The Theory of Jürgen Habermas: Its Application to the Theorisation of Adult Education

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Sept. 1996
CONTENTS

Abstract i
Abbreviations of Habermas' Works ii

INTRODUCTION: Rationale and Structure 1

PART ONE: Crisis and Explanation: Theories of Adult Education

Chapter 1 The Adult Education Traditions 7
Chapter 2 Evaluating the Traditions 15
Chapter 3 The Adult Education Interpretation of Habermas 26

PART TWO: Habermas: Review and Critique

Chapter 4 The Early Works: The Challenge to Positivism 37
Chapter 5 The Transitional Works: Towards Communicative Theory 54
Chapter 6 The Central Works: The Communicative Paradigm 65
Chapter 7 The Later Works: Discourse and its Challengers 83
Chapter 8 Habermas' Theory: An Assessment 103

PART THREE: Habermas in Adult Education Theory

Chapter 9 Mezirow's Interpretation of Habermas 121
Chapter 10 The Critical Theory/Thinking Debate 133
Chapter 11 Interpretations from Initial and Higher Education 144
Chapter 12 Anti-Foundationalism in Adult Education 158
Chapter 13 The Theorisation of Adult Education: An Assessment 180

PART FOUR: Habermas and Adult Education: The Way Forward

Chapter 14 The Reconstruction of Adult Education Theory 192
Chapter 15 Adult Education and Citizenship 211

CONCLUSION 220
REFERENCES 224
ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that adult education in Britain, and other parts of the Western world, is undergoing a process of instrumentalisation which is detrimental to its identity and ethos. Opposition to this instrumentalisation requires the development of a theory of adult education which will protect its ethos and identity, and challenge the neo-liberal ideas of the policy-makers who are initiating this process. This theory must not only explain the role of adult education, by locating it in its historical, educational and social context, but also demonstrate its educational and social importance or intrinsic worth. This requires that the theory also satisfies the criteria of theoretical adequacy: the theory must demonstrate explanatory power and reach. An examination of the main traditions of adult education theory in Britain shows that these traditions do not meet these conditions.

This thesis argues that Habermas' theory of communicative action can provide the basis for the required theory of adult education. This is demonstrated through a dialogical, methodological approach to the research which reflects Habermas' method in constructing his theory. This approach takes three forms. The detailed, critical study of the Habermasian oeuvre identifies those themes important and relevant to a theory of adult education, and highlights their major strengths and weaknesses. A representative overview of the main critiques of these thematic areas is integrated into this critical study to enable further assessment of the validity of Habermas' theory. This assessment affirms the theoretical adequacy of Habermas' communicative project, but also identifies problematic areas which need further investigation or development if that adequacy is to be strengthened. The thesis then examines the extent to which adult education theorists recognise the possibilities of an Habermasian-informed adult education theory. This examination demonstrates that the overall level of understanding and familiarity with the Habermasian oeuvre, and its important, relevant themes, is not sufficient to satisfy the theoretical conditions identified above.

The thesis concludes by drawing from Habermas' work, and from the more relevant interpretations of adult educators and educators, to present a Habermasian-informed adult educational theory which does satisfy these conditions, and thus could provide an effective challenge to the neo-liberal instrumentalisation of adult education currently taking place.
ABBREVIATIONS OF HABERMAS' WORKS


PPP  Philosophical-Political Profiles, (Trans. F. G. Lawrence), London: Heinemann, 1983.


Introduction

1. The Importance of Theory to Adult Education

As the education of adults appears to be assuming a more significant place within mainstream education, even if it is in the continuing rather than the liberal form, then one question remains to be raised ...to what extent is the study of the education of adults a discipline in its own right? (Jarvis, 1983, p. 280)

This question is important for two reasons. First, the post-war period has seen the emergence of the professional adult educator in Britain, and the development of a body of knowledge about this educator's role which is generated both by practice and research. However, a theoretical foundation which both explains and justifies this professional role, and the knowledge which informs it, is also required if adult education is to demonstrate its importance to society. Presently, adult educators are in dispute as to whether such an adult-specific theory can exist; those who believe it can are also in dispute as to what form it may take.

Second, as Jarvis indicates above, adult education is undergoing a change which for many threatens those principles or that ethos which makes adult education distinctive from other forms of education. This is particularly the case in Britain where adult education, in both its liberal and radical forms, is becoming increasingly instrumentalised, vocationalised and institutionalised. This transformation of adult education into continuing education is marginalising non-vocational and non-certificated adult education. If this process is to be challenged, a theory of adult education which demonstrates the importance in adult education of aspects other than the vocational and certificated, while also acknowledging these latter aspects, is required.

These considerations demonstrate that any theory of adult education must satisfy two distinct criteria. A theory of adult education must demonstrate the distinctive importance of adult education to society. Further, explanations of adult education must demonstrate their theoretical capacity and validity qua theory.

Before testing proposed explanations of adult education against these criteria, we must clarify the core concepts involved. The first criterion necessitates an agreement on what constitutes adult education. The terms ‘adult’ and ‘adult education’ have been the subject of much debate which will not be considered here. For the purposes of this thesis, the definitions of adulthood and adult education proposed by Jarvis (1993; 1995) are adopted. Thus, adulthood is perceived not as a psychological or biological maturational state, but as a social construct, which refers to an agreed acceptance by both the individual and the society that the former has achieved the status of an adult within that society. Following this then, the education of adults refers to those learning processes undertaken by people who have achieved the status of adult. These learning processes may be liberal, general or vocational, and may be located in the formal institutions of adult, further or higher education, or may take
place outside these institutions. Thus, Jarvis states:

> the education of adults is regarded as all institutionalised forms of learning that occur after the end of initial education, and these can occur both within formal and non-formal sectors of society. (Jarvis, 1993, p. 6)

The second criterion requires a consideration of the constituents of "theory". For most adult educators the concept of theory is an unproblematic one. Thus, many adult educators, even when explicitly concerned to develop or discuss adult education theory (Bright, 1989; Jarvis 1995; Usher and Bryant, 1989) have done so without defining the term. Equally, where adult educators have attempted to explain the term (most notably, Knowles, 1978) their definitions have been incomplete and unsatisfactory.

This thesis asserts that if an adequate theory of adult education is to be developed, it must consider the social as well as the educational context of the learning process: adult education theory must not only explain the adult learning process within its educational setting, but also locate that process within the wider historical, political, economic and social frameworks which inform, facilitate or constrain that learning process. This is particularly important in the context of current government policy towards adult education in Britain. The theorisation of adult education then, must involve social as well as educational theory.

Jarvis and Jary (1991) define the concept of social theory as a set of hypotheses or propositions linked by logical arguments which attempt to explain an area of empirical reality or type of phenomenon. This is satisfactory as a starting working definition but must be extended analytically if the degree to which explanations satisfy this definition is to be assessed. Two features of theory are proposed which facilitate such an assessment: explanatory power and explanatory reach. These two features of social theory possess descriptive, and prescriptive or critical functions. Explanatory power in its descriptive mode refers to the internal coherence and consistency, and analytical and epistemological quality, of an explanation in its own terms, and in relation to competing theories. This also involves a theoretical openness to the generation of new hypotheses in response to valid problems identified by these opposing theories. In its prescriptive mode, social theory should also critically inform the learning process, as well as describing and drawing from it. Welton (1987) refers to this as the critical reflexive function of adult education theory; Aronowitz and Giroux (1986) describe it as the "language of critique". In sum, the explanatory power of a social theory concerned with adult education must involve both an account of the educational, historical and social context of adult learning, and an identification and description of problems in existing adult education theory and practice, with possible suggestions for resolving these.

Explanatory reach in its descriptive mode refers to the range or the empirical applicability of the theory, and the theory’s capacity to adapt to changing social circumstances. However, where problems in existing adult learning are identified, the theory in its prescriptive or critical mode should also be able to refer to prefigurative or other practices where and if they exist, which challenge the existing consensus on practice, or propose alternatives, which suggest solutions to these problems. As Fay
A theory of how to understand the social world necessarily invokes conceptions both of what humans are and of what they might become. (p. 1)

Welton (1987) refers to this as the critical, normative function of the theory of adult education; Aronowitz and Giroux (1986) describe it as the "language of possibility". In sum, the explanatory reach of a social theory concerned with adult education involves both a description of adult education in its various institutional settings, and an identification of its liberatory, normative features.

This thesis argues that current theories of adult education do not satisfy the criteria identified for the successful theorisation of adult education: they do not successfully demonstrate the distinctive importance of adult education; nor do they do demonstrate the conditions of theoretical status delineated above. One important reason for this is because most theorisation of adult education is psychologically-informed rather than socially-informed, focusing on the educational development of the adult learner, or the professional development of the adult educator, in primarily individual and practical terms. Such explanations do not examine adult education in its historical, societal, institutional, and professional contexts.

This paper argues further that a social theory which does demonstrate the potential for satisfying both criteria at present is the sociologically-informed critical theory of Habermas. To demonstrate this potential, Habermas' theory must be described and examined at two analytical levels. The first level involves a more general sociological account. Adult education, however so defined, is institutionally located in society and as such should be capable of sociological explanation. Given this, the test here is to assess how well Habermas' theory can provide a critical examination of advanced industrial societies and their social institutions, including that of adult education, in their historical, social, political and ideological contexts.

At the second level, Habermas' theory must be examined more specifically in terms of its potential for both interpreting and informing adult education theory, policy and practice. This requires an assessment as to how far the theory enhances our understanding of adult education as a specific institution in society with a specific role. Further, the theory must be examined to see whether it can affirm the particular importance of adult education to a more rationally advanced society: in other words, can Habermas' communicative theory be shown to necessitate adult education in some form?

2. Investigating the Relevance of Habermas' Theory to Adult Education

Many adult educators are gradually recognising that Habermas' ideas may provide the key to a more successful adult education theory. However, this thesis asserts that the discussion of Habermas undertaken in the adult education world so far has been mainly partial, selective and uncritical. In contrast this thesis offers the fullest, critical account of Habermas' theory and its application to adult education theory yet attempted. The research involved is constituted by three major activities: a detailed,
chronological reading of all of the main texts which Habermas has written which have been translated into English; a representative review of the relevant main critiques which have been made of Habermas; and, a literature search of current English language adult education publications which refer to Habermas' ideas. The interpretation and assessment of these various writings draws on a familiarity with those social science disciplines which Habermas primarily refers to, and on experience as an adult educator. On the basis of this theoretically and critically-informed research, this study is uniquely placed to achieve two objectives. The first objective is to evaluate the extent to which the existing adult literature is interpreting Habermas' writings correctly. The second objective is to produce a more informed and valid account of the potential of Habermas' theoretical project for the theorisation of adult education than has been achieved by other adult educators so far.

This thesis works through a number of stages in order to achieve these two objectives. In Part One, the attempts of liberal and radical adult educators to theorise adult education are considered. These traditional positions are assessed in terms of the two criteria identified above: success in developing an adequate theoretical, empirical and normative account of adult education, and in demonstrating the distinctive social role of adult education. This assessment demonstrates that both liberal and radical theories do not satisfy the conditions for a successful theorisation of adult education. Given the uncertain theoretical status of these traditional schools, and their apparent inability to respond to the attacks on adult education, adult educators are turning increasingly to the ideas of Habermas. Here, the thesis outlines the main Habermasian themes which adult educators have identified as important to adult education theory. However, it is asserted, most adult educators demonstrate a partial and theoretically-unsophisticated reading of Habermas that makes their interpretations of his work problematic. This study attempts to rectify these existing adult education interpretations by the different approach it brings to the reading of Habermas. Part One concludes then with an explanation of the methodology used in this thesis. This methodology justifies the assertion that the thesis brings to the project of a Habermasian-influenced theory of adult education the most comprehensive and theoretically-informed reading yet attempted by an adult educator.

Part Two provides an account of Habermas' writings in English translation, and identifies their important, relevant themes. This involves a systematic review of Habermas' works from STPS to AS in order to demonstrate the overall development of Habermas' thought and the continuities and discontinuities in his intellectual development. This section also identifies the main themes which are associated with each of Habermas' works, and considers the criticisms of these themes made by commentators from a range of social science disciplines. The validity of these criticisms, and their implications for the validity of the Habermasian project, is assessed. On the basis of this critical examination of the Habermasian oeuvre, Part Two concludes with an evaluation of the extent to which Habermas' theory satisfies the criteria of theoretical adequacy identified above. This evaluation includes proposals for improving the theoretical status of Habermas' communicative project.

Part Three identifies the major Habermasian themes highlighted by adult educators, and discusses the forms in which the theory is interpreted by the differing schools of adult education. The core of this discussion is an examination of the interpretations
of Habermas by the "critical thinking" and "critical theory" schools of adult education. The former, more liberal school includes adult educators such as Brookfield (1993a) and Mezirow (1991b). The latter is accorded particular attention; this acknowledges the seminal influence of Mezirow in bringing Habermas' work to the attention of the adult education world. The "critical theory" or more radical based interpretations of Griffin (1988), Collins (1991) and Welton (1991) are then examined.

While these two schools of thought are most central to an identification of the relevant Habermasian themes for adult education, other adult education schools are also considered. The feminist interpretation of Hart (1985), although informed by the radical school, identifies important themes insufficiently recognised by both critical thinkers and critical theorists.

The feminist, liberal and radical interpreters of Habermas accept that, to a greater or lesser degree, Habermas' theory can inform a theory of adult education. Antifoundationalists, however, argue that a foundational theory of adult education, whether informed by Habermas or others, is not possible. Here, Bright's (1985) and Usher and Bryant's (1989) respective arguments for adult education as a socio-practical field or situated theory are discussed. In particular, the increasingly influential postmodernist position of adult educators like Finger (1991) and Usher (1992) is considered. This position has clear implications for the central concern of this thesis, and for Habermas' theory, and is therefore examined in detail.

Part Three also considers the writings of other educators who identify relevant, important Habermasian themes which are ignored, or are emphasised insufficiently, by adult education theorists. In this context, Barnett (1990) in higher education, and Young (1989; 1992) in initial education, are particularly important. This section closes with an evaluation of the contribution made by the educational literature on Habermas to a Habermasian-informed adult education theory. Again, this evaluation is conducted through the criteria of theoretical adequacy.

On the basis of the critical assessments of Habermasian and adult education theory undertaken above, Part Four asserts that Habermas' communicative theory has the potential to inform adult education theory and practice. This necessitates, however, a "reconstruction" of the existing adult education interpretations of Habermas. Part Four outlines the form this reconstruction must take, adopting the Habermasian analytical categories of the empirical, methodological and macrotheoretical in order to construct a framework of adult education theory which corresponds to, and is informed by, Habermas' project. This both provides the theoretical adequacy necessary to a valid Habermasian-informed adult education, and demonstrates the potential singular educational and social role which adult education could perform. The examination of Habermas' account of the communicative relationship of state, rights and the public sphere in a democratic society, proposed in his most recent work, demonstrates further the potential singularity of this role.

The thesis concludes by making suggestions for future research on Habermas' theory which may contribute further to the "reconstruction" of the adult education role proposed. These suggestions provide the basis for the development of a Habermasian-informed theory of adult education which draws on, but goes beyond, that provided by the current adult education literature.
PART ONE

Crisis and Explanation: Theories of Adult Education
Chapter 1 - The Adult Education Traditions

1. Policy Attitudes Towards Adult Education

And, of course, since 1979 the British government has undermined adult education consistently...We refer to these matters because we believe that those concerned with the education of adults throughout the world could, to good effect, study the appalling example of the relationship between an extreme government and the education system such as we have in the United Kingdom. (Editorial, "International Journal of Lifelong Education", 1992, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 79)

These strong words reflect the concern many adult educators feel about the British government's current neo-liberal policy on adult education provision. However, this neo-liberalism is not singular to Britain; market-based concerns are currently influencing educational and adult educational policy in other advanced capitalist states also (Elliot and MacLennan, 1994; Foley, 1994). As Foley (1994) argues, there has been a globalisation of production which has transformed the welfare emphasis of these states into a competitive one. Thus, these states are now concerned "to transform education from a citizen's right into an instrument of economic policy" (p. 131). Nevertheless, it is in Britain that this economic rationalism has taken its most extreme form. This is demonstrated by a brief historical overview.

Before the 1970s, adult education in Britain was underpinned primarily by a liberal, humanist ethos which emphasised adult learning in terms of the development of the individual and the citizen. This ethos was established formally by the first major report on adult education in 1919. The 1919 Report by the British Ministry of Reconstruction saw adult education as a national necessity during the post-war period: liberal education was essential to the development of democratic citizenship, particularly for the culturally impoverished. To this end, the Report adopted a missionary zeal:

\[ \text{adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong. (1991, p. 55)} \]

The Russell Report, published by the Department of Education and Science 54 years later, continued to reflect these early ideals. Thus, it states of the 1919 Report:

\[ \text{We too have found our thoughts stirred by this Report and have been struck by the extent to which the principles and values there enunciated are still valid. (1973, p. 1)} \]

The Russell Committee continued to view the role of adult education in primarily liberal terms, thus in terms of its individual and social functions; economic needs were a secondary issue. These liberal principles informed the working definition of adult education that the Committee used. Hence the Committee asserted:
The value of adult education is not solely to be measured by direct measures in earning power or productive capacity or by any other materialistic yardstick, but by the quality of life it inspires in the individual and generates for the community at large. (1973, p. vi.)

Charnley and Stock (in Molyneux et al, 1988) refer to the Russell Report as "a document of lyrical vision" (p. 30); however this vision was not to be fulfilled. The 1973 Russell Report marked the end of the post-war Keynesian consensus. During this consensus, adult education had not been significantly linked with economic or government needs as unemployment was not regarded as significant, and the public and private economy were expanding. However, this view of the role of adult education changed with the growing economic problems in, and the decline of, the consensus in the 1970s. Later reports on adult education, such as that of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education's 1982 Report "From Policies to Practice", now regarded adult education as a more vocationally-oriented, continuing education. Duke states of the ACACE document:

> Whereas the Russell Report was restricted to traditional liberal adult education and was produced in a climate of optimism, growth and full employment, "Policies to Practice" was drafted in a context of increasing social fragmentation, political polarisation and intransigent economic difficulty. (1986, p. 256)

Griffin (1987) argues that this change in policy attitude has changed the role of adult education: whereas the Russell Report saw adult education itself as an agent of social change, the model of continuing education that has dominated adult education since, is based more upon the assumption that change is generated in the economy and society, and that adult education is now primarily a strategy for responding to this. The British government's policy of the last fifteen years has demonstrated this: it has encouraged the institutionalisation and vocationalisation of adult education through changes in local authority and institutional funding, the development of unified vocationally-oriented accreditation schemes, and the establishment of lead bodies for training. This has generated a primarily instrumental and economic cost-efficient attitude to adult education. Thus, Gurnah states:

> Recent education legislation is sweeping away many of the vestiges of British liberal education and local democracy. In their place have arisen market oriented approaches to the management of the sector, making financial accountability the central transformative tool. (1994, p. 110)

These changes have not prevented the development of new liberal adult education initiatives, nor the continuation of existing ones; these are clearly charted by Kelly (1992), and Tuckett (in Westwood and Thomas, 1993). However, the overall trend of adult education policy is one of economic and political marginalisation and institutionalisation. Thus, Kelly refers to the potential "destruction of a valued and valuable part of our educational heritage" (p. iv), while Tuckett states:

> Overwhelmingly, the policies have led to a sustained attack on the idea that the common pursuit of knowledge for its own sake by groups of adult learners was a task which could make legitimate
claims on the public purse. Work in adult education has, as a result, become more managerial: supervising small-scale mixed economies at the expense of curriculum innovation. (p. 40)

Adult education in Britain then, is currently undergoing a process of substantial change which constitutes a double threat to its existence as a distinctive social institution: politically through local government and educational reforms; and ideologically through its increasing orientation to the economy rather than the individual and the community. Adult educators who wish to combat this trend must assert the importance of adult education to the individual, the community and society, as well as to the economy. If they are to do this, they must offer a theory which satisfies the necessary criteria: they must demonstrate the distinctive role of adult education through an explanation which has the theoretical capacity to locate, explain and legitimate adult education within society.

2. The British Traditions of Adult Education

In Britain, and in the English-speaking advanced capitalist societies, two main traditions of adult education theory and practice have predominated. The liberal tradition of adult education reflects the liberal-democratic principles of modernity which generated it; these include a belief in individual autonomy, rationality, choice, formal equality and self-improvement (Kelly in Tight, 1983; Kelly, 1992). This has informed the mainstream institutional practice of adult education in Britain. The radical tradition is influenced by the more Marxist, emancipatory, class-based traditions which, while also generated by modernity, are critical of its liberal emphasis and thus wish to transcend modernity to a new stage of economic and social organisation, and educational practice. In Britain this tradition has been primarily represented at the local and community levels and in oppositional movements (Thompson, 1980; Johnson in Lovett, 1988; Kelly, 1992).

In Britain, the liberal tradition has been concerned primarily with the learning process, and has thus been psychologically-oriented rather than interested in developing a clearly-articulated sociological and political theory based on the tradition's liberal premises. For this reason, the closest we come to liberal theoreticians of adult education are Lawson (1979; 1981) and Paterson (1979; in Bright, 1989). Although they discuss adult education from the philosophical stance of conceptual analysis rather than from a more sociological basis, the ideas they put forward are representative of an important liberal strand in Britain.

These conceptual analysts do not put forward a theory of adult education as such but rather adumbrate a set of principles which they believe should guide adult educational practice and the curriculum. This is explicitly based on liberal principles. As Lawson states: "To educate someone is ipso facto to liberate him" (1979, p. 103). This educational liberation is achieved by developing in the learner "public languages or public forms of knowledge which are regarded as the conceptual apparatus which make rational thought possible" (1979, p. 103). These publicly validated languages, standards and values constitute a framework for rational enquiry and assessment which is essential to education. Lawson and Paterson accept that this framework of theories and procedures is generated by society, and will be modified as society changes. Nevertheless, they also argue that there must be some absolute standard of quality of knowledge or truth which
transcends culture or society, and against which these theories and procedures are measured. Here, the two adult educators demonstrate their intellectual debt to the liberal philosophers of initial education, Hirst and Peters (Hirst and Peters, 1970). These argue that there must be some transcendental truth or end which we commit ourselves to in the very act of even thinking of trying to establish which theory or procedure is more correct or useful. Given this, education should consist of intrinsically worthwhile activities: it should be justified in terms of transcendental ends outside the actual activity or process, rather than in terms of instrumental ends alone. These intrinsically worthwhile activities should be based on distinctive forms of knowledge which would constitute or influence the curriculum. Both Paterson and Lawson, albeit to differing degrees, are sympathetic to this notion of the intrinsic nature of education. Thus, Lawson (1982) states:

Properly understood, forms of knowledge are not constraints but liberating vehicles of thought which, because of the generality of their concepts and the principles on which they are based, help individuals to move from a confined and restricted perception of their immediate concrete situation to an understanding of its wider significance as part of a more general context. (p. 108)

Lawson recognises that the educational requirements of adult education may not be the same as those for initial education given the differing needs and experiences of adults. Nevertheless the general criteria or principles which inform the educational process are applicable to both sectors of education; it is the way in which they may be implemented or interpreted which is different.

