and again around 2000. There's a story about that. I've got a lot of things wrong with me. Twelve years ago, I was told I had cancer. I got a pacemaker and people were not sure I was going to live at that time. I wrote to my publisher and said, "Look, I've written a lot of rubbish all over the place, but I haven't brought much of it together. Will you be prepared to take a chance that if I live, I can write a trilogy?" He said yes, so I wrote a trilogy. Then I got better and better. I live with these conditions. I nearly died 18 months ago when I was due to come here. In one sense, being aware that I am mortal and being aware that I've been very very privileged because I've been able to think new thoughts, has given me some form of obligation that I want to share whilst I'm still here. I was a drop-out in school, and I was 25 before I went to university as a mature person. I think we're all very lucky if we can think. If we have lots of experiences, then we're even luckier.

The question is whether these experiences and maturity are especially important for adult educators or people involved in adult education.

There is a danger about that, not like university experience. Experiences lessen after a certain age, because we get into a rut, we keep doing things normally, but I think that the exciting thing about life is doing things you've never done before. I mean, when I was ill the last time, my family said "stop working, stop travelling" and I said "there's lots of experiences out there, there's lots of people still to meet, there's lots of things to do, and why should I not do them?" So for me it's the fact that I can learn, from all the things I do, I can try my ideas and learn from people. I think adult learning is not necessarily a mature thing, an old thing. But I don't think all of us old people do it as well as we should.

We were thinking about differences between teachers of children and teachers of adults, whether you think there are some differences, in terms of maturity.

Yes, there are things like that. I have four grandchildren, I watch them learning and I think "yes, they're phenomenally lucky," because their mom gives them

lots and lots of experiences. When I watch all their experiences, I didn't have them as a child, but as I got older, I had more and more experiences. It's how we use our experiences which is so important. As adults, when we get into a rut and we don't do new things, it's hard to have them, but if we say "well, I want to do new things" and go ahead and do them... Sometimes we listen to other people, like my coming here, they say "why don't you stop work?" I say "Not yet, there's more things to learn, more things to do. To me, it is important."

We have another question about your personal experience: in a recent interview for Routledge, you said that as the co-editor of *The International Journal of Lifelong Learning* you believe in "second chances." What has led you to this belief? Could it perhaps be your personal life experience?

Yes, but I also believe in third chances and fourth chances as well. Yes, I was very poor in my childhood, I went to work when I was nine at five o'clock every morning and I failed all my exams at school. I had a poor childhood, I had to work at school. By the time I was thirteen, I was doing two jobs every morning before I went to school. I went from my area at half past five, then I delivered papers until seven o'clock, then I went to school. I was 23 before I did my school leaving certificate. Yes, I had a second chance. It's not about crying over spilt milk, as it were; this is what's happening now, if you get another chance, take it.

Do we understand correctly that you didn't finish secondary school?

I finished it but I failed at everything. I failed every one of my school leaving exams.

So, you took your second chance?

I took my second chance, yes. What made me an adult educator is that I don't believe that anybody can't get a PhD. If I got one, with my record at school, anyone can get a PhD. I've been very lucky, I've supervised over fifty PhD students myself.

We have to share this experience with our PhD students.

Our next question is about post-communist countries. Since you have experience with many of them, we would like to ask what is attractive about these countries for you? Could it be the case that your claim about Again, this is my history. Nearly sixty-one years ago I gave my first public talk and my first sermon and they were both in Novi Sad in Serbia. So my history begins in Serbia. I kept in very close contact with the university in Belgrade. Last year, my sixtieth anniversary, they invited me back and

then they took me to Novi Sad to the church where I gave my first sermon, my first lecture. So, right from the beginning, this was my experience. I also went to Hungary; almost the first holiday I had with my wife, we went to Hungary. I never approved of communism, although I would say that I am “Marxian,” in the sense that I believe in the egalitarian things that Marx taught. You had a terrible time under Russia, because that wasn’t communist either. There’s always been an ideal. But then there’s a Christian ideal lurking around as well. It’s just that we’re not very good at getting anywhere near the ideals of our humanity, and I think that we should keep trying.

Is it the result of your political orientation that you’re so oriented towards this part of the world?

No, I love this part of the world, I made many friends after years here. But you see, I’ve been to America forty times, I’ve been to Hong-Kong thirty times, so it’s not just this. I’ve been very lucky in my life that I made lots of friends and they keep inviting me back to talk and I keep going. This part of the world, Central Europe, being the very first place, has been very central to my thinking. So in a sense, yes, it has been a privilege and a pleasure to come back, when I was invited here and Hungary and whatever.

Do you think that this changing political and economical situation could be important for, let’s say a milieu for, adult learning?

I get very worried at the moment because when I watch what’s happening with lifelong learning it’s just learning the skills, learning to conform, but my understanding of adult education is not learning to conform, it’s learning to be a human being and that’s a big difference. I think that as adult educators we should be prepared to teach others or help others to be human beings. So in one sense, we’ve sold out to capitalism by conforming, but we’re better off because of it, financially and what-have-you, and we wouldn’t forego our increased standard of living. So the paradox is what may not be perfectly acceptable in one way is most acceptable in another. I mean a paradox in living, because I benefit greatly under capitalism and disapprove of it. That’s a paradox.

You said learning to be a human being. What exactly do you mean by that?

Learning isn’t just something which is tugged on to life; it’s life itself. I question if there can be any real living without learning, and I don’t think there can be any human living without learning, and so to me learning is at the heart of living itself. To refuse to learn... and I know this as I get older, it is harder to do new things. Since I’ve been quite ill over the last year or so, since my pneumonia, it gets harder than ever. In three weeks’ time I go to Latvia,

because I am doing the European presidential conference in Latvia. The amount of energy I need, I've slowed down to such an extent that I am not producing anything really new, and I think probably that's another sign that the end is in sight.

Let us move to the next questions, which are connected with what you've just mentioned. Your 1992 book *Paradoxes of Learning* is connected to a certain conceptual turning point, as you put experiential learning into an existential frame. How did you arrive at this turning point? We know it's a long time ago, but this is an interesting question for us.

In many senses that was the most important book I've ever written. It was, as you rightly say, it was a very small but very big conceptual shift. The idea of learning has become a part of me and in *Paradox* it was the first time it really became a part of me. When I proposed the book to the publishers, they said "spell out the paradoxes," but that's not possible, I said. Life is a paradox. So at the end they let me go ahead. Perhaps it's immodest to say so, but I think it was the first rule book of the philosophy of learning, because it made me think in a slightly different way, which led to what I am saying today. It has taken twenty years to get there. I think breaking away from the idea that learning was psychological, or psychological and sociological, was so important, quite fundamental to my thinking, really.

And now it's more philosophical, if we understand correctly?

Yes. There's a sense in which I'm not a good enough philosopher to have pursued all the areas I should have done. I did philosophy in my first degree, but not very much, and so I am very conscious that when I read a philosophy book, there are many more that I haven't read. But I would love—in fact I wrote a proposal for a book, a textbook on a philosophy of learning, but I shall never write it.

Maybe you will. Is the starting point of your work empirical, or is it more theoretical?

I think it's basically experiential. I've never ever had a research grant to study learning, I've never had a sabbatical to write anything about learning. As I go through life, new ideas come and I just hang on to them, let them develop, and then, when I think I know enough to write a book proposal, I write a book proposal. Basically what happened through all my life is that I've learnt from my own experiences. I keep learning that what I've written is wrong. So I keep wanting to change it and expand. I've always had quite wide interests in reading theology and philosophy, sociology, psychology. So I just followed, in a very undisciplined way, not a very academic way, just followed my own interests.

Also your intuition?

Yes. Like, what I was talking about today in my lecture on implicit learning. I should have recognized that a long time ago, because I was writing about it, but I never recognized it enough to write a book about it. It was needing the recognition that made me then sit down and say “okay, now read about it.” But not having had that recognition, my career took a very bad turn. After I wrote *Paradoxes* I was made a head of a department, which was the worst job I’ve ever done in my life. I told our rector that he could have the job, but he wouldn’t accept my resignation, so I had to stick in there. But it did put me back four, five years, and I think probably I should have been thinking about the significance of paradoxes.