The liberal position of these two adult educators is primarily curriculum and teacher-led: it is assumed that the teacher has the public knowledge and enquiry skills which can be inculcated in the adult learner, and which will help develop and foster important traditional liberal values and practices. As Lawson (1979) states of the adult educator:

It is the person in this role, however it is defined, who introduces learners to things beyond themselves and who forms the bridge between private and public thought. (p. 26)

Knowles (1970), however, represents the more learner-led side of liberal adult education. Although Knowles has developed his ideas in the United States, these ideas have been influential on adult educational and training practices in Britain and many other countries. Thus, his ideas are more representative of mainstream liberal interpretations of adult education than those of Lawson and Paterson. Knowles has made one of the earliest attempts to develop a theory of adult education; this is based on the concept of andragogy. Knowles proposes that andragogy is characterised by four main principles: self-directedness, student experience, student needs and problem-solving. Jarvis (1995) states that in his later works, Knowles has also added two more principles: the motivation to learn, and the need to know. Knowles argues that from his concept of andragogy he has developed a theory of adult education which identifies specific adult characteristics, and generates teaching and learning procedures and curricular considerations based on these adult characteristics. In doing this, Knowles provides a theoretical framework for education which is pertinent only to adults,
and which is not derived from studies of initial education. Thus, Knowles (1978) states:

The field of adult education has long sought a glue to bind its diverse institutions, clienteles, and activities into some sense of unity; perhaps andragogy will give it at least a unifying theory. (p. 51)

While Knowles' andragogical framework promotes an individual and experiential ethos which is seen as important by adult educators, this is viewed by some as promoting a passive rather than active view of the adult learner. Thus Wilson (1992) argues that Knowles is more concerned that learners adjust to an increasingly technological world rather than develop their capacity to become autonomous agents. This diminishes the possibility of adult education influencing social reform, an important feature of traditional, liberal education. Furthermore, Knowles views the needs and desires of the learner as paramount, arguing that the role of the adult educator is a minimal one. However, also in the United States, Brookfield (1986) and Mezirow (1990) have addressed these two concerns by developing Knowles' andragogical theory further. Thus, while Brookfield and Mezirow continue Knowles' emphasis on the self-directed learner they also see a stronger, more assertive and engaged role for the adult educator. Both also bring a more critical, reflective element to the learning process than Knowles; this enables adult learners to reflect critically on, and make choices between, alternative courses of thought and action. While Brookfield, however, focuses mainly on individual thought and action, with the expectation that critical reflection may lead to social action, Mezirow explicitly links critical reflection to both individual and social action. In what Wilson (1992) refers to as the "post-Knowles generation" (p. 188), Brookfield and Mezirow are leading representatives of liberal adult education theory and practice at present.

The other main tradition of adult education in Britain is that of the radical school. This tradition challenges the liberal educational approach, which emphasises individually-based knowledge, skills and methods, by proposing a more structural analysis, drawing primarily on Marx, and on the adult education theory of Freire and Gramsci. This analysis asserts that social institutions such as adult education can only be understood through central concepts such as class, ideology and power.

This tradition is exemplified in Britain by Thompson (1980) who attempts to develop a sociological analysis of adult education which questions the traditional, dominant liberal position. Thompson argues that the liberal tradition is underpinned by functionalist assumptions; thus its primary ideological role is to maintain capitalist society and its unequal relations. In opposition to this, a new adult education and practice, based on a class analysis, must be developed if adult education is to fulfil its ideological and political potential.

Westwood (in Thompson, 1980) is particularly representative of this radical position. Westwood argues that the key theoretical development in this Marxist-oriented sociology of education must be a recognition of the importance of reproduction on the ideological level; the key phenomenon with which this analysis should be concerned is the over-representation of middle class participation, control and culture in adult education. For Westwood, a radical
Marxist account must assert a counter-hegemonic culture in which adult education workers are "cultural workers" and the "cultural competence" of the working class is seen as equally valid as that of the middle class.

This interpretation is supported by Keddie (in Thompson, 1980) who argues that the liberal ideology which emphasises individualism also promotes a social pathology model where social problems are located in individual failure or lack of ability rather than in the political and economic structure of society. In opposition to this, Keddie asserts that these problems lie in society and its institutions, including adult education, rather than in the individual; their resolution must include the radicalising of adult education organisation and practice.

For many adult educators this radicalisation must be developed through the community education movement which generates education and action on the basis of local working class concerns and experience (Lovett in Thompson, 1980). Outside Britain, the Antigonish and Highlander movements respectively in Canada and the USA are exemplars of the community education principle (Crane in Jarvis, 1987; Peters and Bell, in Jarvis, 1987; Horton and Freire, 1990). These radical community movements are strongly influenced by the Freirean principles of dialogue, praxis and conscientisation.

These Freirean principles have been specifically drawn from and directed to developing an adult education theory and practice in the underdeveloped countries. Nevertheless, adult educators in the West believe that Freire's ideas can be applied to radical theory and practice in their countries both in the community and other educational contexts. Thus, Shor (1987; Shor and Freire, 1987) in the United States, and Allman (1994) in Britain, represent systematic attempts to apply Freire's ideas to Western education. Despite its third world provenance then, Freire is the strongest influence on radical adult education theory and practice in many advanced industrial countries.

Nevertheless, not all concur with this influence; neither do all believe that Freire's theory and practice can so easily be transplanted to Western cultures. Youngman (1986) is representative of those radical adult educators who are more sceptical of the radical, theoretical and universal claims made for Freire. Instead, Youngman argues for a more culturally appropriate Gramscian-based adult education theory which proposes the adult educator as an organic intellectual concerned to develop a counter-hegemony based on working class values and concerns. Allman (1994) refutes this criticism of Freire, and argues that his Marxist, theoretical roots are clearly evident. Nevertheless, Allman (in Lovett, 1988), also recognises the counter-claims for Gramsci, and so argues for a synthesis of these two main influences. Thus, she states that "in Freire's consideration of the political nature of education and in Gramsci's consideration of the educational nature of politics" (p. 92) a socialist adult education theory can be developed.

One problem with the above accounts, including those which draw on Gramsci, is the lack of analysis of the relationship of the state to adult education. This is particularly important for theories which assert their wider theoretical and structural capacity, compared to the liberal theory, and particularly important given the increasing intervention in education by the New Right governments of today. Griffin (1987) presents a sociologically-informed, Marxist-based social
policy analysis of Britain which argues that it is important to understand the relationship of the state to adult education.

In this historically specific form of society we are confronted by specific conditions of the state, class relations, political hegemony and so on which necessitate analysis in their own terms rather than in the universal categories of radical social theory. (p. 247)

This analysis asserts that the agenda of adult education in Britain has become increasingly decided by the state, particularly in the post-Russell period. This has involved a paradigm-shift from adult to continuing education, from a more liberal-welfare model which considered the needs of both individual and society to an instrumental model that primarily considers the needs of the economy. In the current context of New Right economic, political and educational policy, Griffin argues that his social policy approach is necessary to understanding and challenging the current position and problems of adult education. Griffin argues that current adult education theory, whether liberal or other radical, is not able to provide such a relevant and valid interpretation. Thus, he states:

By adopting a social policy approach, however, adult education theory and discourse may regain a degree of intellectual coherence and adult education a better defence. (1987, p. 253)

The radical tradition then, consists of differing strands, which emphasise differing interpretations or influences. However, all radical adult educators assert that they must take a committed, political stance in their professional role. As Allman and Wallis (1990) state:

Within our analysis, whether we are engaged in a struggle to critically understand our world or not, neutrality is not an option. All educational acts are thus political, so all educational workers are obliged to choose the direction they wish to take. (p. 26)

Thus, they assert, even in the current bleak intellectual and political climate, which has been "de-skilling" and "de-intellectualising" the professional adult educator, it is important to become involved in struggles which may offer a prefigurative glimpse of the socialist alternative. Mayo (1993; 1994) argues that currently the sites of such struggle for adult educators are to be found with the new social movements: this requires an advance of radical theory beyond the old revolutionary sites of struggle of Gramsci's working class and Freire's "oppressed". Mayo's proposals suggest that, for some radical adult educators, the theories of Marx, Freire and Gramsci, despite their important influence, are now in need of revision.

These accounts of the liberal and radical traditions demonstrate that they have differing contributions to make to adult education theory and practice in the 1990s. The liberal tradition continues to promote the sanctity of the individual and those values which have underpinned the political development of liberal democracy in the West. This recognition of the needs of the individual constitutes an important principled bulwark against the apparent sacrifice of the individual to the needs of the market and the dictates of the state by New Right governments. However, the liberal position consists primarily of a set of values which are not articulated and elaborated theoretically or within structural frameworks: the
emphasis is on the promotion of individual choice and freedom rather than on more collectivist, theoretically-generated, oppositional strategies. Also, for some adult educators like Knowles (1984) this liberal emphasis may take the form of an adaptation to New Right policy rather than a challenge to it.

The radical tradition, on the other hand, is more theoretically sophisticated and articulated. Its Marxist theoretical influence and its inherent oppositional stance are pertinent at a time when the economic, capitalist features of liberal democracy are particularly evident. Equally, the theories of Freire and Gramsci suggest strategies for radical adult education practice. However, these major theoretical influences on the radical tradition were developed in different historical or cultural circumstances; thus one could question the extent to which they are able to explain and inform adult education policy and practice in 1990’s Britain. The emphasis on political commitment may also have the consequence of substantially narrowing the role of adult education and the adult educator; it also demands much of its practitioners at a time when the profession is especially vulnerable.

This brief, summative evaluation has identified some general strengths of the liberal and radical traditions. However, it has also identified important problems in each tradition which may have implications for their capacity to provide us with a convincing and distinctive theory of adult education for the 1990s. A more detailed examination is now necessary to assess the extent to which these traditions can provide a successful theorisation of adult education.
Chapter 2 - Evaluating the Traditions

The previous chapter discusses the two main schools of traditional adult education thought in Britain, and identifies their differences. This chapter demonstrates that the explanations proposed within these two traditions do not satisfy fully the two criteria identified as necessary to the successful theorisation of adult education: an explanation which demonstrates adult education's distinctiveness and importance, and which demonstrates theoretical validity and capacity.

1. The Liberal Tradition

The modern liberal tradition in Britain, in its representation by analytical philosophy, does not satisfy either of these criteria. In terms of the first requirement, this philosophical liberal position in Britain does not identify distinctive, significant adult education characteristics: it is influenced by a philosophical position concerned with developing an initial school curriculum informed by a transcendental cognitive structure. Thus, Paterson (1979) argues that "the great forms of knowledge must be considered to enjoy an absolute pre-eminence over all other systems and constellations of human knowledge" (p. 89). As Griffin (1983) points out, this belief in the pre-eminence of knowledge must clearly inform all education, whether initial or adult. However, this does not prevent Paterson from attempting to make a case for a distinctive adult education curriculum:

there will be items of knowledge or even bodies of knowledge which are characteristically 'adult'...[not] because of some special degree of intrinsic cognitive value... but because of their distinctive pertinence to adulthood as an ethical and existential status. (1979, p.97)

But, this attempt fails. Griffin (1983) argues that Paterson fails to demonstrate that an adult education curriculum can be based on the structure of knowledge; rather, his assertion seems to be based on conventional beliefs about what is or is not appropriate for adults to learn. Thus, what we seem to be left with, in terms of this first criterion, is a cognitive framework of education which consists of two levels: one level specifically refers to a set of certain beliefs about adult education which are culturally-located; this, along with other spheres of education, is informed by a second, more fundamental level constituted by a more transcendental notion of education. Lawson asserts such a framework in his discussion of adult education. Thus, he posits:

a complex of values, ideas, institutions and practices developed in concrete situations at one level (the immanent) but in a context of tradition (the transcendent) which we simply cannot (logically) ignore because it furnishes us with our modes of perception, understanding and communication at the most universal and at the most particular level. (1989, p. 311)

This philosophically-informed perception of adult education then, does not satisfy the first criterion: it does not demonstrate the distinctive social and educational
importance of adult education. An educational explanation based on a philosophical interpretation also does not satisfy the second criteria of theoretical capacity and validity. As both Lawson (1989) and Paterson (in Bright, 1989) recognise, philosophy does not generate a body of knowledge but is a form of activity, of critical inquiry - in their case relating to the analysis of educational concepts and their underlying values. Nevertheless, while the ideas of this philosophical school cannot be analysed in social scientific terms, they can be discussed sociologically in terms of the theoretical or ideological framework they seem most closely related to. Thus their radical critics (Thompson, 1980) argue that this philosophical strand is rooted in an elitist, ideological and functionalist view of society which emphasises middle class knowledge and culture. This is demonstrated by the liberal philosophers' cognitive privileging of particular forms of knowledge traditionally associated with grammar schools, public schools and the older universities. This narrow, legitimating, ideological orientation is also asserted outside any historical, structural context. These criticisms demonstrate that this liberal strand is limited in both its explanatory power and reach.

This does not mean, however, that this liberal philosophical position must be excluded from attempts to develop a theory of adult education. Its particular role here though is one of providing critical tools to assess explanations of, and trends in, adult education. Thus, conceptual analysis can be an important tool in the arsenal of the critics who oppose the current developments in adult education. This can be seen in Lawson's (1982) concern to distinguish between, and demonstrate the separate identities and relative worth of, education and training. Equally, this liberal philosophical position points out the implicit relativism and contradiction of those radical adult educators such as Thompson (1980) who deny the existence of a transcendental or objective knowledge while asserting the correctness of their own position. Although then, liberal philosophers cannot claim a theory which generates knowledge and practice, they can argue that their philosophy suggests analytical procedures necessary to the assessment and validation of that theory. This contributes to the critical, reflexive function of adult education necessary to the explanatory power of theory. As Paterson (in Bright, 1989) states:

The keeping of the flame of rationality is, then, one of the major contributions which philosophers... can make to the education of adult educators. (p. 24)

It is important to note that this position also reflects Habermasian theory in two important aspects: Habermas (1983) also emphasises the importance of rationality, and of the philosopher's role in the social sciences; equally, Habermas (1990a) challenges his relativistic critics, and asserts the validity of his theory of communicative action, through his concept of the 'performative contradiction'. These aspects of his thought will be considered further in Part Two of the thesis.

Other liberal adult educators in the United States have made a more explicit attempt than the British liberal philosophers to develop a theory of adult education. Knowles (1970) argued initially that his theory of andragogy did identify distinctive, significant characteristics of adult education. In the face of substantial criticism however, Knowles (1978) modified this assertion later to propose a more developmental model of adult education. This model accepts that some children may be able to learn on a
more andragogical basis, while some adults may still be more oriented to pedagogical education. However, Knowles does continue to refer to "a growing body of notions about the unique characteristics of adults as learners" (1978; p. 28) so there remains an ambiguity in his position. This ambiguity is easily resolved. Elias (1979) points out that initial education theorists such as Erikson, Piaget and Dewey have demonstrated that autonomy can start in childhood, and indeed that much of early teaching is experience and problem-centred. Equally, Keddie (in Thompson, 1980) points out that these "unique" adult characteristics form the basis of primary school teaching in Britain and elsewhere. Given this, andragogy's distinctiveness from initial education has not been demonstrated. Nevertheless, it may be argued that if learning is a developmental process, then we can ask no more from a theory than that the adult education or learning practice prescribed is more generally appropriate to adults as a social group. If this is the case, then the generally agreed success of the andragogical approach to adult education confirms both its value, and partially at least, its distinctiveness. As Brookfield (1986) states: andragogy provides "a badge of identity" (p. 90) for the adult education profession.

The theoretical status of andragogy, however, is more problematic. Andragogy emphasises student self-directedness, autonomy and problem-solving. Griffin (1983) argues that this liberal, humanist focus on the individual and on method neglects important structural and epistemological considerations, and shows little insight into the context of power and ideology in the social construction of concepts like adulthood and adult knowledge. As Wilson (1992) states of Knowles' theory of andragogy:

He has resolutely incorporated its individual and experiential basis while largely failing to address much of education's potential for social reform or even its relation to particular contexts. (p. 185)

Wilson also draws attention to Knowles' concern to help adults adjust to an increasingly changing technological world through the development of useful competencies. This can particularly be seen in the human resources programme proposed by Knowles (1984), in which he applies his methods to the training of adults, using behavioural objectives and competency-based learning, within the context of management training goals. As Brookfield (1986) and Tennant (1986) argue, this is reductionist; it is also inconsistent as it conflicts with Knowles' central emphasis on student autonomy and experience. Indeed, it could be argued, Knowles colludes in and fosters the increasing vocationalisation of adult education rather than attempts to challenge it. The explanatory power of Knowles' arguments then, can be subject to similar criticism to that levelled at the liberal philosophers: Knowles' view of andragogy is primarily influenced by a functionalist ideological orientation.

The theoretical criterion of explanatory reach also demonstrates problems with Knowles' concept of andragogy. This particularly pertains to his emphasis on the self-directedness of the student as the main empirical indicator of adulthood. Griffin (1983) argues that this emphasis suggests a culture and class-bound understanding of adulthood and adult learning which does not apply to many societies outside the West; indeed this might exclude certain institutions and groups within Western societies also. Further, the lack of empirical research in support of Knowles' theory of
andragogy is noteworthy, and has been remarked on by many commentators (Brookfield, 1986; Jarvis, 1983).

It is generally accepted (Brookfield, 1986; Hartree, 1984) that the theoretical limitations of Knowles' concept of andragogy exist because it is more concerned with method. This is now accepted by Knowles (1984) also. Nevertheless, the value of this method is widely recognised. Thus, most liberal adult educators agree that any theory of adult education which may be developed must incorporate the procedures of andragogy. Brookfield (1987) has recognised this in his attempt to develop Knowles' position by bringing the practice of critical reflection into the andragogical process; this encourages adult learners to adopt a critical stance to their education, culture and society. This critical reflection is important if adult educators and learners are to challenge the current neo-liberal reforms in education and other institutions. However, like Knowles, Brookfield's view of this critical process is still primarily individualistic and method-based. Thus Wilson (1992) states:

Knowles would tend to see autonomy more in Maslow's terms of self-actualizing whereas Brookfield defines it in a more critical sense of being able to make critically valid choices among alternative courses of thought and action. (pp. 186-187)

Given this emphasis on method, and the self-directedness of the adult learner, a similar critique to that of Knowles can be made of the explanatory power and reach of Brookfield's explanation. However, Brookfield's position does assert the importance to theory of critical reflection; the important difference between Brookfield and the liberal philosophers is that the former sees this as an essential part of the adult learning process for both educator and student rather than, like the latter, primarily or initially the province of the philosopher and adult educator. Furthermore, Brookfield (1986; 1987) describes in detail strategies for developing critical thinking skills in adult learners. He also (1992) proposes a set of criteria for developing theory, and (1993b) has applied these criteria and his critical thinking to the theories of radical adult educators. Here then, we have a possible contribution to the development of a distinctive adult education as Brookfield's concern to develop a learning approach based on the procedures of critical reflection is arguably more pertinent to adults. Brookfield (1993a; 1993b) also recognises the relevance of Habermas' emphasis on critical reflection to adult learning. Given this, Brookfield's ideas are considered further in Part Three of the thesis.

Whereas Knowles' and Brookfield's proposals for adult education practice are under-theorised, Mezirow (1991b) asserts that he has developed a clearly articulated theory of adult education. Mezirow emphasises the importance of reflective thinking, like Brookfield, but has developed this further into a theory of perspective transformation which incorporates both individual and social aspects of critical reflection. Mezirow argues that this process of perspective transformation is particularly relevant to adult learning and the professional role of the adult educator. Mezirow also cites Habermas as the main theoretical influence on his work; however, as a liberal educator, it is the communicative rather than the structural and historical aspects of Habermas' work which Mezirow identifies with. Nevertheless, it is proposed that, among the liberal adult educators, Mezirow's position comes closest to satisfying the assessment
criteria for successful theorisation identified in this paper. Thus, Mezirow's theory requires detailed examination; this takes place in Part Three of the thesis.

2 The Radical Tradition

The liberal positions discussed above demonstrate common theoretical problems; in particular there is a reliance on certain fundamental assumptions or concepts which are not articulated historically or structurally in an elaborated way. Liberalism as a political and educational theory emphasises certain important concepts, or modes of thinking, which suggest but do not direct educational and social practices and relationships; thus while some strands of the liberal educational position do incorporate the critical, reflexive aspect of the theory, they do not make explicit, or critical, normative proposals. The radical position, in contrast, draws on social theory to analyse critically adult education in historical, structural and ideological terms; equally, radical education proposes new transformative social and educational relationships. This gives the radical position an immediate advantage over the liberal position in terms of our theoretical criteria of explanatory power and explanatory reach, including the normative aspect. Nevertheless, despite this apparent advantage in terms of theoretical capacity, the central concepts of the radical tradition, and the wider theoretical frameworks which inform these concepts, are problematic in terms of their theoretical validity.

Radical adult educationalists develop their theory primarily from Marxism; class is therefore a core concept in their analysis. Thus, Thompson (1980), in opposition to the British liberal privileging of middle-class knowledge and education, asserts the equal validity of working class culture and knowledge. However, this key concept of class is presented in an unquestioned, dichotomous and undifferentiated manner with no precise definition of the term nor questioning of whether classes are as unified or homogeneous as these radical educators assert. Equally, there is no recognition that influential neo-Marxists such as Poulantzas (1978) have revised Marx's theory of class in the context of economic and social developments in post-war capitalist societies. It could be argued that the concept of class is now further in need of reassessment in the British neo-liberal political economy of the 1990s. This criticism challenges the explanatory power of this radical position.

Also, many radical adult educators in Britain present a primarily class-exclusive analysis which ignores or under-emphasises other important social divisions such as gender and ethnicity, and the significance of these for adult education. This reflects the emphasis of the influences of Freire (1972) and Gramsci's (1971) position also. Freire's notion of the "oppressed" is ambiguous, but is generally interpreted by Western educators as primarily constituting the peasant or working class. Gramsci's position is much clearer, and is aimed towards the male industrial proletariat. These respective emphases are understandable given the historical and cultural contexts of the writings of Freire and Gramsci. However, Mayo (1993) argues that the importance of other social divisions is important in the current period, for instance in the context of the relationship between the adult educator and the learner. Thus, gender, race and other differences between educators and educatees could create tensions which might result in domesticating forces, or constraining forces, emerging out of liberatory practice. Part of any struggle would be the resolution of this conflict.
between domestication and liberation arising from these different social locations. Lovett (1988) also recognises the need to consider other social divisions.