It seems connected with another concept of yours, the concept of “disjuncture” which forms the basis of all your ideas about learning. Do you find it in any way similar to (or different from), for example, Mezirow’s concept of the disorienting dilemma or Piaget’s cognitive disequilibrium?

Interesting you mention that, because now I am reading a thesis on Mezirow. Mezirow was very narrow, Jack was a friend of mine, I’ve stayed in his house and he’s stayed in my house, but we disagreed quite fundamentally, because he wanted to limit learning basically to life’s meaning. Although he was unreligious, to my mind, he was spiritual, he still was saying this is about the meaning of life. I wanted to say, “All learning is transformative, and it doesn’t have to be just meaning.” But at the same time, I was wrong as well, because what I said today at the lecture about implicit learning is I didn’t need disjuncture. I was learning all the time... but I wasn’t being transformed all the time, I was just being changed very gradually. Because my view of disjuncture is wider than Jack’s, it was easier for me to change than for Jack to change, because he built his parameters quite tightly, and they go back in fact to his own life experiences. They go back to his wife’s experiences of how she changed when she went back to college. That’s what set him off, so we disagreed. I think he’s a superb scholar, I miss him now, because, we didn’t correspond much in the last years, but in other years we had quite a lot of contact and I brought him across to England and everything. We differ because my view was broader.

How does it relate to Piaget? In a sense, we have different forms of learning, but I am not sure that we can draw the dividing line saying “this is one form, this is another form.” I don’t think anything happens that way. Piaget’s insights were brilliant, but I don’t think he has done a great job teaching us about what cognition and cognitive learning was in the first place. But I do like some of his constructions of the world, and the books on children’s construction of the world were superb.

If we understand this well, your concept of disjuncture is broader than Piaget's cognitive disequilibrium?

Yes, I think it's more from Piaget, than from Jack Mezirow, because I was aware that I could have a disjuncture in feelings, and if I didn't feel quite right, that was a disjuncture experience, because I wasn't fitting in properly. I've always been aware, because of my understanding of learning being about life itself, that it's terrific experiences of life itself, especially sort of the fact that "I am not happy in a place, why am not I happy?"

We have another question concerning learning. You mention preconscious learning as one of the ways of experiential learning, and you originally connected it with incidental learning. Can an educator of adults somehow intentionally use this way of learning in his teaching activities? How can we use something preconscious in the learning or teaching process?

Two sort of things that occurred to me immediately. If we're not too bound with our lectures for instance, but we follow our thoughts a little bit, we can actually be a lot more innovative in our thinking. This might sound strange, but as you saw today for instance, I didn't use any notes. It might have been detrimental today, because I've not been teaching very much recently, but I rarely talk with notes. I always wanted to interact, get students involved. You'd get disjuncture experiences when you weren't sure of things, you'd get innovative experiences occurring, so thinking on your feet was quite important and still is quite important to my thinking. One of my closest friends, Colin Griffin, with whom I wrote books, laughed at me once, because we were walking into a lecture hall where there were 110 students, and I said to Colin: "What am I teaching today?" The situation became alive. I've done my preparation, because it's all in my books, but I think you've got to let yourself go with your audience to some extent to be innovative, to live with your disjunctures, as it were, and then just chase them.

Is it possible to use this pre-conscious something in the learning or in the teaching process?

I think that in a sense, yes. This happens in life a lot, we're learning lots of things, but we don't take them in our consciousness, but suddenly, it becomes conscious: "Ah, yes!" I think our experiences are more than our consciousness, there's a lot pre-conscious learning or subconscious learning out there in life, which happens all the time.

This can be applied to the learning process, but we have some problems with understanding it in the teaching process.

If you're free and not bound, you can follow your thoughts and suddenly

something may come, you have pre-conscious learning, but I don't think you can deliberately use it because you make it conscious once you think about it. Today I gave a lecture, but I'd probably have been happier if everybody sort of joined in and sort of argued with me, but they didn't know enough about my work to be able to do it. So I had to be a lecturer. There will be pre-conscious learning in another lecture, because they're already in doubt.

You find contemplation to be another way of learning from experience. Could you give us an example of learning from contemplation?

Surely this takes me back to a very great extent to my religious background. You think of a number of people who live in silence, or people who go away for a couple of days or a couple of weeks just to think about things, to let things happen to them, as it were. I think that perhaps we're too active sometimes in education and we don't use the contemplative side of our nature enough. I was talking to the wife of a friend of mine at a dinner, and she'd just been to a day retreat when they said nothing, just went in silence, and she said it was wonderful. How much you have time to think about things that have happened, to contemplate on them? We don't do that quite often and perhaps we're less of human beings because we don't. Contemplation was deliberately put in my religion statement, education, scheme; to say, "Is there something out there?" Perhaps we ought to do more of that, because it's a genuine form of learning. And as close as we've got to this is reflection. But we don't expect our students to reflect as much.

Is this a process which could be taught?

Yes, I think it is, but it takes time. I've never tried really to teach it further than to say, "Be still for a minute or two and tell me what you've learnt at the end of it." But I think a good leader would contemplate a lot, think very very hard about this process, and I don't. But I am aware of just how profound some of these people are, who take things so much further than we do. I think we should take it further, because we stop on the surface, and sometimes there are more in-depth things, more important, but we don't often get there.

We would like to ask you now about Kolb's learning cycle. Although your model of learning offers many more ways to learn from experience than Kolb's, is it not still enclosed in certain categories which are limiting in their effort to capture learning as a holistic process?

I owe Kolb a great debt in the sense that when I first started thinking about learning, the easiest way for me to conceptualize it was following Kolb, as I did in my first books. But I couldn't just accept him without criticizing him, so right in the first book I criticized him and I suppose my criticisms

have gotten a little harsher, so he's gotten a little bit more famous. I think his insight in 1975 in the article he wrote about the cycle was really insightful. I don't think his book, which he wrote nine years later, took him much further than what he'd written in the article. I am disappointed that he didn't take it any further, because when you get that far and everybody is listening to you, then to take your thinking further would have been an obligation that he didn't fulfill, and that was a disappointment to me. I would've loved to have seen him develop that insight, really, because while he isn't a very good writer, he's a brilliant scholar.

There are also other authors, contemporary authors, like Knud Illeris or Stephen Brookfield. Which of the contemporary authors writing about adult education inspire you?

Well, obviously I know them both very well. Knud probably thinks it's true as well, that we were the closest to each other in our writings. I think he's been perhaps more influenced by me than I have by him, but that might be an arrogant statement. He certainly was never concerned with my non-learning statement until he read my work on non-learning, and he admitted that he put it in because he'd read my work on non-learning. But then he never took it far enough. I think his locating learning in the way he did was really insightful and a very good piece of scholarship. Stephen Brookfield is a brilliant writer.

Would you say that they are more inspired by you?

No, I don't think either of them are, but I think we have the same gurus as it were, like Paulo Freire. I knew Freire well enough to have him come to my university. He was a great influence on me. He was a theologian as well. His ideas of conscientization were really important for me when I was thinking about social constructions of reality.

By the way, we have a question about Paulo Freire. It's about his metaphor "literacy means reading the word and the world." How do you see adult education in relation to an attempt at social reform?

I think it's a fantastic insight of Freire's that literacy is reading the world and by that definition many of us are totally illiterate because we don't read the world very well at all. He was a very very brave man, a very good scholar, he transformed our thinking from the radical perspective like no other thinker. I think that I'm very lucky, because not only did I have him in England but also in America a few years later in Delaware. I was asked to go to a conference to speak about Freire and his philosophy, which I did, but nobody told me when they invited me that he'd be sitting next to me. So I talked and I said to him afterwards "Paulo, do I understand you?" and he said: "Yes". The

chapter about 20th century thinkers about Freire that I wrote, he read before it was published, and said, “Yes, you sum me up.” I think I understand him. He is theologian as well as a sociologist and that makes him so important.

Generally speaking, what do you think about adult education or lifelong learning in relation to social reform, to social change?