There is now some questioning as to whether the stress on working class adult education may in fact present a narrow version of the possibilities for social change which excludes other social movements and oppressed groups in society. (p. 155)

This has also been recognised more recently in Mayo and Thompson (1995), which is an attempt to update and locate the concerns and proposals of Thompson (1980) into the neo-liberal 1990s. Thus, Swindells and Thompson (both in Mayo and Thompson, 1995), discuss the contribution of women to radical adult education, while O'Rourke (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995) argues that adult education must take on a wide equal opportunities remit which recognises the need or concerns of a range of socially disadvantaged groups.

The analytical framework of many radical adult educators then, has moved away from an exclusively class-based analysis; other more Marxist theorists, like Allman and Wallis (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995), still identify class as the core analytical category in their explanation. Here though, the criticisms made above of Thompson (1980) with regard to this class analysis still pertain. Further, this emphasis on class, to the exclusion of other social groups, clearly has implications for the explanatory reach of this strand of radical theory. This criticism also applies to other Marxist-oriented theorists of adult education (Foley, 1994; Youngman, 1986) who still retain the class and economic emphasis of orthodox Marxism.

The British liberal tradition also presents a strong challenge to the British radicals. Thus, Lawson (1981) and Paterson (1984) accuse Thompson and her colleagues of a cultural relativism in their ungrounded assertion of an equally or more valid working class culture. Paterson expresses particular concern about the radical privileging of a working class curriculum. Thus, he asserts, teaching which is based on political faith rather than epistemological considerations cannot be regarded as education.

where we have strayed into the marshy terrain of 'faith', 'commitment', 'conviction', and so on - it is the duty of the teacher to state that this is where teaching virtually has to stop...The limits of objectivity are the limits of education. (1984, p. 20)

However, while this is a correct observation of the position of some radical thinkers such as Westwood (in Thompson, 1980) this criticism is not equally applicable to all radical adult educators or the radical tradition. Thus, other radical theorists (Lovett, 1983; Thompson, 1980) accept that traditional knowledge is not of itself repressive, but rather the use to which it is put. Equally, Mayo (1994) points out that Gramsci also argues for the necessary inclusion of traditional instruction into the education of adults, and Freire has also accepted this in his more recent works. Thus, the radical adult educators do not demonstrate such a simplistic and relativistic belief in the working class curriculum as their critics assert.

Lawson (1981) argues, however, that whether the radical theory is relativistic or not there is still an important contradiction in their epistemological position. Thus, in asserting a position primarily influenced by Marxism, these radical educators imply
an acceptance of an objective notion of truth or knowledge - which they oppose in their attacks on the liberals. Equally, in asserting the radical interpretation as a correct analysis of British society and education, whether from a theoretically or politically committed position, the radical tradition also demonstrates an implicit objectivism. Here, Lawson's criticism does more successfully challenge the general theoretical validity of the radical position. As stated in Chapter One, this criticism also reflects Habermas' (1990a) powerful challenge to those critics of his who challenge the rational, quasi-transcendental communicative basis of his theory on relativistic or other grounds.

Finally, Lawson (1977) asserts that the radical school's theory is informed by a romantic and idealistic ideology which celebrates the community and its working class culture. Lawson questions this celebration arguing that the role and idea of community needs to be examined historically and politically: in terms of the question of the relationship of the community to the individual and the state, the community participation ethic may lead to a "very radical or extremely conservative and authoritarian" (1977, p. 11) position. Here, Lawson demonstrates that there are important omissions or lacunae in the theoretical account of community adult education. Although radical educators do draw on social and educational theory, many are more concerned to encourage localised working class action, and a political commitment on the part of the educator, than to develop an articulated structural explanatory and predictive theoretical analysis which goes beyond the community. This emphasis on the local and the practical, to the exclusion of the wider society or the theoretical, is exemplified, respectively, in Shor's (1987) classroom based activity and Horton's (Horton and Freire, 1990) Highlander project in the United States.

A major reason for this lack of a wider structural, theoretical context for radical adult education is the significant influence of Freire on the radical position. Freire's theory (1972) is general and primarily method-led. This explains why Freirean pedagogy has influenced liberals such as Brookfield (1987) as well as radical educators. Allman (1994) argues, in opposition to this widespread use of Freirean ideas, that the substantive Marxist theoretical influence on Freire, and thus the radical nature of Freire's work, has not been sufficiently recognised. However, Youngman (1986), in a detailed critique of Freire's work, asserts that this is not the case: Freire's philosophy or theory is an eclectic presentation drawn from Christianity, existentialism-phenomenology and a humanist Marxism which ignores or under-emphasises the important materialist, economic concerns of the later Marx. This explains why Freire has appealed to a wide range of adult educators. Thus, Youngman (1986) writes:

Freire's theoretical position is ambiguous, contradictory, evasive and incoherent...His writings, taken as a whole, represent a thoroughgoing eclecticism which provides a kind of Rorschach test into which adult educators project their own viewpoint. (pp. 187-188)

Youngman argues that this eclectic theoretical base has generated an underlying philosophical idealism to his work. This idealism can be seen in Freire's concept of conscientisation: while Freire emphasises the educational and revolutionary process of conscientisation, there is no attempt to explain how this process is located or explicated within the wider capitalist structures. Equally, much of Freire's (1972)
terminology is presented in a categorically ambiguous and imprecise form, notably in his notions of the "oppressor" and "oppressed".

Youngman recognises that in later texts (1978; 1985) Freire seems to have shifted to a more explicit Marxist approach, but nevertheless states that he, while acknowledging the evolution of his ideas, neither provides an extended critique of his earlier positions nor identifies this major development in his own thought. Thus, Youngman asserts that there still exists an essential ambiguity as to Freire's theoretical position, and therefore a question as to its theoretical coherence and radical potential.

Thus, in the final analysis, it is the weakness of Freire's political theory that disables his approach as a vehicle for socialist adult education...Cultural action for freedom is empty if it is not theoretically and practically connected to political and economic action for socialist revolution. (1986, p. 179)

This clearly has important implications in the context of 1990's Britain, both in terms of the current neo-liberal context of adult educational policy in Britain, and the rhetoric of the radicals themselves. At a time when their survival may be in doubt, British adult educators are looking for short term survival strategies as much as revolutionary exhortations. The radical position emphasises critical, normative features of adult education, and suggests the form they may take in more local settings; however, in the larger social and educational framework the radical "language of possibility" is more problematic. Thus, Allman and Wallis (1990) acknowledge, in the absence of a radical political party, the problems of generating prefigurative work on a wider scale. Mayo (1994) also recognises that factors such as the increasingly influential rhetoric of the market at both national and global levels "affect the success or otherwise of Freirean or Freirean-inspired pedagogy in different contexts" (p. 22). Mayo argues that to combat this, and reassert Freire's radical potential, Freire's theory and strategy must be revised to take into account the growing importance of oppositional social movements. Thus, he states:

Freirean pedagogy is more likely to prove effective within the context of a social movement, or an alliance of movements, than in isolation. (p. 26)

Mayo (1994) asserts that in later books (Horton and Freire, 1990; Shor and Freire, 1987), Freire also recognises this. This assertion is supported by Freire's foreword to McLaren and Leonard (1993) in which Freire acknowledges that the feminist movement has an important contribution to make to the struggle for political freedom. Mayo (1994) states that Gramsci's theory must also be revised to include the role of oppositional movements. Mayo's emphasis on the role of these new social movements reflects the stress placed on the emancipatory role of these movements by Habermas, and his radical adult education supporters in North America. This will be discussed further, respectively, in Parts Two and Three of the thesis.

This assessment of the theoretical capacity and validity of the main British radical position demonstrates that the prescriptive or critical aspects of the general explanation are strong. Radical theorists of adult education assert that adult learners must explore, or critically reflect on, the relationships of power and ideological influence which inform society and education. Equally, in attempting to develop
transitional or prefigurative educational practices this radical position demonstrates
the liberatory, normative importance of social and educational theory. However, as
we have seen, these radical adult educators are weaker in the more descriptive areas
of explanatory power and explanatory reach. They remain more theoretically
informed than their liberal counterparts, but their explanations nevertheless remain at
a relatively abstract and practical level: they have not generated an elaborated social
and educational theory which adequately explains the nature and role of adult
education generally, or in terms of its role in social transformation.

Differing theoretical strengths and weaknesses pertain to two other radical strands,
however. Youngman (1986) and Griffin (1987) provide explanations of the role and
nature of adult education which possess greater general explanatory power and, in the
case of Griffin, explanatory reach. Equally, both emphasise the necessity for critical
reflection or a language of critique. However, the liberatory, normative characteristic
is respectively weak or absent.

Youngman (1986) provides a fully-articulated Marxist theory which provides
substantive critiques of the other main adult education positions, including that of the
Freirean-influenced radicals. In its place Youngman proposes an orthodox Marxist
explanatory framework influenced by Gramsci. Thus, Youngman argues that a
socialist counter-hegemony of the working class can be generated through the
development of political, literacy/numeracy, and scientific and management/
organisational skills developed through socialist pedagogical strategies. However, his
work demonstrates the same problem as that of his radical counterparts: the problem
is how to articulate the interrelationship of the economic and political institutions
with ideology and culture in a way which adequately demonstrates how revolutionary
consciousness can develop within, and transform, deterministic capitalistic structures
through a defined and credible programme of action. While Youngman's proposals
may be necessary to the development of a counter-hegemony, they are not sufficient
to it: more explanation is required to demonstrate how they can play a prefigurative
role effectively and transformatively within Western capitalism.

The same criticism can also be applied to Griffin (1987). Like Youngman, Griffin
recognises the theoretical limitations of much of the radical school, referring to their
"political utopianism" (1987, p. 253). Griffin's alternative social policy model is a
useful one, particularly in terms of its general theoretical analysis of the market model
which provides an insight into the current approach of the British state to adult
education in the 1990s. But, while Griffin provides an analysis of the ideological and
historical role of the state which is lacking in most other radical accounts, he does not
attempt to articulate further the relationship of adult educators and the state so that
the former can gain some idea of how they can develop a counter-hegemonic practice
educationally and politically.

Whichever radical strand is considered however, the distinctiveness and importance
of adult education is emphasised. This is necessarily generated by its Marxist or
radical premises. Thus, Marxism distinguishes between the working class qua
working class, a class in itself, and the working class qua proletariat, a class for itself,
which has developed from the former in having a degree of economic and ideological
consciousness about its exploited position. Only as a proletariat will the working
class engage in political struggle against the ruling class. Equally, the respective
transformative political and cultural strategies of Gramsci and Freire of counter-hegemony and conscientisation are based on the notion of ideological enlightenment and political emancipation through struggle. The role of radical education is to facilitate this enlightenment and encourage this struggle. These themes of enlightenment and struggle which underlie the radical position can only be applied to adult learners.

The radical position, then, offers an account of adult education, and of its political role, which distinguishes it from other kinds of education. This satisfies the criterion of the importance and distinctiveness of adult education. However, this is achieved at the price of a view of adult education which many professionals and learners would not accept. The radical position delimits adult education in its emphasis on the politically committed role of the professional and the emancipatory struggle of the adult learner. Liberals like Brookfield (1993a) and Mezirow (1991b) argue that adult educators and adult education should not be concerned with only this radical aspect. It is probable that while some adult learners may wish to "unmask the dialectical contradictions of our reality" (Allman, 1994, p. 155), others are looking for rather more limited and less ambitious achievements from their education. Adult education, despite what the radical theorists might wish, exists in many forms; the restrictive representation of the radicals devalues or excludes much educational practice which other adult educators consider valuable and significant.

3. The Undermining of Adult Education

These critiques of the liberal and radical adult traditions demonstrate that each, either generally or in terms of specific strands within the tradition, can satisfy part of the criteria necessary to the successful theorisation of adult education; however, neither can satisfy these criteria fully. This means that adult education theory cannot provide a viable theoretical defence to the encroachments on it by modern neo-liberal policy. Barnett (1990) coins the term "sociological undermining" for this neo-liberal attack. While specifically referring to higher education, this is a concept which can be applied to adult education also. Sociological undermining refers to the New Right political and economic policies which are undermining established educational institutions and practices, including that of adult education. The nature of this undermining is outlined in Chapter One. The strength of the undermining is demonstrated by the despondent tone of Thompson's (1993) discussion of the failure of the radicals to respond to the New Right attack in Britain; the success of this undermining can be seen in the fact that, the more recent radical attempt to make such a response (Mayo and Thompson, 1995) offers little that is new, either theoretically or practically. Given this apparent inability by the two traditional schools to challenge successfully neo-liberal policy, some adult educators have moved away from, or further developed, these two traditions by looking elsewhere for their theoretical and legitimising base to adult education. Some adult educators believe that they have found this theoretical and legitimising base in the works of Habermas.

However, Barnett asserts that there is another kind of attack on education which is equally significant. This is the "epistemological undermining" which refers to the challenge by postmodernism to the established theory which has been developed in
modernity. Both liberal and radical traditions primarily draw from, in differing forms and to differing degrees, the social science disciplines of psychology, sociology and political theory, and from philosophy (Bright, 1989). The postmodernist attack undermines or challenges the underlying theoretical explanatory and legitimising base of these disciplines, and thus the theoretical base of the liberal and radical traditions of adult education. This attack also threatens the validity of those theoretical strengths which have been discovered in the two traditions. Indeed, there is a growing postmodernist school of thought in education (Usher and Edwards, 1994), and adult education (Bagnall, 1995) which explicitly challenges the modernist liberal and radical traditions. In the face of this second attack some adult educators have accepted the postmodernist position to a lesser (Brookfield, 1993a) or greater (Westwood in Westwood and Thomas, 1991) degree. Others, however, have looked for a theory which can promote a strong defence of the modernist traditions against this postmodern attack. Some adult educators again believe that they have found their champion in Habermas. It is to this growing influence of Habermas on adult education theory that we now turn.
Chapter 3 - The Adult Education Interpretation of Habermas

In the last ten years adult educators have responded to the twin attacks of New Right policy and postmodernism, and to the failure of traditional educational theory to challenge this, by attempting to generate a new or revised theory. This response has been particularly influenced by the work of Habermas. Adult educators recognise that Habermas rarely refers to education; however, they assert that his theory is applicable to the current concerns of adult education.

This increasing recognition of the importance of Habermas is demonstrated by comparing the research of Ewert (1991) to the research undertaken for this thesis. Ewert undertook a search of educational literature between 1972 and 1987 in order to discover how often Habermas’ works were being cited. The search found over 3,200 English language articles which cited Habermas, evidence of his influence on the academic world generally. Out of these English speaking articles, 44 articles referred specifically to educational topics; of these only two articles, both written by Mezirow (1981; 1985), concerned adult education. While this research was clearly not definitive as it failed to identify at least two other adult education references (Hart, 1985; Collins, 1985), the lack of interest in Habermas by most adult educators during this period is clear.

In contrast to this the literature search for the period of 1988 to 1995 undertaken for this study found over thirty English language adult education publications which discuss Habermas in a substantive manner, most of which are referred to in this thesis. The authors, who range across the English-speaking world, discuss Habermas’ work from a range of different, and often conflicting, theoretical positions, and from differing cultural, political, professional and academic traditions or backgrounds. This demonstrates that theorists of adult education are increasingly recognising the importance of Habermas to the theorisation of adult education. This is supported by the apparent phenomenon of the development of a Habermas ‘industry’ in adult education: reference to Habermas in adult education literature, no matter how brief or tenuous (Garrison, 1991), seems increasingly compulsory if the author wishes to claim some theoretical validity. Should such references also be included in the new citation count, the above figure of thirty would be very substantially increased.

1. The Central Themes

The authors of the more substantive publications have identified a range of themes in Habermas’ work which they believe can contribute significantly to a theorisation of adult education. Six themes are of particular importance. The first theme has motivated all of Habermas’ work: this is his concern to combat the anti-Enlightenment process in society which Habermas believes constitutes the most significant threat to modernity. This threat takes the form of an increasing instrumentalism in society, which Habermas has more recently seen as embodied particularly in New Right governments (1989a; 1991b), and the increasing intellectual influence of
postmodernism (1987b; 1989a). Educators draw on Habermas' theory to chart these historical developments and their influence on education, and to inform an oppositional practice in educational institutions. These educators include Barnett (1990; 1993) for higher education, Young (1989; 1992) for initial education, and Little (1991) for adult education.

Adult educators from a more Marxist or radical tradition highlight the Frankfurt School of critical theory in which Habermas' intellectual roots particularly lie. It is this critical theory which informs their interpretation and application of Habermas. Thus, they argue that any attempt to oppose the current neo-liberal policies must recognise that these policies are the latest manifestation of, and perhaps most overt response to, the growing economic crisis of a capitalist society which is based on inequality and exploitation. These adult educators are most interested in those writings of Habermas (1979; 1987c; 1991b) which emphasise the necessity for a critique of the existing system, its institutions and ideology. This critical understanding is necessary to the development of an oppositional and emancipatory adult education practice. Thus, Griffin (1988) refers to critical theory to question the instrumentalist-oriented ideology underlying adult education practice and professionalism, arguing that this ideology reflects the capitalist ethos. Welton (1991) discusses the importance of Frankfurt social theory in general in critiquing capitalism, and Habermas' theory in particular in terms of its potential application to an emancipatory adult education.

Other adult educators are more concerned to focus on the early epistemological theory of Habermas (1987a). Here, Habermas distinguishes between differing kinds of knowledge-based interests. Habermas asserts three kinds of cognitive interests which have informed all theory and practice: instrumental or technical, hermeneutic or interpretive, and emancipatory. Habermas argues that it is the first two interests, and particularly the first, which have been most influential in society and in the disciplines. In opposition to this, Habermas proposes that emancipatory cognitive interests should inform future theory and practice in the social sciences. Adult educators have used this typology in their analyses of a range of professional practices in different countries. Thus, Alexander (1991) highlights the problem of an increasing instrumentalist domination of the professionalisation of adult educators in Canada; Hindmarsh (1993) applies Habermas' schema of the three cognitive interests to three modes of discourse in social work education in New Zealand in order to highlight good practice. This cognitive schema is also essential to the action research paradigm developed by Carr and Kemmis (1986) in initial education in Australia, and Usher and Bryant (1989) in adult education in Britain.

In line with Habermas' own theoretical development, most adult educators prefer to emphasise Habermas' later theory of communicative action (1987a; 1991b). This theory asserts that the potential for an emancipatory, rational, discursive procedure based on the testability of validity claims underlies language, and thus the communicative process. The recognition and development of this in society will combat social pathologies such as the economic instrumentalism of the New Right at the levels of both theory and practice. Adult educators from a range of theoretical positions believe that Habermas' theory of communicative action, and the practice it informs, has a particular significance for adult education. Liberal adult educators
such as Mezirow (1991b) see the application of communicative action primarily in terms of educational practice; this promotes the critical understanding of adult learners and helps them to become more autonomous individuals in society. Radical adult educators like Collins (1991), however, are concerned to develop a wider educational and political role for adult education through this communicative process; this role will involve challenging the ideology and institutions, including those of education, of capitalism. From a feminist viewpoint Hart (1985) asserts the importance of the communicative process for the development of a more powerful women's movement, and a more equal society. It is important to note however, that other commentators such as Finger (1991) and Usher (1992) support a postmodernist position, and posit a Habermasian input to resolve this position's weaker areas.

Habermas' (1987c) theory of communicative action proposes that advanced welfare capitalist societies are characterised by a systems-lifeworld relationship, in which the administrative and economic institutions of the systems world are gradually encroaching on, or colonising, the more communicative spheres of the lifeworld such as the family and education. Adult educators argue this proposition has a direct application to the current instrumentalisation of adult education in policy and professional terms. Collins (1991) refers to Habermas to chart and challenge this colonisation of the communicative aspects of adult education. Chambers (1991) also recognises the importance of Habermas' theory in understanding this process of welfare colonisation, but argues that an input from feminist theory can correct the gender-blind nature of Habermas' analysis and enhance its explanatory power.

Finally, adult educators have been concerned to identify, in this struggle between the systems world and the lifeworld, how adult education can foster the communicative aspects of learning and social interaction. Habermas (1987c; 1992a) identifies the new social movements, which embody the greatest communicative and emancipatory potential, and which operate on the border of the systems and lifeworld, as the major sites of struggle in advanced capitalism. Thus, some radical adult educators Welton (1991; 1993) and Collins (1991) assert that the role of adult education is both a political and an educational one: it must contribute to the anti-capitalist struggle through participation in these new social movements.

2. Applying the Habermasian Methodology

The identification of these six themes demonstrates how Habermas is becoming increasingly important to adult educators from a range of ideological and professional positions in their attempt to develop or ground an adult educational theory and practice. However, these interpretations of Habermas by adult educators must be treated with caution. Habermas has developed his theoretical project over thirty years, emphasising different aspects of his theory in different texts. Thus, a full understanding of his project requires a detailed and wide reading of his texts; no adult educators evince this degree of familiarity with Habermas' works. Further, Habermas presents his ideas in a highly abstract and complex manner, drawing from, and engaging with, theorists in a range of academic disciplines. Few adult educators, in particular in North America, have a background of such academic traditions. Also, Habermas' ideas have generated substantial debate in many academic disciplines, such as the philosophical, sociological, and political arenas among others. The adult
education world has not recognised this debate, nor the critiques Habermas has been subject to. This debate has important implications for the validity of Habermas' theory, and thus for the theory of those adult educators who have adopted Habermas' ideas. In sum then, up to the present, adult education has not engaged with Habermas' ideas in the fully critical, theoretical and informed fashion which is essential to a valid, Habermasian-informed theorisation of adult education.

The aim of this study is to rectify this problem. This requires three areas of research: a detailed, chronological reading of all the main texts Habermas has written which have been translated into English; a representative review of the relevant main critiques which have been made of Habermas' theory; and, a literature search of current English language adult education writings which discuss Habermas.

This research is necessary as few critical studies of the Habermasian oeuvre exist. McCarthy (1984) and Pusey (1987) have produced reviews of Habermas' earlier main works, and White (1988) Habermas' more recent works, but only Outhwaite (1994) has produced an up to date study of all of Habermas' major texts in English translation. In the adult education literature there has been no attempt to provide a similar review. Equally, no detailed critical overview of Habermasian-informed adult education literature has yet been published. This full, critical and dialogical examination of both Habermas' theory, and that of adult education's interpretations of it, is essential to a valid and balanced assessment of both the Habermasian theoretical potential for adult education, and the current capacity of the adult education literature to recognise and apply this.

On the basis of this rigorous, theoretically and critically-informed research, this thesis is uniquely placed to achieve two objectives. The first is to assess the extent to which the existing adult education literature is interpreting Habermas' writings correctly; the second is to assess more accurately than has been achieved by other adult education theorists so far the usefulness to adult education of Habermas' theoretical project. In undertaking these assessments, this thesis explicitly adopts the same methodology which informs Habermas' work. This methodology is reconstructionist, hermeneutic, dialogical and dialectical. There are important reasons which justify the adoption of this methodological approach of Habermas; these are explained in turn.

Habermas' reconstructionist approach first involves Habermas in tracing the development of major Western philosophical and sociological theories, and identifying their contribution to the instrumentalist paradigm which characterises present-day modernity. Then Habermas "reconstructs" these theories by identifying and developing their communicative aspects so that they can contribute to a new macrotheoretical communicative paradigm in the social sciences. Similarly, the reconstructionist approach of this thesis identifies and clarifies the main concepts of Habermas and their contribution to his critical social theory by tracing the development of his thought from his early works to the present. This also enables important weaknesses in his work, both in the general theory and in its application to adult education, to be identified. From this Habermas' work can be "reconstructed" or revised in order to enhance its theoretical validity and capacity, and its applicability to the adult education context. As McCarthy, in his introduction to "The Theory of Communicative Action" states, the aim of Habermas' reconstructionist method is:
to excavate and incorporate their (the theories') positive contributions, to criticize and overcome their weaknesses, by thinking with them to go beyond them. (1991b, p. ix)

A similar reconstructionist approach to the reading of Habermas' work is essential to a full and critical understanding of all relevant aspects of Habermas' theory. The density and erudition of Habermas' writing, which is demonstrated in his wide-ranging and critical discussion of many well-known and lesser-known theorists from a range of disciplines, makes much of Habermas' work difficult to grasp initially. Also, there are central concerns and themes which have informed all of Habermas' work. These have been progressively clarified, elaborated, refined, and revised as his theoretical project has developed through his writings. Given these two characteristics of Habermas' work, the methodological strategy of tracing the development of Habermas' thought in order to both understand and 'reconstruct' it, is a necessary one. As Sartre (1965) states in a discussion of Gide's work:

Every truth, says Hegel, has become so. We forget this too often, we see the final destination, not the itinerary, we take the ideas as a finished product, without realising that it is only its slow maturation, a necessary sequence of errors correcting themselves, of partial views which are completed and enlarged. (p. 67)

The developmental, maturational process of the Habermasian project has not been recognised by his interpreters in adult education; these have focussed mainly on the "finished product", the later seminal "Theory of Communicative Action (1987c; 1991b), ignoring much of importance in Habermas' earlier works. This has generated a narrow, uncritical and, at times, distorted understanding of Habermas' theory.

A chronological reading of Habermas prevents, or minimises these problems. Thus, the methodical study of Habermas' works in the order that they were originally published enables us to progressively clarify, consolidate, extend, and deepen our understanding of Habermas' critical social theory. This approach also enables an understanding of how Habermas develops his theoretical project, and why and how it progresses into a macrotheoretical, linguistically-based framework. This reading also provides the necessary grasp of Habermas to allow an exploration of the extent to which, in terms of the adult education project, certain themes can be presented differently or brought to the foreground, or whether early themes, later ignored or under-emphasised by Habermas, may be given a revised importance. This may involve the identification of important themes which the adult education literature on Habermas, in its more selective reading, has not recognised.

Another important reason for working through Habermas in a systematic and chronological manner is that a developed and full understanding of Habermas' ideas and methodology, on the lines set out above, is necessary if the thesis is able to subject these both to effective critique in terms of their general coherence and validity, and in terms of their specific applicability to the adult education sphere; in other words to assess the explanatory power and explanatory reach of Habermas' ideas as a basis for adult education theory.

Finally, this developmental approach minimises possible inaccuracies, which otherwise might not be recognised, in the translations or critiques of Habermas. The
reading of Habermas that has been undertaken for this paper has been based on English language translations, and is thus at one stage removed from the original. Short of learning good academic German there is little that can be done about this. However, the detailed, chronological reading of Habermas' works, by a range of translators, minimises possible distortions which might arise from specific translators, and also should highlight any inconsistent or inaccurate interpretations. Equally, the examination of a wide range of critiques of Habermas also helps to highlight any inaccurate or distorted interpretations in either specific critiques or specific translations. Collectively then, the systematic reading of the Habermasian oeuvre, and of the critical literature, provides a strong and accurate understanding of Habermas' ideas, and the ability to identify specific misrepresentations of these.

This strong and accurate understanding of Habermas' ideas requires the same kind of hermeneutic strategy that Habermas brings to his own work. For Habermas this hermeneutic strategy involves an identification of the concerns, central presuppositions and ideological influences which inform the theorists with whom he is engaging dialogically, so that he can assess their usefulness to his theoretical project. Similarly, the hermeneutic strategy of this study is to identify the influences on Habermas' theory, and that of his interpreters and critics with whom this thesis engages in dialogue. This enables judgements to be made as to the accuracy, objectivity and validity, and thus usefulness, of the arguments and criticisms which are being considered.

In undertaking a detailed reading and assessment of Habermas' theory it is also important to be aware of the inherent hermeneutic problems involved. First, Habermas' texts are not easily accessible to the reader: his writings are complex, highly theoretical, and range widely through history, social science disciplines and thinkers (some of whom are little known outside Germany). Thus, Brand (1990) compares teaching Habermas to undertaking a dangerous, obstacle-strewn journey:

The professional teacher might, for a while, enjoy the sensation of being an intellectual mountain guide, until he or she has the alarming experience of having lost the group. (p. vii)

To continue the analogy one might add nor can the traveller afford the time and effort to scale every theoretical peak. Thus, there is an inevitable process of selection, primarily on the basis of what is important and relevant, but sometimes on the basis of what is familiar in terms of the interpreter's own intellectual background. This must be borne in mind as the journey through the Habermasian theoretical topography is undertaken.

A second hermeneutic consideration is the need for an awareness that this research is motivated or informed by specific preoccupations and influences which may differ from those which motivated Habermas in his writing, and which is generated from within a different historical and cultural period to that of Habermas (in terms of his earlier works at least). This requires an understanding of the different intellectual traditions which have influenced Habermas, particularly those of German historical idealism and the Frankfurt School. The same considerations, of course, apply to the reading of the adult education literature which has been undertaken.
Finally, the reconstructionist approach identified depends on a hermeneutical context in terms of the integration of differing theories and disciplines, and differing traditions. Thus, this study attempts to assess the extent to which the differing intellectual traditions, central concepts and concerns influencing Habermas' theory, and those influencing adult education theory, can be "fused" or find common ground. This "fusion of horizons", involves a mediation of the historical (vertical) and cultural (horizontal) distances which exist in the act of interpretation of a text. This central hermeneutic concept of Gadamer's is discussed critically by Habermas (1988b), and particularly informs Habermas' methodological approach in his early works (1987a; 1988b). This thesis then, makes a significant contribution to adult education theory in its attempt to develop a more informed and comprehensive, or successful, "fusion" than has hitherto been achieved by theorists of adult education.

This fusion can only be achieved by the adoption of the dialogical and dialectical process that Habermas uses in his examination of his theoretical contemporaries and predecessors. This study also adopts this process: the thesis undertakes the dialogical role of interpreter, mediator and integrator of these differing traditions, drawing from both social science and educational theory. Thus, it performs a similar role to that which Habermas (1983) ascribes to philosophy today, in its relationship to social science. Further, in the critical tradition of dialectical development, the thesis identifies those significant themes, and proposes new ones, which may suggest or indicate ways forward to a theoretical approach to an Habermasian-informed adult education which is different from those currently proposed.

In sum then, this thesis argues that the best way forward to assessing the possibility of developing a theorisation of adult education is to use the Habermasian method. As Holub (1991) states, Habermas:

enterst debates in order to learn and expand his own horizons through the complex process of absorption, adaptation, critique, and self-reflection. (p. 1)

The adoption of the Habermasian method reflects a similar rationale. This method is applied to the three systematic overviews, which are conducted in this thesis, of the Habermasian oeuvre, the critical literature on Habermas from commentators in the social sciences and philosophy, and of the literature on Habermas in adult education. This Habermasian method has not been applied before in this way, nor have any of these overviews been attempted previously (with the exception of Outhwaite's [1994] account of Habermas' works) to the knowledge of this writer. In its attempt to undertake these tasks, this thesis makes a singular contribution both to the interpretation of Habermas, and to the Habermasian theorisation of adult education.

However, this thesis makes no grand claims about the form this theorisation must take: its aim is to demonstrate that this theorisation is possible, and suggest future directions that may be taken. As Habermas states:

I am not a producer of a Weltanschauung; I would really like to produce a few small truths, not the big one. (1992a, p. 128)
This study does not attempt to produce a "Weltanschauung"; that is a task for future research. The thesis does, however, produce "a few small truths", which will guide the direction of this future research in a critical and informed manner.
PART TWO

Habermas: Review and Critique
Introduction

Adult educators, and commentators from other disciplines, correctly identify Habermas' "The Theory of Communicative Action" (TCA) as his seminal work; thus they devote most consideration to this. It is in the two volumes which comprise TCA that Habermas unifies the disparate theoretical and methodological strands discussed in his previous works. However, while TCA presents the clearest and most integrated account of Habermas' theory of communication, a fuller understanding requires a reading of his other texts where significant features of that theory are discussed more fully. In not recognising this, these commentators do not do justice to Habermas' communicative project: the painstaking, dialectical and dialogical process of the development of a macrotheory which began before TCA and which continues to develop or clarify its themes in important ways after TCA.

This part of the thesis undertakes a review of Habermas' major works up to "Autonomy and Solidarity" (1992a), in order of original publication, tracing the development of Habermas' macrotheory and identifying its central themes. AS is a convenient and useful end-point for this detailed study of Habermas' writings as it consists of a number of interviews with Habermas which help to clarify aspects of his theory, and places Habermas' writings within a historical, political and personal context. Given this function, AS is referred to where relevant rather than given its own discrete, substantive and thematic consideration. It is recognised that works later than AS have been published; however, these works develop or discuss thematic aspects of the existing communicative paradigm, rather than advance the paradigm significantly; they were also published too late, in English translation, for the detailed study that has been given to the earlier texts. These later works will be referred to where relevant in the thesis. The exception here is Habermas' latest text "Between Facts and Norms" (1996) which does further Habermas' theory in important areas. However, this text was also published too late in English translation for detailed study. Like the other later texts then, BFN is referred to where relevant in the thesis; unlike the later texts, however, it is also accorded more detailed, albeit selective, treatment in Part Four of the thesis. It is AS then, in terms of its theoretical and autobiographical clarification of Habermas' communicative project, and in terms of the research programme, which marks a logical and convenient end to the more detailed examination of Habermas' work.

This section of the thesis also offers a critique of, and dialogue with, the central themes of Habermas' theory. This takes the form of an identification of major thematic criticisms of Habermas' work, and of a critical engagement both with Habermas' work and these critiques. Many of these Habermasian themes, whether in rudimentary or more advanced form, occur throughout the thirty plus years that Habermas has been developing his theory. Also, critics have raised similar questions about his work over many years. Given this, the dialogue undertaken here, for the purposes of analytical and thematic coherence, focuses categories of critiques around those texts where the themes being considered feature most strongly or are developed most fully. The charting of the development of Habermas' thought then, reflects the progress of his project in taking a primarily diachronic form, while recognising the
commonality of continually developing ideas within this; the critiques though, regardless of their historical location, will be synchronised around specific texts.
Chapter 4 - The Early Works: the Challenge to Positivism

Habermas' early works constitute those texts written up to, and including, KHI. In his 1971 retrospective introduction to TP, Habermas states that these early works are concerned to clarify aspects of the relationship of theory and praxis. The earlier three works, STPS, TP, and TRS, are concerned particularly to investigate the problematic empirical relationships between science, politics and public opinion in advanced capitalist societies. In the next two works, LSS and KHI, Habermas states that he is attempting respectively to clarify the methodological basis of a critical social theory, and the epistemological relationship between knowledge and interest. The first text, STPS, and especially the last text, KHI, are regarded as the most important of Habermas' early works; this importance is demonstrated also in that most critiques have been concerned with these two texts. Given this, more discussion will be devoted to these two works than his other works of the period.

Two central motifs can be identified in the three earlier texts: the attempt to develop an analysis of how positivism has generated a pathology of modernity which has had important consequences for rationality and society; and, proposals for combating this pathology and moving towards a more rational, democratic society. Each of these texts explores these two motifs in different ways: thus, each makes an important contribution to Habermas' early thought, and demonstrates the underlying coherence and continuity in that thought from the early days of Habermas' theoretical project.

1. The Role of the Public Sphere

"The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" (1989b) is Habermas' first, major published text. STPS undertakes an historical and sociological account of the development and decline of the public sphere in Europe. Habermas argues that the liberal, bourgeois public sphere of early capitalist society, from the late seventeenth century on, provides the best, empirical (but not necessarily ideal) historical example of a public arena of rational, communicative discourse. This public sphere was characterised by the growth of positive and negative political rights and freedoms, which were promoted through a range of arenas of discussion such as coffee houses, salons and reading societies, and literary and political journals. Through these, the public were able freely and rationally to discuss, criticise, and thus exercise a measure of supervision over, the growing state and its influence on the market economy and the private sector. As Habermas states:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves...The medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people's public use of their reason... (1989b, p. 27)

The public sphere's influence was reflected in the constitutional rights which sanctioned the role of the public sphere and protected the place of the private sphere. Indeed, Habermas asserts, by the nineteenth century the public sphere had become
institutionalised with the growth of press, parties and pressure groups, and "publicness became the organizational principle for the procedures of the organs of the state themselves". (1989b, p. 83)

Habermas recognises that the bourgeois form of the public sphere was not fully democratic or representative given its social base. Indeed, the notion of the bourgeois public sphere was centred on an ideological conflation, as represented in Locke's writings of the time, of the "bourgeois" as private property owner and the "homme", the human being concerned with the wider general, social interest. Nevertheless, Habermas believes, in its historical context this public sphere did have the essential democratic ingredients of equality, accountability and accessibility. Habermas asserts then that, despite its social limitations, the bourgeois public sphere provides a model for how truly democratic and communicative forms of interaction can develop; thus it demonstrates how, to some degree, "the interest of the class, via critical public debate, could assume the appearance of the general interest" (p. 88).

However, Habermas asserts, from the early nineteenth century on, the public sphere has not only declined but has become structurally transformed. This transformation has been generated in two ways. The growing interpenetration of state and society has invaded areas such as the family, the market and the public sphere; this currently takes the form of the social welfare state. Also, bureaucratic media and political institutions which give the appearance of representing the public have supplanted the role of the public sphere. These institutions have achieved this by presenting issues in primarily technocratic terms, which allow them to argue that political and social issues are mainly the concern of the experts of these bureaucratic institutions. The public's role, Habermas argues, is now that of passive, acclamatory consumer rather than that of active, critical participant in the debates on the important issues of the day.

However, Habermas states, the welfare state retains its legitimacy through recompensing the public by providing it with a semblance of democracy and rights so that it can "maintain the institutionalized fiction of a public opinion" (p. 237). Thus, Habermas states:

As soon as the state itself came to the fore as the bearer of the societal order, it had to go beyond the negative determinations of liberal basic rights and draw upon a positive directive notion as to how "justice" was to be realized through the interventions that characterize the social-welfare state. (1989b, p. 224)

Habermas' analysis of the role of the public sphere continues the pessimistic tradition of the Frankfurt School, as particularly evinced by Horkheimer and Habermas' mentor Adorno - that mass culture and instrumental rationality so dominate society that there is little potential for effective, political opposition. However, although Habermas' account supports this proposition empirically, Habermas does not support his colleagues' pessimistic prognosis of a dominant social and political instrumentalisation. Habermas proposes a way forward to combat this growing instrumentalisation of society and the public sphere: the internal and external democratisation of political organisations such as pressure groups and political parties. In particular this involves the substitution of a pluralistic and antagonistic
ethos of competing interests by a consensual ethos or a general interest to which public opinion can refer to as a criterion.

This notion of a general interest, of some universal normative standard which can form the basis for a critical public sphere, is the quintessential dynamic which generates Habermas' theoretical and methodological project of the development of a critical social theory. This is recognised by Bernstein.

Can we still, in our time, provide a rational justification for universal normative standards? Or are we faced with relativism, decisionism, or emotivism which hold that ultimate norms are arbitrary and beyond rational warrantibility? These became primary questions for Habermas. (1985b, p. 4)

This concern for universal, normative standards is not one only of abstract, academic importance: it is rooted in Habermas' biography. Thus, Bernstein (1985) states that as a teenager Habermas was shocked by the discovery of the horrors of the Nazi regime at the end of the Second World War. Habermas became particularly concerned to discover how Nazism could have emerged in a German culture which contained emancipatory, critical thinkers like Kant, Hegel and Marx. Thus, Habermas became concerned with rethinking and reappropriating the German tradition of critical thought in his pursuit of democracy.

Habermas' discussion of these three German philosophers in STPS demonstrates this concern. Here, Habermas again traces the development of the public sphere but at the philosophical level. Thus, he argues that Kant, Hegel and Marx conceive of the ideal public sphere respectively as: the public use of reason through critical-rational debate (this is similar to the bourgeois public sphere); an integrated part of the state, serving the latter in its actualisation of the ethical idea (which, in its most extreme form justified Fascism and Nazism); and, as a socialist, classless society consisting in citizen qua homme rather than bourgeois qua homme. However, Habermas continues, nineteenth century liberals such as J. S. Mill and Toqueville demonstrated a more ambivalent attitude to the public sphere viewing it potentially "as the reign of the many and the mediocre" (1989b, p. 133). This view resulted in the development of a more pragmatic, representative, institutionalised role for the public sphere. This was characterised by an increasing penetration of more spheres of society; however, it also influenced the loss of the public sphere's political, critical function for the reasons discussed above.

In STPS then a number of essential themes, which fall within the two motifs identified above, are demonstrated: the importance of studying the historical process of the deformity of rationality both in its empirical and theoretical or philosophical manifestations, and of analysing the pathology of modernity generated by this deformity; and, the recognition of the consequent need to develop a democratic, public sphere which satisfies the conditions of critical reason and which is based on universal, normative standards. These themes inform all of Habermas' later works. Thus, Holub (1991) writes:

"The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" articulates concerns that are foundational for his general perspective and that have
continued to be important for Habermas even in his most recent work.

(p.3)

STPS attracted much comment in West Germany when it was first published. Holub states that the text was very influential on the early German student movement, and was "one of the most hotly debated works of the 1960s" (1991, p.2). STPS has been given little attention by critics outside Germany until recently however; this can be explained by the lateness of the English translation, 27 years after the German publication. Another reason may be the more general accounts of the public sphere in his other works: in TCA and later texts Habermas does return to the concept in more detail, but in a modified and contemporary form which does not have the historical and sociological analytical background of STPS. It is only then with the 1989 English translation that academic attention has turned to a more systematic analysis of STPS's analysis of the public sphere; this has taken its most notable form in Calhoun (1992).

Postone (in Calhoun, 1992) and Holub (1991) express the important concern that STPS demonstrates the problematic nature of Habermas' view of the theory-practice relationship; this has important implications for Habermas' attempt to develop a critical social theory. Thus they assert that there is a theoretical tension and ambiguity in Habermas' presentation of the public sphere. This is demonstrated in the apparent oscillation between the bourgeois public sphere as a normative concept, one which is utopian, anticipatory and transhistorical, and Habermas' historical account which places it in a specific historical context, and charts its decline. Calhoun (1992) argues similarly that the least successful aspect of STPS is Habermas' attempt to find an effective institutionalised basis for a modern public sphere. Because of this, Calhoun argues, Habermas moves on from the notion of a historically-located democratic, institutional basis for rationality, in STPS, to the more transhistorical notion of a linguistically-underpinned, communicatively-based public sphere of TCA and his later works. This also involves a philosophical shift from the social and historical emphasis on Hegel and Marx in the earlier works to the moral and procedural emphasis of Kant in Habermas' later texts.

It is important to highlight this criticism at this early stage as it refers to the theory-practice tension which runs through Habermas' work, and which, commentators like Calhoun argue, becomes more problematic as his theory develops. If there is a problem here, its resolution is central to the validity of the critical social theory that Habermas professes to offer. Certainly there is a general agreement that Habermas' early attempt to locate the public sphere in existing, but more democratised and interconnected, political institutions, is a pessimistic and unconvincing one. However, it can be argued, Habermas' shift to a different foundation for an undistorted rationality does not necessarily devalue the notion of the public sphere. As Holub (1991) states: "On the basis of his linguistically based model Habermas has been able to provide a substantive foundation for free debate as the rationale and goal of social existence" (p. 15). Further, it can be argued, Habermas' modified notion of the public sphere, which identifies the new social movement as the most probable emancipatory institution which embodies a relatively undistorted rationality, can be seen as more firmly theoretically grounded by this communicative basis.

Nevertheless, this can also be questioned, given the rather general account of NSMs that Habermas provides in his later texts. Thus, Calhoun is correct to recognise that
this philosophical shift may have implications for the theory-practice relationship in Habermas' project. Habermas' later conception of the public sphere then, albeit informed by a modified account of a theory-practice relationship, remains problematic. This theme, which is central to the emancipatory project of Habermas, is discussed further below.

Fraser (in Calhoun, 1992) raises more specific theoretical and empirical concerns. She argues that problematic assumptions underly Habermas' concept of the bourgeois public sphere which reduce its explanatory power. Her central criticism is that Habermas seems to prefer a single, comprehensive public sphere as opposed to a nexus of multiple publics. The latter, she argues, is more likely to reduce the dominance of powerful groups and enhance the influence of alternative, subaltern groups which need their own space to develop their confidence and tactics. Indeed, Fraser continues, historically these alternative publics have existed, in the form of nationalist, peasant, working class, and women's publics; and at times they have been in conflict with the bourgeois public sphere. Connected to this is Habermas' assumption that discussion in public spheres should be restricted to deliberation about the common good; this excludes issues particularly relevant to women such as the familial sphere. This important criticism of Habermas' "masculinisation" of the public sphere is echoed by other feminist commentators (Fleming, in Meehan, 1995; Landes in Meehan, 1995). Fraser concludes from this that Habermas' bourgeois conception of the public sphere is insufficient as a normative ideal: a new postbourgeois conception is required which permits a multiplicity of public spheres, and is "feminised" through the inclusion of private interests.

Eley (in Calhoun, 1992) supports Fraser in arguing that historically a range of different publics have existed. He also argues that Habermas has over-emphasised the economic and political generators of change, ignoring important cultural generators such as religion and printing. Postone (in Calhoun, 1992) adds that Habermas must include the wider structural constraints, including ecological and global influences, which capitalism places on the democratic process.