We’re not very good at it, especially since we got into lifelong learning. I think we are not critical enough of the world now. I suppose the best journalists I read are those who are critical, the investigative journalists who want to investigate the world or what happens, but to me that’s what we should be doing in adult learning. There are good adult learners and I think that life is too comfortable in many ways now. Zygmunt Bauman wrote somewhere: “When we are this affluent, who’s going to go out there and fight for everybody?” I think he’s right, we’re too affluent now to really be critical of the world.

One of your latest books deals with the criticism of global capitalism. In your opinion, what role does lifelong learning play in this context?

I am a product of that capitalist system. I benefit from that capitalist system. We all benefit from it.

I’m a product of a socialist system and I am not benefiting from it (MR).

Yes, you are a product of a different system. I wish I found critical thinkers in your country, because that’s the real issue. There’s not many Michael Neumanns around. Michael is another very good friend of mine and I think he is the most radical thinker of today. He’s a lovely, lovely Australian. He’s a product of our system, but I think there it’s slightly different. He’s lived in two cultures, he lived in Australia and he lived in England for a long time, as a principal of a working-class college, then he went back to Australia again, so he’s had this cultural shift, which has freed him up in some ways, of some of his pre-oppositions, which I think allowed him to be more critical.

What about you, you mentioned that you are a product of capitalist system and at the same time you are critical?

Of course, coming back to my religious roots, I’m a Protestant. But I am critical of Protestantism because it’s individualistic and it’s the individualism of Protestantism that has led to the capitalist systems we have today, also it has led to the fact that we are no longer as communitarian, social ethics are not as good as they ought to be. In times of real crisis, when we actually get rid of those systems, we allow ourselves more time for thinking. I think our humanity re-emerges, but most of the time we’re too lazy for it to emerge because we enjoy the fruits of this system. The fruits of this system, whilst I am critical of them, I enjoy them.

That's the paradox. Another paradox.

And that's the problem. What softens our critical awareness is the fact that we enjoy the lifestyle that we lead, so as Bauman said: "Why should I get up and fight for your rights?"

We were impressed by your idea of enriching Delors's four pillars of lifelong learning with a fifth one: learning to care for the planet. Could you say anything more specific about that? Is this idea connected to the topic of sustainable development for you, for example?

I think that *The Process of Learning* was a superb book, *The Four Pillars* were terrific, but I fail to see how a book published by UNESCO can omit concern for the world, when so many of its publications have focused on this type of topic. It's a lack of care for the world that will destroy humanity if we're not careful, so I think it's a real pillar, it's a real heart. I think that committee didn't get far enough, wasn't as critical as perhaps it could be, but it's a brilliant book.

Is this connected for you with the topic of sustainable development? We're wondering whether your suggestion to put a fifth pillar of learning to care for the planet is connected with the idea of sustainable development?

Yes, it must be. We're all responsible in this world for the future of this planet. We know that from our living so easily at the moment we're destroying the planet, because we don't care enough, or we care too much for our lifestyle and not enough for the world as a whole.

Which is counterproductive.

Yes, then you can say: "Yes, that is true, but what about countries like India?" They say: "Why can't we catch up with your lifestyle?" That's obviously because we are in the West, the richest; we have the best, richest lifestyle. Everybody else wants to catch up with us, and why can't we prognosticate, "You can't do it because it will be..." So I think this is an unsolvable paradox, because the biggest countries in the world are just beginning to catch up and causing an awful lot of pollution.

Is there any solution for that?

No, I honestly think that gradual change in policy, but it will be too late... we shall see change. But perhaps we'll have to learn to adapt to it. And that's again where I come back to the issues of my learning theory, is that an evolution and adaptation are learning experiences. I think we have to learn to adapt, much of it is something that we do implicitly, all the time.

Yes, we agree. We have two final questions. You have written in some of your texts that you do not see andragogy as a research discipline, but as a field of practice. How did you arrive at this opinion, and has there been any change in your views? What are your arguments for that?