Habermas (in Calhoun, 1992) accepts many of the above criticisms. Nevertheless, he asserts, his theory needs to change in terms of its degree of complexity rather than in its fundamentals. Thus, Habermas recognises the growing importance of women and other competing groups which he excluded in his account of the bourgeois public model, but nevertheless argues for the singular importance of the latter.

This can be justified by the brief Habermas sets himself in his preface to STPS. He explicitly notes the exclusion of women from the male, bourgeois public sphere, arguing that they are not relevant to his empirical account. Habermas also accepts the existence of workers' public spheres stating these took such forms as the Jacobins in France, and the Chartists in Britain; however, he argues that these spheres were oriented towards the intentions of the bourgeois public sphere and thus are not of significance. In this way he also explains his exclusion of these spheres in his investigation of and emphasis on the liberal bourgeois model.

Thus it refers to those features of a historical constellation that attained dominance and leaves aside the plebeian public sphere as a variant that in a sense was suppressed in the historical process. (1989b, p. xviii)
Habermas (in Calhoun, 1992) however, accepts that, in the modern context, a significant pluralism of interests may exist outside the institutional, collective solution proposed in STPS. Equally, Habermas recognises the importance of cultural influences such as religion and science on historical progress; here he acknowledges a shift in the influence on his thought which comes from Weber rather than Marx and the Frankfurt theorists.

Habermas justifies the limitations of his empirical account of the public sphere in STPS by stating that at the time of writing there was little relevant sociological research to draw on; thus, he did not sufficiently recognise the critical potential of a better educated, pluralistic, internally-differentiated mass public. Now Habermas recognises the possible public, discursive role of a much larger number of civil institutions than those he identifies in STPS; these may range from local clubs to national pressure groups. He points out further how the civil movements of the Eastern Bloc, consisting of groups ranging from voluntary associations in churches to human rights groups, played an important part in the collapse of communist societies and the setting up of a new order. Indeed, he states, it is this overthrow of the Eastern Bloc which has provided important empirical evidence.

As if a large-scale experiment in social science had been set up, the apparatus of domination was overthrown by the increasing pressure of peacefully proceeding citizen movements (in Calhoun, 1992, p. 454-55)

Habermas notes also that the ubiquitous presence of the media had a decisive, infectious effect on these upheavals. This demonstrates the more ambiguous nature of the media nowadays.

Habermas believes, however, that the situation in the West is different as voluntary associations are established within an institutional, democratic constitutional state based on consensus rather than force, but one nevertheless buttressed by strong media power. The question remains here then how the public sphere is to be opened up and made critical. Habermas (in Calhoun, 1992) argues, that despite the weaknesses of the original model, his central concept of the political public sphere is still relevant referring to it as "the quintessential concept" (p. 446) denoting the conditions of communication necessary for discourse.

It seems to me that the concept of a public sphere operative in the political realm, as I developed it in "Structural Transformation", still provides the appropriate analytical perspective for the treatment of this problem. (p. 455)

However now, Habermas states, this concept is discussed under "the rubric of the 'rediscovery of civil society'" (p. 453). The importance of this 'rediscovery' is considered in more detail in Part Four of the thesis.

Habermas also asserts that whereas the theoretical means available to him at the time of writing meant he could not resolve the problem of demonstrating adequately the basis for such a public sphere, he now feels he has those means. His theory of communicative action emphasises a social scientific reconstructive methodology, and a theory of a discourse-based ethics, which no longer restricts the search for
normative potentials to a formation of the public sphere that is specific to a single epoch. Thus, an empirically meaningful approach to the selective and colonised forms of public communication is to see how they work within his discursive procedures. This is most clearly demonstrated in TCA, discussed in Chapter Six.

This discursive notion of a public sphere, Habermas asserts, resolves the theory-practice tension pointed out earlier: the discourse-centred theoretical approach is able to specify the empirical preconditions for communication which have to be fulfilled in debate if the results of these are to be presumed rational. Thus, Habermas states:

Therewith this approach opens up the possibility of linking normative considerations to empirical sociological ones. (in Calhoun, 1992, p. 448)

This thesis returns to the question of how far Habermas' discursive resolution of the theory-practice problematic is valid in its consideration of MCCA in Chapter Seven.

Habermas' response to the critics of his concept of the public sphere is useful for three main reasons. It demonstrates the enduring importance of his concept of the public sphere as the core of his communicative theory, and gives an indication of how it has been, or might be, applied empirically. Nevertheless, while central to his thought, this concept has been modified in the light of the development of Habermas' metatheory. Habermas' explanation of this in Calhoun (1992) demonstrates his dialogical and dialectical approach: he engages in dialogue, considers criticism and incorporates this into his theory where he thinks it is valid. Finally, the continuity of Habermas' thought throughout his work is demonstrated by the significance Habermas ascribes to his concept of the public sphere in both his early and later theoretical development.

2. Positivism - The Pathology of Modernity

Habermas argues that a critical social theory must be developed which informs this important concept of a public sphere: "Theory and Practice" (1988c) starts the process of articulating this social theory. TP consists of three major themes: a detailed, historical account of major philosophers' treatment of the relationship of theory to practice; an extensive discussion of Hegel's and Marx's theories with relationship to this issue; and, an examination of the pathology of modernity from this perspective. TP then, at the philosophical and theoretical level, parallels STPS in both structure and intent in that it also attempts both a historical diagnosis and prognosis of the pathology of modernity. TP begins further the process of clarifying what Habermas believes are the necessary elements of a critical social theory.

In its historical account TP traces the political and philosophical attitudes to the relationship between theory and practice from Aristotelian, rationally-based classical, practical law through Hobbesian technically-based natural law to twentieth century purposive-rational positivism. Habermas argues that in the earlier Aristotelian period there was a clear relationship between theory and practice because politics was seen as being necessarily directed by praxis, by moral considerations as to what was a good and just life. In this view of politics then, a normative framework existed which guided thought and action. However, this relationship was undermined by Hobbesian philosophy which was concerned with scientifically and externally-based rights and
duties rather than with moral, ethical and practical considerations. This technical emphasis was continued under later philosophers influencing a positivist-informed science and philosophy. Thus, Habermas asserts, the technical appropriation that started with Hobbes in the seventeenth century has culminated in positivism in the twentieth; this has culminated in a transformation from a practical to an instrumental view of the concept of reason.

In this system, science, technology, industry, and administration interlock in a circular process. In this process the relationship of theory to praxis can now only assert itself as the purposive-rational application of techniques assured by empirical science (1988c, p. 254)

Habermas argues that this positivist conception is a distortion of the eighteenth century Enlightenment conception of reason; this was seen as a critical guide to practice, in that it liberated mankind from the dogmas and authorities which previously dominated its thought and action. Now, however, at the level of theory instrumental reason takes the form of the employment of the scientific method, and at the level of practice it takes the form of the predictive and technological application of empirical knowledge. Thus, TP identifies positivist philosophy and its inherent, instrumental concept of reason as the force which is responsible for the technically-generated pathologies of modernity. In opposition to this, Habermas argues that only a critical theory which draws on the Enlightenment notion of an ethical and emancipatory concept of reason, can challenge positivism theoretically.

Nevertheless, while not wanting to lose the ethical considerations of the earlier classical philosophy, Habermas accepts the need for the more scientific rigour of the positivist philosophy. Thus, Habermas undertakes an extended philosophical discussion of Hegel and Marx in his attempt to resolve this dilemma. In this discussion Habermas identifies as important the dialectic of labour, or work, and interaction, developed briefly in Hegel's Jena period (after which he moved on to the more idealist notion of the absolute identity of the spirit), and particularly in Marx's theory of historical materialism. In this theory, Marx emphasises the materialist basis of history and social evolution in articulating the relationship of the forces and the relationships of production.

For Habermas, "work" or purposive-instrumental action, refers to the instrumental or strategic action found in economic and state subsystems, while "interaction" or communicative action refers to the binding consensual norms which are intersubjectively understood and recognised in the institutional framework or socio-cultural lifeworld of society. Habermas believes that the Marxist model asserts similar descriptions in its account of the relationship between the forces and relations of production. This offers the potential for a critical social theory, and so is an important philosophical advance. However, Habermas argues that Marx insufficiently recognises the importance of the communicative: in his emphasis on, and subsumption of the communicative to, the productive forces and thus primarily instrumental reason, the promise of a Marxist-informed critical social theory is not fulfilled. Habermas argues that a Marxist class-based, revolutionary theory cannot sufficiently explain such institutional developments as the welfare state and the
increasing role of state intervention in the economy. Habermas thus proposes a Weberian-influenced model of the levels of rationalisation which he asserts is more applicable to a general history of theory than that offered by Marx. This model is characterised by the dominance of one level of rationalisation over another: the increasing encroachment and domination of the institutional framework by the subsystems of purposive-rational action, or of work over interaction.

Like STPS, TP also prefigures important themes in Habermas' later work. Habermas' concern with praxis, or attempts to achieve the good and just life, are central to Habermas' later texts, especially MCCA. Indeed, TP is the only text to explore this in substantive, political theoretical and analytical terms, with the exception of the recent BFN, as the later texts conduct their discussion on primarily philosophical grounds. Also, this early discussion of the distinctions between work and interaction in TP foreshadows the important development of Habermas' model of systems-lifeworld and the colonisation thesis developed in his central works, LC, CES and TCA. Like STPS then, TP demonstrates Habermas' early concern with themes which later form an important part of Habermas' communicative theory.

The same is true of "Toward a Rational Society" (1987d). This text is important in three respects. First, it develops and adds substance to a number of the themes discussed in the previous two works. Second, the text also raises, in a fragmented manner, new themes which were being developed coterminalous in other writings, or were to be developed more systematically in later writings. Finally, and rarely in Habermas' writings, the role of education in modern Western society is considered.

Three main continuing themes can be identified: the increasing scientisation of society; the replacement, or inclusion of, the theoretically and empirically outdated Marxist framework by one emphasising a framework of two types of action or levels of rationality which characterise social institutions; and, the need to reconstitute a democratic public sphere to oppose the dominance of the productive or purposive-rational over the communicative. These add little to the discussion above.

However, TRS also highlights themes which are important to Habermas' developing knowledge-based theory. Thus, Habermas argues that critical social science has a role in helping scientists reflect on the hidden interests, in order to help them to understand the increasing domination of the instrumental rationality which is influencing their work. Habermas' discussion here of these underlying interests presages his important cognitive interest theory in KHI. Habermas is also concerned to demonstrate that current social science theories are not sufficiently reflective and thus unable to provide this communicative function; this prefigures his discussion of the important hermeneutic problematic in LSS.

However, it is the themes which are more pertinent to Habermas' later communicative theory which are of most interest. The first theme concerns Habermas' view of the role of the student movement. In TRS Habermas identifies this movement as a potential oppositional force to the scientisation of society. Habermas later became disillusioned with, and was disowned by, the West German student movement (Holub, 1991), and so this identification is short-lived. Nevertheless, here Habermas signals ideas which also become an important part of his overall theory. In his attempt to explain student radicalisation Habermas discusses how structural changes
in society can be reflected in the personal development of the student. Thus, Habermas argues that a structural disjuncture can be perceived in the student opposition of the 1960s. He argues that the primarily middle-class, liberal post-war parental and educational upbringing of students in Western modernism has generated an orientation towards emancipatory economic and political ideals which conflict with the dominant bureaucratic, competitive, individualistic and achievement-oriented features of Western society. This conflict particularly occurs around the recognition of the students that, though the level of technological achievement has made possible the realisation of their economic and political emancipatory ideals, the dominant existing social and economic values prevent this realisation. This conflict has resulted in the students' challenge to those values. Thus, Habermas states:

It could very well be that industrial society in the United States and Europe has attained a level of development at which the problems of structural social change... find in the formative processes of the rising generations a correspondence with psychological development.
(1987d; p.30)

In this discussion of the emancipatory potential of the student movement two incipient communicative themes emerge which are central to Habermas' later theory. Habermas' attempts to relate students' psychological development to that of society foreshadows his theory of an ontogenetic-phylogenetic framework of evolution, or the parallel rational development of society and of the individual, which is developed in CES and TCA. Further, Habermas' identification of the central oppositional role of the student movement, despite his later disillusion, signals a shift away from STPS' emphasis on the democratisation of existing political institutions as the primary vehicle for the public sphere to a growing emphasis on the importance of the new social movements. This modified characterisation of the public sphere is developed further in TCA and other texts.

Habermas also identifies another new, institutional vehicle for the democratisation of society in TRS, that of the universities. Habermas acknowledges the decline of a critical, emancipatory philosophy within, and an increasing technicisation of, both society and the university. Nevertheless, he argues that universities have an immanent democratising and philosophising role in society in that the academic enterprise necessitates rational, critical reflection and discussion of methodologies, theories and standards. Thus Habermas states of such academic discussions: "they illustrate a self-reflection of the sciences in which the latter become critically aware of their own presuppositions" (1987d, p. 8). Habermas argues that this inherent critical, reflective role should be recognised and its potential fulfilled in the form of the establishment of internal democratic relationships and processes in the university, and in terms of facilitating more open, democratic relationships with the wider society.

TRS then, both continues the thematic discussions of STPS and TP, but also raises new themes; the latter feature is especially important. TRS foreshadows themes that are central not only to the knowledge-based theory of KHI but also to Habermas' later communicative paradigm in TCA. This shows that important elements of Habermas' communicative theory were being considered and developed in Habermas' earliest
works: TRS, like STPS and TP, demonstrates the underlying continuity and coherence in the Habermasian oeuvre.

In the more specific context of adult education, TRS is also significant. Habermas' discussion of the role of the university constitutes one of Habermas' few references to the specific institutional role of education in promoting a more communicative society. Habermas returns to this theme in more detail in NC, in the context of communicative challenges to the New Right. This possible communicative role of the university then, is one of the few aspects of Habermas' theory which has a clear and explicit relevance to adult education; this relevance will be discussed further in Part Three.

3. Positivism in the Social Sciences: Problem and Resolution

This thesis has shown how in Habermas' first three texts of this early period, Habermas' empirical and theoretical investigations trace the historical process of the deformity of rationality in modernity, and identify its central cause as that of a positivism which informs the social, economic and political institutions of advanced capitalist societies, and pervades the disciplines of science and social science. In his next two texts, LSS and KHI, Habermas respectively details and explores the nature of the problematic methodological basis of positivist-oriented social science, and then attempts to resolves this problematic by proposing a critical theory based on the notion of cognitive interests. At the same time both texts continue the two motifs of the earlier texts: the detailed tracing of the positivist problem, respectively here in primarily sociological and philosophical terms; and, the positing of proposals for combating this problem.

In "On the Logic of the Social Sciences" (1988b) Habermas explains how the social sciences (and to an extent the cultural sciences) have been influenced by positivist, or empirical-analytical assumptions, to the detriment of their methodological rigour and explanatory power. Habermas analyses a range of primarily sociological traditions including Weberian social action, Parsonian structural-functionalism, Schutzian phenomenology, Wittgenstein's linguistic approach, Gadamer's hermeneutics and Freudian psychoanalysis. He argues that at the methodological level these different traditions are influenced by a hermeneutic dimension of which their proponents are unaware: this dimension consists of unrecognised presuppositions or pre-understandings imbued with positivist assumptions or residues.

Weber is an exemplar of this methodological problem as he attempts to draw from both the positivist and heuristic disciplines. Weber argues that for scientificity to be achieved, explanatory adequacy must be achieved at the level of meaning and causality, respectively in terms of both interpretive understanding and causal explanations of social action. Nevertheless, Habermas argues, Weber emphasises purposive-rational action in his explanation of social action, apparently relegating the understanding of meaning to a methodologically-subordinate status. Furthermore, Weber asserts that the methods of social science can be scientific and value free - even though he recognises that the selection of problems, and even the theoretical framework adopted to explain these problems, may be value laden. Habermas argues that these criticisms demonstrate positivist assumptions which influence Weber's
theory. To prevent these positivist-influenced assumptions, Habermas argues, Weber and other social scientists must develop a methodological reflexivity which is aware of the cognitive interests that inform their methods and theories. Thus, Habermas states:

The controversial relationship between the methodological framework of research and the pragmatic function of applying the results of research can be clarified only when the knowledge-orienting interests invested in the methodological approaches have been made conscious. Only then will there be a precise answer to the question of when the social sciences in their internal structure are pursuing the intention of planning and administering, and when they are pursuing the intention of self-understanding and enlightenment. (1988b, p. 14)

Habermas believes that the hermeneutic methods of the cultural sciences or humanities can play an important role in this methodological reflexivity; here Habermas is influenced by the hermeneutic approach of Gadamer. Habermas asserts, of course, that the social sciences must continue to draw from their strengths, their consideration of structural influences and causal explanations, but should also recognise the need for an interpretive element more usually found in the cultural sciences. Thus McCarthy, in his introduction to LSS, states that Habermas' concern is "to bring explanatory and interpretive approaches 'under one roof" (in Habermas 1988b, p. viii).

LSS is important because it is the first, major analysis of social science theory that Habermas undertakes; indeed Outhwaite (1994) refers to it as "a superb survey of the state of social scientific methodology in the mid-1960s" (p. 23). LSS is also an exemplar of Habermas' dialogical approach. Further, here also Habermas demonstrates convincingly the importance of methodological reflexivity to critical theory. At this stage in his thought Habermas indicates that an understanding of cognitive interests must form the basis of this reflection on method; later, in his linguistic, communicative turn, this methodological reflexivity is achieved through the testing of validity claims.

Finally, although Habermas mainly concentrates on the hermeneutic problem in this text, Habermas does offer some suggestions as to which theories might usefully inform a reflexive, critical social theory at this stage. Thus, he argues that Freud's psychoanalytical theory demonstrates how causal and interpretive elements may be unified in a practice which emphasises the importance of reflection. In particular, Habermas signals that a modified, or reconstructed, structural functionalism, as a unified social action and systems theory emphasising a normative framework, does have the potential for explanation. While Habermas' interest in Freud apparently disappears in later works, Habermas undertakes the reconstruction of structural functionalism in TCA2.

LSS provides an important bridge between the critique of positivism in TP and the theory of cognitive interests in KHI which challenges this positivism. In the earlier three texts, Habermas makes a diagnosis of the disease of positivism in his identification of the symptoms of the pathology of modernity and his tracing of the course of the disease from an allegedly, earlier healthy state of the social organism.
In LSS Habermas identifies the cause of the disease in the social sciences as the hermeneutic problematic; KHI provides the guidelines for the cure in the form of the critique of knowledge-interests.

In "Knowledge and Human Interests" (1987a) Habermas continues the theme of the hermeneutic problematic by returning to the philosophers most influential on his theory, Kant, Hegel and Marx. In doing this he attempts to retrace the dissolution of epistemology and its replacement by the philosophy of science; this enables him to recover and assert the importance of reflection again. Thus Habermas demonstrates that Kant, Hegel and Marx facilitate the emergence of positivism through their respective emphases on the transcendental structure of a-priori consciousness, the presupposition of absolute knowledge in the development of the world spirit, and the emphasis on productive rather than reflective knowledge. Habermas also discusses the continuing hermeneutic problematic in early modern positivist philosophy through an engagement with some of its main representatives, such as Peirce and Dilthey. Habermas is more sympathetic to Peirce who emphasises the logic of procedure through which scientific theories are generated (indeed, Habermas acknowledges the influence of Peirce's pragmatic approach on his own theory in AS). However, Peirce's faith in the inevitability of the progress of scientific knowledge through this procedure, Habermas states, steers Peirce away from the communicative, consensual implications of his position. Habermas also returns to Freud, but in terms of Freud's more theoretical and evolutionary ideas. Here, he argues that Freud fails to realise the critical potential of this theory because both his psychoanalytical method and theory of history are informed by scientific and objectivistic assumptions.

In KHI then, a clear continuation of the central theme of LSS is demonstrated: Habermas is concerned to demonstrate the errors made by both pre-positivist and early positivist philosophers through the lack of self-reflection on their epistemological assumptions. Habermas sums up his view of the hermeneutic problematic which has affected both philosophy and social science. His starting position is that the objectivism of the sciences is illusory and conceals underlying interests:

we shall designate as objectivistic an attitude that naively correlates theoretical propositions with matters of fact. This attitude...suppresses the transcendental framework that is the precondition of the meaning of the validity of such propositions. As soon as these statements are understood in relation to the prior frame of reference to which they are affixed, the objectivistic illusion dissolves and makes visible a knowledge-constitutive interest. (1987a, p. 308-9)

Habermas argues that a critical social theory must be developed on the basis of a recognition of these cognitive interests. Thus, Habermas presents a theory of knowledge constituted by three quasi-transcendental knowledge-constitutive interests, and locates their place in the history of the human species. These are the technical, practical and emancipatory interests which represent differing forms of knowledge, types of discipline, methodological approaches and spheres of social existence. Thus, the technical interest informs the empirical-analytic sciences which are motivated by a cognitive interest in technical control through nomologically-derived and hypothetico-deductive methodological rules of observation and measurement. This is
derived historically from an interest in self-preservation and manifests itself in science and work, or Marx's productive forces. The practical interest is an interest in attaining consensus among actors in the framework of self-understanding derived from tradition; this informs the historical-hermeneutic sciences which are more concerned with the understanding of meaning and the interpretation of texts. This interest is derived from an interest in social reproduction, or finding a criterion for the good life, and manifests itself in social interaction and cultural traditions.

However, while the technical and practical have important functions in society, Habermas argues that their interest-bound nature can only be recognised through the third, emancipatory cognitive interest. This emancipatory interest attempts to achieve a self-reflection in which knowledge is congruent with the interest in autonomy and reason. This involves a methodological reflexivity which determines the validity of critical theoretical propositions through a recognition of their ideological dependence on presuppositions; it can then apply a critique which can transform that dependence. This third interest involves a dialectical synthesis of the empirical and hermeneutic disciplines which both draws from and transcends these in its self-reflective process.

Although Habermas explains the methodological principles necessary to an epistemologically-informed critical, social theory in KHI, he does not attempt to develop the theory itself. Habermas explains this in his preface to KHI: he states that his theory of cognitive interests is only a first step, a prolegomenon, in the development of a critical social theory. Indeed, we can see the potential basis for Habermas' later communicative theory in his assertion that autonomy and reason can already be apprehended a-priori for they are inherent in language and its underlying intention of consensus. KHI then may represent the culmination of the development of Habermas' methodologically-oriented, knowledge-based theory, but it also demonstrates the continuing awareness of more substantive communicative elements also present in the earlier works.