I always find it very difficult to go along with the views of some of my friends from Central Europe that andragogy is a distinct discipline, because I never believed it was a distinct discipline. Then I found it very difficult to see it as a research discipline. I still find it hard to believe that andragogy is a distinct discipline, because for me it's a combination of practices and a combination of theories and a combination of disciplines. So I see andragogy as a description of a way of teaching, a way of educating, but it's the psychology or the philosophy or the sociology or the economics that are the disciplines that are underlying. I think sometimes—this is a criticism of an old man—that if we research teaching, we research teaching, we don't research andragogy. If we research learning, we research learning, we don't research andragogy. If we research both teaching and learning, we're researching both teaching and learning. Tell me what andragogy is that is distinct; I can't find anything.

Okay, but what about other education disciplines, like pedagogy?

I don't think pedagogy is a separate discipline, either. I think they're both descriptions of parts of practice. Pedagogy is of early education, andragogy is of later education, so it doesn't make them disciplines. It's either descriptions or parts of practice, the parts of practice are what's researchable. Different aspects of practice are researchable.

Does that mean that you think that neither pedagogy nor andragogy have theories?

I am not sure that they have distinct theories.

And what about your theory of learning?

It's a theory of learning, period. It's not a theory of andragogy, it's not a theory of pedagogy. Maybe it might fit into both. The disciplines, the sciences, it is a different ballgame. And I am more interested in pure sciences. In this sense, sociology is a science and learning theory is a science, but I don't think we can reduce education to teaching, to learning, to memorizing. It's the fundamental disciplines that are the research fields.

It is interesting that you mention that this is a special situation for Central Europe, but there is also a huge German tradition of pedagogues and social pedagogues and andragogues. We are influenced by that German tradition.

Yes, I think you are. This is, to my mind, as much a cultural phenomenon. I mean we talk about adult education all the time, but we never developed andragogy as a concept, so what makes andragogy different from adult education?

Well, for me, it's just a difference of names, titles, nothing else. We call it andragogy and you call it adult education.

Yes, so in that sense, the research subjects or the educational subjects or the adult subjects, or the adulthood itself, so I want to get back to saying: "Here's the research." But adult education itself is not a discipline, it's just a descriptive category.

This interview will be published in *Studia paedagogica*, which is a journal focused primarily on empirical studies. We would therefore like to ask: what do you think of the interconnection of theory and experience (research) in adult education? Or, interconnection with practice?

In teaching and learning, we're dealing with human topics that are not empirical and they don't have an empirical base. Certain forms of teaching become empirical, so I can research empirically how people teach or what I teach, but it doesn't tell me anything about teaching itself. There's a limitation in quantitative studies, which are about normative topics and about values. So, therefore, to me, quantitative studies are to some extent fraud, because they don't take the whole of it. But then, theoretical subjects are also flawed if they don't take the reality of what's happening in practice. So, whilst I am a theorist, I recognize that my theory is based upon practice. I am certain that a good theory must always be based upon practice and critical views about practice, but good practice must also incorporate all the values that come from normative thinking. So there's a sense in which to be a good educator, I've got to be both a theorist and a practitioner.

Do we understand correctly that you mean that a good theorist doesn't need empirical studies, either qualitative or quantitative, because your theories are based on practice, you reflect practice?

I do, I hope, yes. But I recognize that at some stage, if I want to say: "That's good teaching!" at one stage I've got to get beyond that assertion to say what is good. What is good is a fundamentally theoretical question, but to recognize goodness in practice is the recognition that I can translate that goodness into practical situations, and so I think good research in one sense has got to contain both, and to exclude the one is fundamentally weak. To exclude any discipline from the whole is to include something and the wider we are, then there's the problem when we become too wide and we become nebulous. So we kind of all have to concentrate on other areas. I am a theorist, I assess

the practice by my understanding of the theory. But the practitioner, a quantitativist, says: “The real issue is finding out what’s happening.” I accept that it’s the real issue, but I can’t evaluate it, I can just state that it’s happening. But there’s an awful lot of evaluative comments made about empirical research, and they forget that once they’re doing that, they’re actually talking about normative positions. So I think it’s very difficult to talk about quantity without having a qualitative element, otherwise you’re unrealistic.

Thank you very much. Do you want to add anything, or do you have some questions for us, or do you want to comment on anything?

No, but please recognize that a lot of the answers are off the cuff; they’re not thought about very deeply, but at the same time I hope they reflect something of my philosophy.

Thank you once more.