KHI is regarded as the most important of Habermas' early works because it attempts to demonstrate how critical theory can move on from the pessimism of the early Frankfurt School to present an anti-positivist rational foundation (but not foundationalism) to social science; this foundation is based on Habermas' theory of knowledge. Nevertheless, this theory of knowledge has been subject to substantive criticisms which Habermas responds to in a later postscript to KHI, and in his introduction to TP. Habermas also shifts his theoretical emphasis to a more communicative basis in later works.

Given Habermas' recognition of the problems of this work, and attempted resolution of these in his later works, it might be argued that we do not need to spend much time now on the critiques of his knowledge-based theory. However, consideration of the problems of this theory is required for three reasons. The first reason is that an understanding of the problems of KHI are necessary to an enhanced understanding of why and how Habermas makes his theoretical shift to a more communicative emphasis. Secondly, some critics argue that vestiges of the early problematic theory remain in the later communicative theory thus problematising that also; this will be discussed further below. Finally, some adult educators continue to refer to this early, knowledge-based position in the development and application of their theory; a
discussion of their position in Part Three argues that this makes their interpretation of Habermas theoretically questionable.

The most well-known and cited critique of Habermas' KHI is McCarthy (1984); the major criticisms involved have also been ably summarised and discussed by Held (1980). It is however in Bernstein (1985) that the most accessible account of the main problems of KHI can be found. This account is also praised by Habermas who refers to it in AS as "a brilliant article" (1992a, p. 150) which summarises well his reasons for moving away from a knowledge and interest-based framework to a communicative paradigm. Bernstein asserts that there are four main flaws in Habermas' KHI which Habermas recognises and addresses in later works. The first is the conflation of two distinct concepts of reflection: a more abstract, individually-based, Kantian theory of knowledge where reason self-reflexively grasps the universal and necessary conditions for the possibility of theoretical knowledge and practice; and, a more emancipatory, Marxist and Hegelian-based theory of ideology which reflects on the formative history and structural processes of society in order to generate enlightenment and praxis. Thus McCarthy (1984) states that Habermas' theory of reflection is too imbued with German idealism: one cannot ground practice in the transcendental conditions of theory.

The second problem is related to the first: that the claim that knowledge-constitutive claims are quasi-transcendental, and thus necessary, universal, and capable of scientific discovery, but not a-priori, cannot be justified. Habermas is concerned here to avoid the two extremes of historicism and transcendentalism in his theory, but he does not bridge this gap convincingly. These first two flaws can be seen to relate to the theory-practice tension which characterises Habermas' work.

The third problem is that the underlying philosophy of KHI is that of the consciousness or the subject which has its roots in Descartes. Bernstein argues that Habermas has become increasingly aware that this orientation obscures the intrinsic intersubjective and dialogical character of communicative action. Fourthly, Habermas, while showing the importance of a critical social science, does not show how this could be developed in terms of a parallel research programme.

Bernstein believes that Habermas' later works, in particular TCA, addresses these problems. Habermas meets the first two inter-linked criticisms through his theory of communicative action: this establishes universal, normative but not transcendental foundations, based on a pre-theoretically grounded notion of universal species competence of communication, or universal pragmatics, which can be scientifically tested but which still involves critical reflection. The three earlier epistemological, interest-based distinctions are now subsumed into Habermas' two major categories of action: purposive-rational, or instrumental /strategic action, involves technical interests, while communicative action involves practical and emancipatory interests. The third problem is resolved by turning to the linguistic, intersubjective dialogical basis of communicative action and the implicit, redeemable validity claims involved. Here, also, elements of his cognitivist thesis remain in the form of the interests which are relevant to particular validity claims. In terms of resolving the fourth problem, Habermas believes that he can develop a potential research programme from this communicative basis; this is based on a sociological theory grounded on an understanding of rationality and rationalisation processes, involving his lifeworld-
system schema, and the pathologies of modernity. These themes are discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

Another important area of criticism refers to Habermas' discussion of Freud's psychoanalysis. McCarthy (1984) argues that Habermas' psychoanalytic model is a useful metaphor for the organisation of political enlightenment in its emphasis on self-emancipation through self-understanding: this involves the overcoming of systematically distorted communication and the strengthening of the capacity for self-determination through rational discourse. Nevertheless, he believes, it is more problematic to take the metaphor too literally, as it would be difficult to transfer this to the political situation.

Held (1980) supports this stating that Habermas' interest in psychoanalysis is primarily methodological: it is uncertain how much of Freud's substantive theory Habermas would want to defend. He argues further that the general applicability of the psychoanalytic model is questionable as a voluntary dialogue between individuals cannot be compared to relationships between classes and groups which are characterised by economic, political and social inequality.

However, these criticisms by McCarthy and Held do not recognise that while Habermas' discussion of Freud in LSS does use Freud primarily as a methodological example, Habermas also refers to the importance of the substantive historical and evolutionary content of Freudian theory in KHI. Here he refers to Freud's account of the pathology of social institutions and the individual's attempts to cope with this in psychological terms. In such areas as these, Habermas asserts, Freudian theory can contribute both methodologically and theoretically to the emancipatory interest in Habermas' theory of cognitive interests.

Nevertheless, McCarthy and Held's criticisms are also partly supported by Habermas' criticism of Freud's scientism in KHI. Further, Habermas states in AS that he has done no work on Freud since the end of the sixties; indeed while he believes that the Freudian emphasis on reflexive insight does still have a relevance for communication theory, he does not see it as a parallel to discourse because of the unequal relationships involved in the psychoanalytical process. Despite this partial continuing recommendation, the fact remains that Freudian theory is markedly absent in Habermas' later works. It appears that Freudian psychoanalytical theory and method is replaced by the psychological cognitive and moral frameworks of Piaget and Kohlberg which Habermas draws from in his later works, and their social, evolutionary concomitant in Habermas' communicative theory.

However, Whitebook (in Bernstein, 1985) believes that Freud can still play an important part in Habermas' theory by helping fill in a missing dimension of human experience. Thus Whitebook argues that the disappearance of Freud is problematic as Habermas' later theory fails to grasp theoretically the dialectic of human rationality and its instinctual substratum, the opposition and resolution between reason and drives. For Whitebook the earlier Frankfurt School's emphasis on the importance of the Freudian unconscious is a correct one, and central to the project of modernity. Thus, this critique argues that Habermas' communicative theory is overly rational and fails to consider the affective aspects of communication. However, Habermas asserts in MCCA that he does acknowledge these affective aspects of human experience in
his recognition of the "weak" substantive elements of the good life. This will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

The criticisms of KHI outlined above clearly influenced Habermas to reconsider his theory of knowledge; this can be seen in the detailed responses he made to his critics, particularly in the postscript added to later editions of KHI. However, this review of the works of this early period also demonstrates that Habermas was already considering many of the themes which would later form the communicative framework of TCA. This, and Habermas' statement that KHI was only the beginnings of a critical social theory, indicate that he was gradually moving towards a more communicative emphasis in his thought. From his earliest work Habermas has been concerned to develop a valid theoretical and empirical analysis of the pathology of modernity; this requires more than sketchy guidelines on how to develop a critical social theory and an emancipatory practice from an analysis of the positivist assumptions underlying theoretical propositions. Thus, Habermas states in his preface to a later edition of LSS that the logic of research has interested him only in connection with questions of social theory. This explains his communicative turn.

This turn from the theory of knowledge to the theory of communication makes it possible to give substantive answers to questions that, from a metatheoretical vantage point, could only be elucidated as questions and clarified in respect to their presuppositions. (1988b, p. xiv)

In the texts after KHI, and particularly in TCA, Habermas starts to develop that more substantive social theory on the basis of a communicative framework which both subsumes and moves away from the more methodological, knowledge-based interests of the earlier theory.
Chapter 5 - The Transitional Works: towards Communicative Theory

Habermas' transitional works are constituted by the two texts, LC and CES; these have two roles in the development of Habermas' thought. The first is that they are works in their own right which identify and elaborate on specific substantive themes which have so far not played a major part in the development of Habermas' theory. The second role is that these texts can be seen as "bridges" which mark the transition from the primarily philosophical and epistemological concerns of KHI to the more sociological and macrotheoretical emphasis of TCA. Before the publication of TCA then, these publications were subject to considerable attention as they indicated a shift from the concerns of KHI.

1. Legitimation and the State

In his preface to "Legitimation Crisis" (1988a) Habermas comments that he is trying to resolve the problem of applying a Marxist theory of crisis to the altered reality of advanced capitalism by amending or replacing the traditional theories of crisis. Habermas attempts this by his introduction, and systematic development, of the thesis of the relationship between systems and social integration. This can be seen as a similar categorial distinction, albeit a more complex and contemporary one, to that of Habermas' distinction between work and interaction in the earlier works.

Habermas argues that crisis refers to the potential disintegration of social institutions when social integration, or the consensual foundations of the normative structures of society, are threatened.

Disturbances of system integration endanger continued existence only to the extent that social integration is at stake, that is, when the consensual foundations of normative structures are so much impaired that the society becomes anomic. Crisis states assume the form of a disintegration of social institutions. (1988a, p.3)

Habermas argues that a social-scientific understanding of the concept of crisis must grasp the connection between system integration and social integration which respectively derive from the system and its steering mechanisms, and the sociocultural world of social integration and its normative structures. This involves a historical analysis of social systems within a framework of social evolution. This more anthropological and sociological account of social evolution involves a shift from the more epistemological and philosophical, historical emphasis of KHI and other earlier works. In presenting this account of social evolution, Habermas is influenced by, but modifies, Marx's historical, more economic account of social change. Habermas distinguishes four social formations: primitive, traditional, capitalist and post-capitalist (or state socialist) formations, each of which is determined by a fundamental principle of organisation. This principle of organisation, Habermas asserts, is characterised by a certain learning capacity, and
thus level of development, "in regard to its forces of production and its identity-securing interpretive systems" (p. 16).

Habermas explores in detail the characteristics and crisis tendencies of advanced capitalist societies. He argues that Marxist theory is not adequate to this task; a more sophisticated analysis which describes the complex relationships between systems and the interpretive or sociocultural world must be used. Thus, Habermas proposes a schematic model consisting of three levels, the economic (systems), the sociocultural, and the administrative or political, which mediates between the systems and lifeworld. Habermas also proposes four crisis tendencies, economic, rationality, legitimation and motivation, which may operate at all or some of these levels.

Using this schema Habermas demonstrates the problem of Marx's focus on class conflict as the dynamic of social change. Habermas argues that the advanced capitalist societies have been able to prevent economic crises through such strategies as collective bargaining structures and the distribution, through the welfare system, of any dysfunctional secondary economic effects to less powerful, more marginal groups in society. In this way class conflict is avoided, and class consciousness fragmented. Indeed, class struggle becomes depoliticised as economic crises which may emerge, do so at the systems level, and thus appear as natural, objective catastrophes or events which cannot be prevented or altered by self-reflection.

Habermas argues that economic crises may be permanently avoided through such strategies. However, he states, this is only at the cost of other crisis tendencies emerging at other levels.

A rationality deficit in public administration means that the state apparatus cannot, under given boundary conditions, adequately steer the economic system. A legitimation deficit means that it is not possible by administrative means to maintain or establish effective normative structures to the extent required. (1988a, p.47)

Rationality deficits operate more at the political systems level; legitimation deficits are manifested also at this level but are generated by motivational crises located at the sociocultural level. Sociocultural systems, Habermas argues, require an input from the economic and political systems in terms of goods and services, legislation and welfare services. Their output consists of two privatisms: civil privatism, the motivation to accept and acclaim the depoliticised public sphere; and, familial-vocational privatism, the motivation to perform appropriately in, and accept the values underlying, the educational and occupational systems. These patterns of motivation are important to the continuation and stability of the economic and political systems. Should they be disturbed, perhaps by a rationality deficit, they will generate a crisis of motivation in the sociocultural world which results in the withdrawal of legitimacy. Habermas also asserts that new communicatively-based, normative structures are emerging, in the form of student and women's movements, which also challenge these motivational patterns of the sociocultural world. Here, we see Habermas acknowledge the emancipatory potential of NSMs again.

Habermas argues that the legitimation crisis is the central form of crisis confronting advanced capitalism; this occurs in the sociocultural sphere because the needs and expectations generated here tax the social welfare state's legitimising mechanisms
beyond their capacity. The state's claim then to legitimacy is questionable. Habermas proposes instead a different notion of legitimacy which is characterised by grounds or justifications based on rational validity claims which can be questioned and tested. This is only possible in a communication community or society where the sociocultural is based on the communicative ethic, which emphasises rationally-motivated agreement based on such generalisable validity claims. Discourse is seen as a form of communication which is removed from contexts of experience and action, where there is no restriction, no force other than that of the better argument, and all motives except that of the cooperative search for truth are excluded.

If under these conditions a consensus about the recommendation to accept a norm arises argumentatively, that is, on the basis of hypothetically proposed, alternative justifications, then this consensus expresses a "rational will." [sic] (1988a, p.108)

Habermas states that such a "rational will" must inherently express a generalisable or universal interest. This requires a cognitive linguistic ethics which can be reconstructed in the framework of a universal pragmatic. The question of whether this is possible, Habermas argues, answers itself: an appeal to the partiality of reason can only be justified so long as alternatives are posed within an already accustomed, shared, rational, communicative form of life. This argument, later described by Habermas as the performative contradiction, is central to Habermas' response to those critics of his who challenge the linguistic base to his communicative theory of TCA. This will be returned to below.

LC identifies five important themes which, while not new, are given greater significance, or are developed further theoretically, by Habermas. These are: the historical account of social evolution; its central dynamic of the systems-social integration dialectic; the role of crisis, in particular of the legitimation kind in the pathology of modernity; the central role of the interventionist welfare state in this legitimation crisis; and, the importance of a rational discourse, expressing a universal interest. Habermas refers constantly to the notion of crises in his later texts, but does not explicitly develop this theory of crises further, emphasising more the colonisation of the sociocultural world of social integration, or lifeworld, as he henceforth calls it, and the differentiation of isolated expert cultures, in his analysis of the pathologies of the lifeworld. However, the other associated central themes identified here, are developed and modified substantially in his later works. Of particular importance to the theorist of education is Habermas' account of the learning dynamic underlying social development; this is detailed further in CES. Overall, LC demonstrates the shift in Habermas' concern from the epistemologically-based cognitive interests of KHI to a more linguistically-based sociology. Indeed, the argument that rational will is inevitably generalisable is the core assumption upon which Habermas builds the overarching edifice of sociological theory in TCA, and through which he then attempts to fill in the philosophical foundations in later works.

Most of the themes identified above are developed in Habermas' TCA; an assessment of their validity, therefore, will be reserved until this text is considered. However, as noted above, Habermas' thesis of the legitimation crisis has not been detailed further. Thus, this concept, which is influential in political theory, is discussed here. Three important criticisms have been made of Habermas' view of the legitimation crisis.
The first two criticisms apply to several of Habermas' works: these refer to the lack of empirical content of LC, and its refusal to analyse political relationships at a more global level. These are addressed in Chapter Six.

The third, more immediate important criticism is Habermas' undifferentiated notion of the state. Thus, Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987) point out that Habermas seems to shift constantly between a legitimation crisis which has consequences for the state, and which has consequences for the economic system. While to a neo-Marxist, they state, this might not make much analytical difference, to other political theorists there is a clear distinction between liberal democracy and capitalism which is not recognised and thus is delegitimised. Held (1987), while more sympathetic to Habermas, also takes Habermas to task on this issue. He asserts that there is an apparent conflation or lack of distinction between government and state in Habermas' presentation: while particular governments may be vulnerable to declining legitimacy, this does not necessarily mean that the state is also threatened. Held argues that this is because Habermas' belief that the state's power is eroding underestimates the state's own capabilities and resources which are derived from its bureaucratic, administrative and coercive apparatuses.

Held also argues that responses to the growing legitimation crisis of the state may not be directed at the state: these responses may take an unfocussed, fragmented, directionless form, as people's beliefs, values and norms are not coherent but fragmented and atomised. White (1988) also suggests this, giving the example of the apparent growth of "two Britains" (and Americas) which is predicated on a division between those with and without jobs and prospects, where the former are increasingly indifferent to the problems of the latter. Indeed, one might add, referring to the similar "two thirds-one third" or "contented-discontented" thesis of Galbraith (1992) that the former also increasingly perceive the latter as a threat to their security, thus directing their hostility to the group than to the state. This is the same marginalised group, of course, which, Habermas argues, already suffer from the unfair distribution of the effects of economic problems or crises. Held argues that Habermas does not recognise such possibilities because his assumptions are drawn from systems theory which emphasises norms and integration, and the reproduction of the dominant group's ideas.

This is perhaps a too simplistic pronouncement however. LC does argue that the state is heading for difficulty given its increasing failure to attain the legitimation necessary for its capitalist-maintaining role. Further, Habermas' TCA explicitly recognises increasing reifying and fragmenting processes in society, through its discussion of the colonisation of the lifeworld, which diminish the need for the state to achieve a normative consensus. Nevertheless, Held is more correct in his argument that Habermas does not recognise or detail sufficiently the implications of these processes for the increased resilience of the state, and thus the potential for communicative-based emancipation. This lack of clarity on the nature and power of the state is an important problem, and gap, in Habermas' macrotheory. It is a problem which Habermas does not sufficiently recognise, or discuss further, until BFN. This thesis then, returns to Habermas' discussion of the state in Part Four.
2. Evolution and The Emancipatory Subject

"Communication and the Evolution of Society" (1979) is probably the most important of Habermas' works apart from TCA, in that it highlights the essential themes of the latter. McCarthy, in a useful introduction to the text, states that CES is an overview of Habermas' progress to date in developing a critical social theory. This overview has three theoretical levels: a general theory of communication; a theory of the acquisition of communicative competence; and, a theory of social evolution. Thus, Habermas presents a theory of universal pragmatics or a linguistic base which describes the universal structures of communication: these are manifested in the development of the structures of moral consciousness both at the levels of individual and society; and this in turn forms the basis of a historical account of the development of the species, of a reconstructed historical materialism.

At the first level then, Habermas presents a detailed account of universal pragmatics which draws strongly on Austin's theory of speech acts, and is also influenced by Chomsky's linguistic notion of deep surface grammatical rules. Habermas' central claim is that the task of universal pragmatics is to identify and reconstruct universal conditions of possible understanding, or presuppositions of communicative competence. Habermas argues that anyone acting communicatively must, in performing any speech action, raise universal validity claims and suppose that they can be justified. These claims are based on the recognition of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness. These refer respectively to the actions of: choosing an utterance which can be understood; intending to communicate a true proposition; expressing these intentions truthfully so that the hearer can believe the utterance; and, choosing an utterance that is right or appropriate so that mutual agreement can be attained with respect to a mutually recognised normative background. Thus:

A participant in communication acts with an orientation to reaching understanding only under the condition that, in employing comprehensible sentences in his speech acts, he raises three validity claims in an acceptable way. (1979, p.65)

The difference between the linguistic and the communicative is that the former only has to satisfy the claim to comprehensibility; the latter must also satisfy the other three validity claims. These three validity claims express a relationship to separate worlds: truth expresses a relationship to the external reality or the objective world in that it involves a representation of something in the world; rightness expresses a relationship to the lifeworld of shared norms and values in that it is concerned to establish legitimate, interpersonal relations; and, truthfulness expresses a relationship to internal reality or the speaker's subjective world in that it is concerned to express the speaker's intentions. These must, of course, all be expressed comprehensibly, through the domain of language. Habermas asserts that in every utterance all three relationships to the world are expressed simultaneously. In sum, Habermas' account of universal pragmatics provides a model in which language acts as a medium which interrelates the three worlds: the external world (truth), the social world (normative/rightness) and the inner world (truthfulness).

We can examine every utterance to see whether it is true or untrue, justified or unjustified, truthful or untruthful, because in speech, no
matter what the emphasis, grammatical sentences are embedded in relations to reality in such a way that in an acceptable speech action segments of external nature, society and internal nature always come together. (1979, p. 67-68)

Habermas argues that speech-acts have a double structure - a propositional force and an illocutionary force: the former refers to a fixed propositional content which is communicated, the latter to the generation of the interpersonal relations intended by the speaker. For Habermas, it is the illocutionary force of the speech-act which is particularly important to this theory of universal pragmatics. Thus, Habermas states:

The goal of coming to an understanding ... is to bring about an agreement... that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another. (1979, p.3)

At the second level, Habermas develops an ontogenetic schema of the development of the individual which is based upon the Piagetian cognitive developmental tradition and its adaptation by Kohlberg. Kohlberg proposes a schema of six progressive stages of the development of moral consciousness which he structures on three main cognitive levels: the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. These involve respectively the understanding and following of simple behavioural expectations, the understanding and following of norms, and the understanding and application of principles. Habermas supports this general schema, but argues that the framework is incomplete. Kohlberg's stage six, at the third level, is that of an orientation to universal ethical principles. Habermas argues, however, that we should add a seventh stage at this post-conventional level: this is a universal ethics of speech where the principle of justification of norms is no longer the monologically applied principle of generalisability but the communally followed procedure of redeeming normative validity claims discursively. This seventh stage is central to Habermas' theory of communication; the ontogenetic schema is also essential to Habermas' theory of social evolution.

Habermas argues that there is also a phylogenetic, or social evolutionary developmental framework, which parallels that of the ontogenetic: the same development of pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages of moral consciousness which occur at the individual level can also be seen in the evolution of societies. Habermas makes a detailed study of the world views of early Neolithic society, and traces its early symbiotic identification with nature to the modern world's universalistic principles underlying moral and legal representations. Habermas asserts that this historical analysis demonstrates that the reproduction and evolution of society, and the socialisation processes of its members, are dependent on the same structures of consciousness.

In both dimensions, development apparently leads to a growing decentration of interpretive systems and to an ever-clearer categorical demarcation of the subjectivity of internal nature from the objectivity of external nature, as well as from the normativity of social reality and the intersubjectivity of linguistic reality. (1979, p. 106)
Habermas is now able to move onto the third level, that of the reconstruction of historical materialism. In doing this, Habermas returns to his critique of Marx expressed in earlier texts; here, however, Habermas expresses in more detail how Marx's theory must be modified in order to meet the communicative demands of a critical social theory. Habermas states that Marx emphasises the developmental logic of the productive forces which consists of the technical, organisational and strategic rationality structures. But, Habermas argues, Marx does not sufficiently consider the rationalisation forces in the sphere of the relations of production. Thus Habermas argues that it is here that the consensual presuppositions of communicative action which can secure motivation reside, unlike the strategic action of the sphere of productive forces which is indifferent with respect to its motivational conditions. Indeed, Habermas argues that it is the relations of production which may be most important as new modes of production can only develop when a new institutional framework, and new forms of integration, have been developed.

I would even defend the thesis that the development of these normative structures is the pacemaker of social evolution, for new principles of social organisation mean new forms of social integration (1979, p. 120).

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Habermas is challenging the historical, materialist emphasis of Marxism. Habermas argues that his analysis of developmental dynamics is materialist insofar as it makes reference to the crisis-producing systems problems in the domain of production and reproduction, and remains historically-oriented in that it seeks to find the causes of social evolutionary changes. Nevertheless, if the communicative under-emphasis of Marx is to be redressed, his historical theory must be modified. Thus, Habermas does challenge Marx's conception of history as a discrete series of modes of production which is unilinear, progressive and necessary. Habermas presents a modified, alternative account which counters both the theoretical problem of the historical or philosophical objectivism of Marx's account of the development of modes of production, and the empirically problematic nature of this historical and predictive account. Thus, Habermas proposes a weaker, less dogmatic version of historical materialism which is multi-linear, contingent and which may be regressive. For Habermas then evolution refers to cumulative processes that exhibit an overall direction.

It is not evolutionary processes that are irreversible but the structural sequences that a society must run through if and to the extent that it is involved in evolution. (1979, p. 141)

Habermas asserts that this dialectic of evolutionary progress is generated by learning mechanisms and processes which exist at the level of individuals and societies; in the latter, this occurs in the spheres of both the productive forces and the lifeworld. This framework, Habermas believes, can be applied to the dialectic of social progress, including that of the dynamics of class struggle. Thus, evolutionary progress is explained by the fact that new levels of production and social integration open up not only expanded ranges of options but also problem situations, new historical needs - such as those generated by legitimation and motivation crises - which must be resolved. This leads to a higher stage of development of productive forces and of social integration, which bring new problems in turn. The resolution of these crises
and needs then, requires developments in learning ability or new stages of social learning. Thus, Habermas states:

I do not regard the historical-materialist criterion of progress as arbitrary. The development of productive forces, in conjunction with the maturity of the forms of social integration, means progress of learning ability in both dimensions: progress in objectivating knowledge and in moral-practical insight. (1979, p. 177)

Finally, Habermas provides a historical account of how differing interpretations of legitimacy, "the social-integrative preservation of a normatively-determined social identity" (p. 182-3), and the grounds of justification which have underpinned them, have characterised differing types of states in the historical process. Habermas asserts that two main concepts of legitimation are used with reference to the modern, social welfare state. These are found in the normativist and empiricist accounts of democracy, respectively associated with the classical, neo-Aristotelian, and Schumpeterian, proceduralist, schools of thought. However, Habermas asserts, these are unsatisfactory as they do not recognise the justificatory importance of the systematic evaluation of legitimacy claims through rational, intersubjective procedures. In opposition to the empiricist and normativist theories, Habermas offers a "reconstructivist" account which locates the concept of legitimacy within an evolutionary theory which describes different and progressive levels of justification which correspond to different levels of learning. Habermas asserts that this phylogenetic schema should be informed by cognitive developmental psychology which "can be understood at least as a heuristic guide and an encouragement" (p. 205). Here again then, Habermas demonstrates the importance of his ontogenetic-phylogenetic framework to his emerging communicative theory.

Outside TCA, CES is arguably the most important text of Habermas' terms because of its detailed presentation of major themes in Habermas' communicative theory: the account of universal pragmatics, Habermas' theory of individual and societal development; and, his theory of a Marxist-informed but modified historical materialism. Here, Habermas both develops themes presented in LC and prefigures the important themes of TCA. In terms of the former, Habermas elaborates on his account of the evolution of society through developments in the relationship between systems and lifeworld, and the roles of the learning dynamic, and of legitimation, within this. In terms of the latter, Habermas' development of a multi-levelled theory in CES, in which the important elements of communication theory, moral consciousness and social evolution are articulated, presents accessible, and in detailed manner, some of the important, main themes which inform the sociological reconstructions of TCA.

As CES is a precursor to TCA, many of the criticisms made of the former also apply to the latter work. For this reason criticism of their common themes is reserved until after discussion of TCA. However, it is in CES that Habermas presents his most detailed account of the reconstruction of historical materialism; critiques addressed to this theme therefore are considered here.

It is noted above, with respect to LC, that a problem of Habermas' work for many critics is its lack of empirical specificity. This criticism is also levelled at CES, and
in particular in terms of its presentation of the emancipatory subject. Thus, McCarthy (1984) argues that a continuing problem of Habermas' theory is the lack of an identifiable emancipatory social group which can be proposed as a replacement for the traditional Marxist working class. McCarthy also argues that Habermas proposes a more general human interest in rational self-determination through constraint-free communication rather than class interest; thus, it is not clear how this serves to orient effective political practice. For McCarthy, this raises the theory-practice problematic now increasingly obvious in Habermas' work: in emphasising the universalistic elements of his theory, he diminishes the importance of the situational and practical aspects of his theory.

Held (1980) supports McCarthy in arguing that the universalistic elements of Habermas' thesis increasingly outweigh the practical ones, and thus there is no real sign of a revolutionary subject. This is paradoxical because in effect Habermas seems to be offering a theory of fundamental social transformation which has little basis in social struggle. Thus, Habermas does not refer to diverse and changing political movements in Europe nor the importance of non-European societies in world politics. Heller (in Thompson and Held, 1982) also argues that the omission of class as addressee is problematic. In essence the addressee is now a Kantian practical reason; however, Habermas does not recognise that issues of class and force may be needed before discourse can take place.

Rockmore (1989) asserts that in his increasing adoption of a Kantian-based theory, Habermas has moved away from a Marxist and class-based theory. In particular he argues that Habermas fails to show the practical relevance of theoretical reason, thus how it contributes to human emancipation. Indeed, Rockmore believes that Habermas is more concerned with the elaboration of an adequate social theory as an end in itself, rather than with the identification of how to attain radical social change. Rockmore devotes his text to proving that Habermas is no longer a Marxist. Thus he traces Habermas' development of thought, arguing that Habermas has moved through two stages with respect to historical materialism: in his earlier texts Habermas is at the first stage of theory reconstruction in his attempt to work on the original theory; in the later texts, Habermas moves onto the later stage of theory replacement, where he argues that historical materialism has exhausted its potential. Rockmore asserts that Habermas cannot reject historical materialism and its emphasis on the economic interpretation of social phenomena, and still claim to be a Marxist.

Habermas (in Calhoun, 1992) responds to these criticisms by accepting that he is not a Marxist in the traditional, orthodox sense; indeed he asserts that the problem lies with those who continue to hold this outdated position. Equally, Habermas (in Thompson and Held, 1982) argues that contemporary history shows us that social class cannot now be seen as the emancipatory addressee. Nevertheless, he does not agree that he has substituted human reason as this addressee or universal subject. Given his notion of crisis and the displacement of conflict to the margins, developed first in LC, Habermas believes that the groups in which conflict potentials accumulate need not be identical with class.

Habermas has made his position clearer still more recently. In PF he gives his view of socialism.
Socialism too ought never to have been conceived of as the concrete whole of a determinate, future form of life - this was the greatest philosophical error of this tradition. I've always said that 'socialism' is useful only if it serves as the idea of the epitome of the necessary conditions for emancipated forms of life, about which the participants themselves would have to reach understanding. (1994b, p. 111)

At different times in his writings Habermas does provide concrete suggestions as to who might be the new emancipatory leaders. In TRS the student movement is seen as a possible vanguard (although, as Chapter Four describes, Habermas soon moved away from this view). In TCA and AS, Habermas proposes, more generally, that the new social movements at the interface of systems and lifeworld (which might or might not include students) may possess this role. This is shown in his example (in Calhoun 1992), discussed in the previous chapter, of the revolutionary populist movements which overthrew the Eastern Bloc.

White (1988) supports Habermas in his current formulation of NSMs, arguing that Habermas' communicative model provides the best available framework for constructing explanations of the behaviour of these movements and how and why they have arisen - in particular in terms of their response to and challenge of the colonisation of the lifeworld. However, White continues that Habermas does not make explicit the potential of these movements, but rather expresses caution both about their emancipatory possibilities and internal tendencies to administrative instrumentalism. This rather general and negative presentation of NSMs by Habermas, White argues, has blinded his critics to the potential that Habermas does invest in them.

However, many commentators argue that Habermas' notion of NSMs is less satisfactory. Benhabib (1986) argues that Habermas' rather general espousal of NSMs in TCA does not take us much further. She also questions whether Habermas' theory of the potential of NSMs in response to the welfare state encroachment on the lifeworld is useful given that it is not certain that victims of welfare crises, who nevertheless support the welfare state, and the (mainly middle-class) NSM members who seek to transform it, are necessarily the same. Habermas seems to recognise this problem of uniting such disparate groups in AS when he states:

How can unity be achieved among such heterogeneous groups - anti-productivist, old-productivist, new middle-class? Above all, what kind of political vision can be developed beyond the impasse of the welfare state? (1992a; p. 210)

This concern about the lack of a concrete emancipatory subject is pertinent particularly to the issue of how successfully Habermas deals with the theory-practice problematic in his revised Marxism. While clearly still aware of the need to address this central issue, Habermas' attempt to resolve it does seem, as McCarthy and Benhabib argue, to remain at the level of generality and anonymity. A further important consideration is the need for a systematic theoretical and empirical analysis of the relationship between important NSMs, society and the state which would also provide us with a clearer assessment of their emancipatory potential. Some critical supporters of Habermas (Cohen, in Meehan, 1995; Schlosberg, 1995)
have started to explore this relationship; to date, Habermas has yet to attempt such an analysis.
Chapter 6 - The Central Works: the Communicative Paradigm

"The Theory of Communicative Action", Volumes 1 (1991b) and 2 (1987c), are regarded together as Habermas' most seminal work in his attempt to develop a critical theory of society which offers an explanation of, and challenge to, the pathology of modernity. Given this status as the most systematic and full representation of Habermas' mature theory, TCA has attracted the most discussion and critique in the Habermasian oeuvre. This is reflected in the detailed account of TCA, and of the responses to it, given here.

TCA marks a distinctive theoretical change from the epistemological and methodological concerns of LSS and KHI in that it brings to the fore those more substantive, theoretical communicative aspects which play a lesser part in Habermas' earlier period. Habermas makes this change clear in his preface to TCA. Here, Habermas states that his motivation for writing the text continues to be the pathologies inherent in the development of Western societies. He identifies particularly what he refers to as the neo-conservative, or New Right, social welfare state compromise which maintains the capitalist pattern of economic and social modernisation. This confirms the continuing motivation for his theoretical project that he has shown from his earliest works. However, Habermas also states that he has moved from attempting to explain this from primarily within a theory of cognitive interests. Thus, he states:

I do not conceive of my analysis of the general structures of action oriented to reaching understanding as a continuation of the theory of knowledge with other means (1991b, p. xli).

1. The Rationalisation of Society

In the first volume, "Reason and the Rationalisation of Society" (1991b), Habermas attempts to develop a concept of rationality that is not tied to the old paradigm of consciousness, to the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of philosophy and social theory. He argues that this can best be done through sociology as this discipline remains concerned with society as a whole including the lifeworld, and has been concerned particularly to explain the capitalist modernisation of traditional societies and its pathological side-effects.

Habermas asserts that sociology, in its consideration of rationality, has operated on three levels: the metatheoretical, the methodological and the empirical. The metatheoretical level is concerned with developing a framework for action theory which emphasises the rationalisable aspects of action; the methodological level involves a theory of interpretative understanding that clarifies the internal relation between meaning and validity; and, the empirical level explores whether and in what sense the modernisation of society can be described from the standpoint of cultural and societal rationalisation.
Habermas argues, however, that a rationality problematic exists at each of these levels in social science because the levels are not informed communicatively. Thus, at the macrotheoretical level this is constituted by models of action, the strategic, normative and dramaturgical, which take up primary relations to the objective, social and subjective. Habermas argues that the communicative model of action, based on his theory of universal pragmatics, is preferable as it involves a simultaneous relation to the world in all three spheres of action.

Habermas, however, is mainly concerned with the rationality problematic at the methodological level, in terms of the validation and universalisation of meaning. Here, Habermas repeats some of the theoretical investigations and arguments of LSS. Essentially, he argues that the sociological traditions ignore the hermeneutic problematic of how their privileged justifications and presuppositions can be separated from, or validated within, the lifeworld. Habermas argues that the requirement of objectivity is only satisfied if it demonstrates the universal validity of the structure of internal processes of reaching understanding in terms of the three actor-world relations and the validity claims associated with them. The problem for communicative social theory however is that the ontologically privileged position of the scientific observer is lost. The observer is situated and acting within the same communicative context as those that are being studied; this seems to preclude the theoretical objectivity Habermas seeks.

However, Habermas believes that his reconstructionist approach solves the problem of developing a communicative theory which satisfies the requirement of objectivity and universality; this is achieved through a "history of theory with systematic intent" (1991b, p. 140). Here, Habermas proposes the critical examination and reconstruction of the competing paradigms of important social theorists. This involves the identification of their particular problems, and the attempt to solve these problems by means of a communicatively-informed theory of rationalisation. Habermas argues that all theories have been influenced to some degree by their social contexts, by certain collective interests, or previous theoretical traditions. Given this, Habermas asserts:

Thus, for any social theory, linking up with the history of theory is also a kind of test; the more freely it can take up explain, criticize, and carry on the intentions of earlier theory traditions, the more impervious it is to the danger that particular interests are brought to bear unnoticed in its own theoretical perspective. (1991b, p. 140)

For Habermas, the development of a theory of communicative action, underpinned by a universal validity, must involve a reconstruction of theories of important sociologists like Weber, Mead, Durkheim, Parsons and Marx. The macrotheoretical content then is determined by the reconstructivist methodological approach. The rest of TCA is devoted to the reconstruction of this communicatively-informed macrotheory.

TCA's central motif is that the theories of Habermas' sociological predecessors are locked, to some degree, into the paradigm of consciousness. This, Habermas argues, gives an instrumentally-oriented, restricted view of rationality which has implications for both the analysis of the pathology of modernity and for attempts to resolve this
pathology. Habermas bases his reconstructions on the paradigm of communicative action which differs both epistemologically and ontologically from the earlier paradigm. Epistemologically, there is a shift from an isolated subject-object relation to an individual or collective subject-subject relation. Ontologically there is a shift from the view of the nature of reality, which may emphasise primarily the objective, social or subjective world - as respectively in the perspectives of positivism, social interactionism and phenomenology - to one which emphasises the interconnection of the three worlds and differing subject-subject relations in each world. Thus, TCA offers a critique of the adherents of the subjectivist paradigm and proposes a new communicative paradigm.

Habermas applies this critique to Weber who is the strongest influence on Habermas' communicative theory. Habermas argues that Weber is locked into the paradigm of consciousness through his "Protestant Ethic" thesis. Here, Weber argues that the purposive rationality of techniques and organisation has increasingly influenced the progressive rationalisation of world views, and the cultural differentiation, and increasing irreconcilability, of the value spheres of science, law and morality, and art. This results in a loss of meaning and of freedom in the world: the former derives from increasing secularisation and from the separation of the moral and legal, resulting in a formal and positivistic law rather than in a substantive, value-rational law; the latter derives from the increased instrumentalisation and bureaucratisation of the subsystems of the economy and the state.

Habermas asserts that Weber's "iron cage" thesis has influenced other social theorists. Thus Horkheimer and Adorno, the major, early members of the Frankfurt School, accept the Weberian view of rationalisation in terms of the instrumentalisation and reification of society and of consciousness; they also believe it is verified by modern historical developments such as fascism, Stalinism and US commodification.

Habermas states that these views are locked within a philosophy of consciousness which has generated a teleological, monological concept of the lifeworld. This fails to recognise the communicative potential of the lifeworld, and leads inevitably to an emphasis on instrumental rationality characterised by a predominance of systemic imperatives over the lifeworld. Habermas argues that this derives from Weber's narrow, one-sided view which emphasises the organisational, purposive-rational aspects of rationality to the neglect of other aspects of culture and society which may be informed by other kinds of rationality. These are also necessary to a communicative theory and practice because they are the cultural and institutional expressions of the three worlds which language mediates in promoting understanding. Thus, truth relates to the scientific, cognitive sphere, normative rightness to the moral-practical sphere, and truthfulness, authenticity or beauty to the aesthetic-expressive sphere. Weber does not recognise the communicative aspects of these value spheres, Habermas asserts, because he does not distinguish between the value content of these spheres, and the formal, universalistic standards, or value claims, which inform them, both within and across cultures.

In particular Habermas argues, Weber should distinguish between social action corresponding to the coordination of action through interest positions, thus oriented to ends and success (the non-social, instrumental and strategic) and coordination through normative agreement (action oriented to reaching understanding) which correspond
respectively to the perlocutionary and illocutionary features of speech acts. Given Weber's emphasis on the strategic, Habermas argues, the instrumental rationalism of the Protestant Ethic is inevitable. However, a more communicative emphasis, which includes the important distinction between the logic and dynamics of development, would demonstrate the possibility of outcomes other than the instrumentalisation of the economy and the administration. Thus Weber's thesis of the generation of capitalism is problematic as it does not also recognise the moral, interpersonal basis of this ethic.

At this first switchpoint Weber parts company with a theory of communicative action. What counts as fundamental is not the interpersonal relation between at least two speaking and acting subjects - a relation that refers back to reaching understanding in language - but the purposive activity of a solitary acting subject. (1991b, p. 279)

Habermas argues, in opposition to the Weberian view, that social theory must shift from the instrumental and strategic, non-social views of action to a communicative concept of action which recognises the importance of the lifeworld: this requires a conjoining of the perspectives of the lifeworld to systems theory. Habermas attempts this through his reconstructions of the sociological theories of Mead, Durkheim and Parsons. This he undertakes in the second volume of TCA.

2. The Communicative Reconstruction

In the second volume, "The Critique of Functionalist Reason" (1987c), Habermas argues that the theories of Mead and Durkheim can be reconstructed through drawing from their respective emphases on the ontogenetic and phylogenetic, and through identifying the communicative elements inherent in their theories. In terms of the latter Habermas asserts that Mead has already crossed from the paradigm of consciousness to that of communicative action through his emphasis on symbolic interactionism and the role of language. However, Habermas asserts, Mead's theory still remains problematic as the latter's symbolic interactionism focuses on language more as a medium for coordinating action and for socialising individuals than for reaching understanding. Also, Habermas argues, Mead over-emphasises the lifeworld as the milieu for the self-formative processes of the individual or socialisation, and therefore does not sufficiently recognise external influences and constraints on these processes.

Habermas believes that these problems originate in Mead's ontogenetic framework, which is developed from the perspective of a growing child. From this perspective, Mead explains socialisation as the process of individualisation and normativisation as the child gradually separates the three worlds of the subjective, objective and social. However, it is with the explanation of normativisation, the separation of the "I" from the "me" that Habermas takes issue. Here, Mead refers to the child's capacity to take over the attitude of the generalised other, the already existing norm-regulated, moral community. However, this community is constituted by adults who have themselves initially developed from children. In arguing this, Habermas asserts, Mead gives a regressive ontogenetic explanation which moves in a circle; what is needed here is a
phylogenetic explanation which looks outside this process for an understanding of how the normative validity or moral authority of the generalised other develops in the first instance and from where. To redress this, Habermas argues, we need to look outside the interactive socialisation process, at the older manifestations of the generalised other, namely sacred symbols, to analyse the transition from symbolic interaction to norm-regulated action. For this, Habermas turns to Durkheim.

Habermas cites Durkheim's theory of religion which argues that normative consensus and social functions were originally fulfilled by ritual practice and religious symbolism. The foundations of the moral and the normative then, are to be found in the sacred which embodies the collective consciousness and society. Habermas argues that this theory resolves the phylogenetic problem in Mead's construction. However, Habermas believes also that Durkheim's theory has its own problems: in particular, while Habermas supports Durkheim's description of the structured differentiation of society, he believes that Durkheim has over-emphasised the collective, integrative and institutionalised aspects of his theory to the neglect of individuation.

Habermas resolves this Durkheimian over-emphasis on the phylogenetic through his thesis of the linguistification of the sacred. This thesis argues that as institutional differentiation occurs, attitudes develop and claims are made which relate to the three worlds of the objective, social and subjective. Thus the respective social functions of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation pass from the domain of the sacred to that of everyday communication. Habermas argues that the more communicative action takes over the function of social integration from religion, the more the ideal of an undistorted communication community gains empirical influence. The spread of democratic ideas and the demand for the legitimation of the state demonstrates this influence.

Both Mead and Durkheim accept that there has been this process of democratic will-formation, embodied in the universalistic principles of law, which is established in the modern state. However, for Durkheim's theory this takes the form of a contract. Thus, modern, differentiated society consists of an organic solidarity based on a contract. The binding force of this contract in modern law is not ensured just by state compulsion, but in particular by a legitimacy which derives from a general interest, representing the collective consciousness, which has been clarified and recognised through discourse. Here, Habermas argues, Durkheim comes close to the notion of the linguistification of the sacred; he does not achieve this, however, because he is still locked in the paradigm of consciousness. Mead does recognise both individuation and cultural or social reproduction in his sociological framework of social interaction and linguistic intersubjectivity; Durkheim's sociological approach, however, emphasises that scientificity can be achieved only through a cognitive instrumentalism which emphasises external reality and the individual as primarily a collective and social being.

Habermas asserts that this reconstruction of the theories of Mead and Durkheim, which integrates their respective communicative or potentially communicative aspects, provides the beginnings of a valid sociological theory which can explain the communicative origins and development of both the individual and society. Thus, Habermas states:
we can combine the theoretical approaches of Mead and Durkheim to construct a hypothetical initial state; from this we can hope to learn what the change to communicative action - at first narrowly circumscribed by institutions - meant for the process of hominization, and why the linguistic mediation of norm-guided action could have supplied the impetus for a rationalization of the lifeworld. (1987c, p. 86)

In attempting this, Habermas returns to his central concern, discussed at length in LC and CES, of articulating the relationship of systems and lifeworld. He argues that this problem particularly comes to the fore with the theory of Parsons; it is, however, by drawing from Parsons’ theory that Habermas attempts this resolution. Before we do this however, it is important first to outline Habermas' description of the lifeworld.

Repeating his analysis of the phenomenological theorists in LSS, Habermas argues that the phenomenological account of the lifeworld is too narrow in its emphasis on the cognitive function of the generation of culture, and too subjectivist in its emphasis on the experiencing subject. Thus Habermas argues that the lifeworld is communicatively based, and also performs the functions of social integration and socialisation. Habermas proposes then, that the lifeworld possesses three structural components, culture, society and personality, which refer to the reproductive processes of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. These processes are rooted respectively in the linguistic propositional, illocutionary and expressive components of speech acts, and in the cultural value spheres of science, law and morality, and art. These structural correspondences permit communicative action to perform its different functions and to serve as a suitable medium for the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld.

Habermas argues that Parsons fails to recognise the importance and role of communicative action and the lifeworld; this is why the latter is unsuccessful in his attempt to reconcile the tensions between systems theory and action theory. This failure to distinguish system from lifeworld, Habermas argues, means that Parsons is not able to explain the social pathologies recognised by Habermas and the other social theorists. Thus, Parsons believes that the increased rationalisation of the world has generated an institutionalised individualism which has enhanced freedom and meaning; the social pathologies which concern Habermas and the other theorists discussed are described by Parsons as systemic disequilibria.

Nevertheless, while Habermas disagrees with the systems emphasis of Parsons’ theory he is influenced by it in his explanation of the growing rationalisation and colonisation of the lifeworld. Thus Habermas argues that as the rationalisation and differentiation of society progresses, so also does the potential for a decline in mutual understanding and the risks of disagreement and conflict. This places an increasing burden on communicative action's capacity to resolve these conflicts. Here, Habermas draws upon Parsons' systems theory to argue that relief mechanisms have developed for reducing these risks; he refers to these as "delinguistified" steering media. Thus, Habermas argues that the development of the economy and its medium of money, and of government administration and its medium of power, now coordinate major areas of social action. Habermas asserts though that this "mediatisation of the lifeworld" has also generated a colonisation of the lifeworld, and
the segmentation of the cultural value spheres of science, morality and art into elitist expert cultures which are increasingly cut off from the lifeworld. Thus, he states, there has been:

- the penetration of forms of economic and administrative rationality into areas of action that resist being converted over to the media of money and power because they are specialized in cultural transmission, social integration, and child rearing, and remain dependent on mutual understanding as a mechanism for coordinating action. (1987c, p. 330)

Habermas argues that it is this colonisation of the lifeworld which has generated the social pathologies of the modern world: when lifeworld functions are interfered with, as in the rationalisation of the lifeworld through the processes of colonisation and segmentation described above, this generates disturbances in the reproduction process and corresponding crisis manifestations: these include loss of meaning, anomie, and crises of legitimation and motivation.

Habermas believes that Parsons is unable to see the burdens placed on the internal structures of the lifeworld by growing system complexity because he brings the rationalisation of the lifeworld conceptually in line with the growth of system complexity. In contrast to this, Marxism does contribute to an understanding of this dynamic; however, it can only provide a partial explanation given its subsumption of the lifeworld to the system. Habermas argues that by emphasising the former through his thesis of the colonisation of the lifeworld, which redresses the balance, he can also account for the failure of orthodox Marxism to comprehend the central features of advanced capitalism and their crisis tendencies.

Habermas believes that Marxism has failed as a social theory because its belief in the inevitable progress of society through the class struggle is falsified by Weber's more accurate account and explanation of instrumental rationalisation. Further, Marx's emphasis on economic exploitation is not sufficiently theoretically analytical to explain or recognise the colonising role of the subsystems of the economy, and in particular power as evinced through the state, on the lifeworld and social integration. Given this, Habermas argues, Marx's identification of the emancipatory role of class must be replaced by the notion of other groups which are attempting to oppose this colonisation. Here, Habermas returns to the theme of the emancipatory role of new social movements raised in LC and CES.

Habermas concludes by demonstrating the empirical applicability of his now fully-developed communicative theory. He applies his colonisation thesis to the welfare state in the former West Germany, considering specifically the institutions of the family and education in the private sphere. He provides a historical account of the juridical stages states have progressed through which reflects the stages of evolution discussed in CES. The final form of juridification, Habermas asserts, is the democratic welfare state which is characterised by social welfare law which guarantees legal entitlements. For Habermas this form of juridification both promotes and constrains the freedom of the beneficiaries: it serves the goal of social integration but also promotes the disintegration of life-relations when these are separated from the consensual mechanisms that coordinate action, and are transferred over to the
media of money and power. This penetration of the lifeworld generates the social pathologies of modernity as it increasingly instrumentalises the lifeworld functions of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation.

The more the welfare state goes beyond pacifying the class conflict located in the sphere of production and spreads a net of client relationships over private spheres of life, the stronger are the anticipated pathological side effects of a juridification that entails both a bureaucratization and a monetarization of core areas of the lifeworld.

(1987c, p. 364)

Habermas also demonstrates his theory's empirical worth by applying it to the central concerns of the Frankfurt theorists, and in particular that of the potential for protest. Habermas argues that his thesis of the colonisation of the lifeworld is proved correct by the fact that protest movements have emerged just where we would expect them to - in those areas of the lifeworld where ways of life are perceived as needing defending or restoring. Thus, protest is not now concerned with the domains of money and power, the areas of material reproduction and distribution or of political parties and associations: the "old politics" of collective bargaining is being replaced with a new politics concerned with issues of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. This involves struggles in areas of life such as the quality of life, equal rights, individual self-realisation, and human rights.

In TCA Habermas refers to many of the themes of the earlier works (with the notable exception of the epistemological cognitive emphasis of KHI). Equally, Habermas develops and integrates more fully the themes introduced in the works of LC and CES into a theory of communicative action. This is achieved through the reconstruction of the theories of major sociologists around the quintessential theme of communicative action. The final result is Habermas' macrotheoretical communicative paradigm: a linguistically-based, sociologically reconstructed and philosophically transformed paradigm which can explain and resolve the problems of modern society in a way which previous analyses have been unable to do.

3. The Critique of Habermas' Communicative Theory

The macrotheoretical communicative project of Habermas outlined above is an ambitious one; as Brand (1990) states: "There is in sociological literature nothing quite like it" (p. vii), apart from, perhaps, Parsons' structural functionalist theoretical project earlier in the century. Outhwaite (1994) concurs with Brand's pronouncement, stating also that the importance of Habermas' theory is recognised even by the latter's critics. Given this recognition, it is not surprising that Habermas' communicative theory has been subject to extensive critique. This critique is represented here at the macrotheoretical, methodological and empirical levels; this adopts Habermas' description of the significant levels of social theory, and enables categorial coherence.

At the macrotheoretical level a major theme many critics have addressed is Habermas' phylogenetic-ontogenetic framework which attempts to explain the growth and nature of rationality in modernity. Brand (1990) questions the status Habermas claims for his framework of the evolution of rationality. He argues that a distinction about what constitutes evolutionary gains and what does not is not so much a matter
of knowledge but of will. McCarthy (1984) identifies further the possible problem of a culturally-rooted bias in Habermas' conception of developmental stages which may influence Habermas' notion of the applicability of ontogenetic models to social systems. Schmid (in Thompson and Held, 1982) supports this, arguing that Habermas' theory of social evolution seems normatively-loaded, as Habermas shows no clear empirical connection between the ontogenetic and phylogenetic to support his case. McCarthy (in Thompson and Held, 1982) and Giddens (in Bernstein, 1985) also make the point that Habermas is markedly less critical of Piaget's and Kohlberg's developmental psychology than he usually is of those thinkers with whom he engages.

Arnason (in Honneth and Joas, 1991) also questions the general historical-developmental logic Habermas proposes in his theory of social evolution. Thus Arnason argues that the communist state did not develop from similar historical contexts or origins as capitalism, and differs markedly in terms of the nature of, and relationship between, the three cultural spheres. Further, he argues, Habermas ignores the international capitalist structure, relationships and processes, centre-peripheral relationships and counter-tendencies all of which must be taken into account in analysing societal development. In sum then, Habermas' model is too restrictive in design and unable to embrace the variety and variability of the economic, political and cultural relations within societies.

Benhabib (1986) also expresses concern about Habermas' evolutionary theory. She argues that this evolutionary theory seems to involve a natural development of rationality, so that it is difficult to see what would constitute an emancipatory break with the present if communicative rationality is to be fulfilled. For Benhabib communicative potential can only motivate if it contains a utopian potential. Given this seems not to be the case with Habermas' theory she wonders whether the theory leads to a joyless reformism or whether we can see a moment of transfiguration. Benhabib argues for the latter, and suggests a way to modify Habermas' theory to include this utopian moment. This is considered further in Chapter Seven.

A number of the above criticisms are problematic for Habermas. The apparent parochial nature of Habermas' analysis remains a problem; however, as Chapter Eight demonstrates, this applies less to Habermas' more recent works, such as PF, and to his more journalistic writings. Further, in Habermas' defence we can argue, in Popperian terms, that should a theory explain everything it ceases to have heuristic value. Habermas has never claimed anything more for his macrotheory other than it is a heuristic framework which others can develop in their own way; anything more might indicate those positivist presuppositions which Habermas is so concerned to avoid. Thus, he states in AS:

I have said goodbye to the emphatic philosophical claim to truth. This elitist claim to truth is a last remaining piece of myth, and you know that I do not want to return to where the Zeitgeist is leading today.

(1992a, p. 129)

The apparent uncharacteristic, uncritical nature of Habermas' adoption of cognitive-developmental theory is also problematic. However, this has been partly redressed by later works: while still supportive of Kohlberg's general framework, Habermas does subject Kohlberg to critique in MCCA and JA. The criticism that Habermas'
evolutionary theory is culturally-biased is dealt with below in the context of his account of validity claims. Equally, Habermas' lack of empirical content is also addressed in the discussion of his distinction between the logic and dynamics of evolution below. Other criticisms can be given an immediate response, however. Habermas can answer Brand's argument through his notion of the performative contradiction: developments in communicative rationality must be seen as evolutionary gains because if they were not, Brand's argument would not make sense nor would he have any valid premises to base it on. Habermas' evolutionary thesis can also provide an effective response to the criticisms of Arnason and others. Thus, Habermas' important distinction between the logic of evolutionary development and the dynamics of this development in his evolutionary schema makes this schema more flexible than his critics seem to recognise. Although there is an overall evolutionary trend towards increasing rationality, this can take different paths, and also include short-term counter-trends and reverses. Given this, Habermas can explain the developments of communism and its collapse - and implicitly does in his reference to this collapse (in Calhoun, 1992) described in the previous chapter - as an example of such a different path, or short-term counter-trend, to Western rationalism. Furthermore, as Dews, in his editorial introduction to AS argues, in TCA and elsewhere Habermas does discuss the position of state socialist countries, arguing that they are the "mirror image" of capitalist societies. Thus, of these two types of post-liberal society, welfare capitalist societies are characterised by a central dynamic of the economic system but one restrained and counter-balanced by the administrative system. However, it is the unrestrained administrative system of the bureaucratic state apparatus which is dominant in the socialist societies. Habermas opposes such a bureaucratic dominance:

Modern societies separate out an economic system regulated by the medium of money in the same way as an administrative system; the two systems are on the same level, and however their various functions complement one other, neither may be subordinated to the other.

(1990b; p. 17)

Thus, Dews argues, there is more space in the political domain of pluralist, capitalist societies for communicatively-generated public opinion which helps to relieve the market of the pressures of legitimation; this is not the case in socialist societies. This must inevitably lead to the collapse of the latter if they are not able to achieve their ends.

In sum then, these responses to some major criticisms levelled at Habermas' theory of evolutionary rationality demonstrate that this theory has a wider empirical applicability and a greater explanatory power than his critics recognise.

Central to Habermas' evolutionary theory is his historical and sociological account of the differentiation of, and relationship between, the system and lifeworld. This has also been criticised strongly. The central criticism levelled at this categorial distinction, and Habermas' treatment of its philosophical origins in work and interaction, is that the distinction is too discrete and simplistic (Giddens in Thompson and Held, 1982; Held, 1980; Joas in Honneth and Joas, 1991). Berger (in Honneth
75

and Joas, 1991) and McCarthy (in Honneth and Joas, 1991) also argue that Habermas' systems-lifeworld is too inflexible, and does not recognise specific problematic situations arising from the intrusion of lifeworld principles into the purposive subsystems. Alexander (in Honneth and Joas, 1991) asserts similarly that here Habermas is making a similar error to Weber - that of simplistically arguing that political and economic life is instrumental or strategically-oriented, while not recognising that the lifeworld may also be influenced by this rationality problematic. Many of Habermas' commentators (Bauman, 1992; Benhabib, 1986; Giddens in Thompson and Held, 1982; Joas in Honneth and Joas, 1991; Mouzelis, 1992) believe that Habermas' emphasis on the colonising force of the system demonstrates that Habermas has been too influenced by Parsons and is moving to a functionalist, reifying tendency which de-emphasises power as an analytical concept and problematises emancipation.

Habermas responds to this strong critique in AS: here he recognises his emphasis on systems, but argues that this was necessary in TCA if he was to explain the reification of rationalisation. However, he continues, he rectifies this in his preface to the third edition of TCA where he asserts that an emphasis on the system's colonisation of the lifeworld, and the democratic blocking of this by lifeworld processes, are equally valid analytical perspectives. Indeed, a close reading of TCA2 demonstrates that Habermas makes this clear also in the original text. Thus, he writes that either dominance by the lifeworld or systems is possible:

> Both are conceivable: the institutions that anchor steering mechanisms such as power or money in the lifeworld could serve as a channel either for the influence of the lifeworld on formally organized domains of action, or, conversely, for the influence of the system on communicatively structured contexts of action. In the one case, they function as an institutional framework that subjects systems maintenance to the normative restrictions of the lifeworld, in the other, as a base that subordinates the lifeworld to the systemic constraints of material production and thereby "mediatizes" it. (1987c, p. 185)

Nevertheless, despite this theoretical openness to the influence of the lifeworld on systems, Habermas' writings continue to leave him open to the general criticism of the emphasis on systems. Habermas does not consider in detail, unlike his thesis on the colonisation of the lifeworld, what forms a dominance by the lifeworld might take. Further, with the exception of the events in Eastern Europe discussed with reference to STPS, Habermas provides no empirical accounts of the power of lifeworld processes in blocking systems colonisation. The closest that Habermas comes to an empirical identification of the democratic, communicative forces of the lifeworld is the discussion of the role of the NSMs; the problematic nature of this role is considered below.

This emphasis on systems also has implications for the autonomy of the individual. Habermas addresses this problem in his distinction between singularisation and individuation in PT. Singularisation refers to the individual who plays many diversified roles confronting multiple opportunities; however, the choices open to the individual under system conditions at the conventional level are not under his control. Habermas argues that this progressive inclusion in increasing numbers of functional
subsystems does not imply any increase in autonomy. In this context, he states:
"social individualization isolates or singularizes but does not individuate in the
emphatic sense" (1992c, pp. 196-97). Individuation, however, refers to the
development of a post-conventional society and identity where the universalisation of
norms leads to their becoming ever more abstract, and thus more compatible with
increasing pluralism and concrete diversity. Thus, Habermas writes:

The idealizing supposition of a universalistic form of life, in which
everyone can take up the perspective of everyone else and can count
on reciprocal recognition by everybody, makes it possible for
individuated beings to exist within a community - individualism as the
flipside of universalism. (1992c, p. 186)

This description of individuation demonstrates a potentially more autonomic role for
the individual than his colonising thesis suggests. Habermas discusses this post-
conventional autonomic potential further in MCCA. This is considered in the next
chapter.

A final major area of contention, at the macrotheoretical level, is the extent to which
Habermas' theory, resting on its belief in the universalisability and generalisability of
validity claims, can be regarded as scientific and objective. Critics (Giddens in
Bernstein, 1985; McCarthy in Bernstein, 1985; Thompson in Thompson and Held,
1982) argue that Habermas can not claim such a universalist basis for these validity
claims. Thus, McCarthy, repeating the argument levelled at Habermas' evolutionary
theory, argues that Habermas' privileging of the three relations to the world reflects
the traits of Western culture. In contrast to this, the authors above are concerned to
keep the door open for other possibilities of rationalisation not recognised in
Habermas' schema. In apparently not recognising this possibility, it is argued,
Habermas' theory is ethnocentric.

If this is the case, then Habermas' theory, despite its emphases on the critique of
ideology and critical reflexivity, is itself imbued with ideological presuppositions
which must affect its claims to universality. Held (1980) believes that this is the case,
arguing that a central problem of critical theory, both in the Frankfurt School and for
Habermas, is its claim to privileged status as a means of enlightenment. Thus, Held
asks: "How can the possibility of critique be sustained, if the historical contextuality
supports this position, arguing that Habermas' concept of the ideal speech is
insufficiently cogent to evade the dilemma of untenable a-priorism on the one hand,
and unacceptable relativism on the other.

Lukes (in Thompson and Held, 1982) draws attention to the general nature of
Habermas' communicative process which begs important questions such as who are
the participants in unconstrained discourse (actual people? representatives? ideal
types?); this is not specified and so is problematic. Thus Lukes points to the problem
of deciding between the two positions of men in the morally superior post-
conventional stage except from some outside neutral, objective standpoint. He also
questions whether, given Habermas' dislike of compromise, one can derive
generalisable interests from value pluralism except through imposition. In sum, for
Lukes these problems demonstrate the continuing need for decision in moral and political thinking which Habermas attempts to avoid.

In response to these criticisms, Habermas in AS recognises that he has developed his theory from the three cultural value spheres that were differentiated out in modern Europe, but argues that they nevertheless have a wider applicability - and so are not ethnocentric. In JA Habermas argues that surface structures of languages may differ radically but still have a common underlying semantic structure, or 'deep grammar structure'. In essence then, Habermas argues that it is difficult to see how the question of possible opposing forms of rationality, with differing linguistic structures, but with supposed equal validity, can be discussed or assessed without recourse to Habermas' rational argumentative process. Here again, Habermas' notion of the performative contradiction demonstrates its force.

Habermas (in Thompson and Held, 1982) also accepts the problem that there is a difficulty in how one relates a universalistic ethics back to historically concrete situations, discursive practices, and forms of life. But, Habermas argues, one cannot derive criteria for the evaluation of particular forms of life from the argumentative process. His justification for this assertion, that universalistic principles can inform but not decide particular social contexts, without falling into the traps of foundationalism or relativism, is developed primarily in MCCA. This is considered further in the next chapter.

Substantial critique is levelled also at the methodology underpinning Habermas' macrotheory. The critique here is primarily directed at the theory of pragmatics and its underlying assumption of a universal rationality which can be assessed or developed through a testing of the underlying generalisable validity claims of communicative action.

McCarthy (in Bernstein, 1985) opposes Habermas in his stand that validity claims are, and must be, rationally decidable. McCarthy argues that an objectivating, hypothetical attitude in which judgement is simply bracketed is a possibility also. Thus, he argues, one does not have to accept or challenge a claim, but can ignore it while still accepting that the act it is based on is rational because the subject believes it has an objective grounding. Schnadelbach (in Honneth and Joas, 1991) also questions the internal relationship between understanding and evaluating linguistic utterances, arguing that one can understand without having to adopt a position on whether these truth claims are fulfilled or not.

Held (1980) and Thompson (in Thompson and Held, 1982) make the further general point that the claim that all speech is oriented to discourse and consensus is hard to sustain, citing such examples as poetry and banter. Held (1980) argues also that the general notion of the force of the better argument does not exactly explain how we decide this, what positions will be regarded as valid, and what evidence is accepted. Thompson (in Thompson and Held, 1982) argues further that agreement may not necessarily be induced by the force of the better argument, but by such emotions as compassion or commitment. He also raises the lack of evidence in Habermas' concept of discursively-redeemable truth claims, and argues that there is insufficient explanation as to how the model of idealised speech can be used for the critique of ideology.
Habermas (in Bernstein, 1985) responds to McCarthy's criticism by arguing that an abstention from an affirmative or negative position also constitutes a rationally motivated position (as in perhaps the putting off of a decision). Habermas (in Honneth and Joas, 1991) also argues that we must evaluate in order to understand. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is an underlying foundationalism to understanding as discourses are open to differing ideas: it is the procedure by which these discourses are conducted which is important.

Furthermore, as White (1988) argues in support of Habermas, Habermas accepts the existence of forms of expression such as irony, humour and fiction, but argues that these are of derivative status. Thus, their success depends on intentionally using categorial confusions because we have the competence to distinguish the three universal validity claims. Even where the irony or humour may not have been intended, the hearer also makes similar distinctions. Equally, White asserts, we cannot avoid the consensual element in speech as it is inherent in communication. Indeed, despite increased pluralism and thus scope for increasing options, there are enough counter-examples - from traffic rules to basic institutional norms - to make it clear that this does not decrease the chances for agreement on common interests.

Habermas states in JA that he believes that much of the above criticism stems from his apparent early notion of the ideal speech situation which suggests a hypostatisation, a concrete standard against which actual speech situations can be measured; this is not Habermas' view. Habermas makes this clear:

> The point is, rather, that if we want to enter into argumentation, we must make these presuppositions of argumentation as a matter of fact, despite the fact that they have an ideal content to which we can only approximate in reality. (1993, p. 164)

Nevertheless, the universalistic principles which underpin these presuppositions do allow us to reach out to, even if we cannot achieve, this ideal. Habermas refers to Peirce's concept of the communication community in developing this argument. Thus, he states:

> the idea of the unlimited communication community serves to replace the moment of infinitude or timelessness of the unconditionality of truth with the idea of a procedure of interpretation and communication that transcends the limits of social space and historical time from within the world. (1993, p. 165)

For Habermas, this communicative procedure only takes place in terms of discourse, speech situations which involve the testing of validity claims. But, Habermas does recognise, in AS, that many forms of speech, which are more strategically or particularistically-oriented, will involve compromise. Nevertheless, there must be agreement on the procedures for reaching compromise which will involve, at some level, discourse and the testing of validity claims.

> When only particular interests are at stake, conflicts of action cannot be settled, even in ideal cases, through argumentation, but only through bargaining and compromise. Of course, the procedures for reaching
compromise must for their part be judged from a normative standpoint. (1992a, p. 173)

Habermas' responses demonstrate the coherence of Habermas' communicative methodology. This argues that the lifeworld consists essentially of the background of unproblematised consensus against which communicative action takes place. When part of this background consensus is challenged or breaks down, it can only be re-established by special argumentation procedures, or communicative discourse, which examine, in order to reassert or redefine, the validity claims under question. Thus language serves as a medium of action coordination because it allows us to continue and re-establish, via argumentation, this background consensus to society. Thus Habermas' claim that all speech is oriented, to some degree, to consensus and understanding, is sustained.

The third area of critique, the lack of empirical reference in Habermas' theory, has already been raised several times in consideration of both this work and earlier works. Essentially, this critique questions the extent to which Habermas' delineation of the rationalisation of modernity and the lifeworld has empirical application and can generate useful empirical research. Thus, a constant criticism of various themes of Habermas' work has been their abstract formulation and lack of empirical content.

The latter criticism of a lack of empirical content can only be partly supported. It has been demonstrated above that Habermas does apply his theory to society at times in his work. In particular, Habermas analyses institutional aspects of the former West German welfare state, and reconstructs the earlier Frankfurt theorists' central themes by reference to current empirical concerns, in TCA2. Also, Habermas discusses historical and political tendencies in the former West Germany in NC; this is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

A more specific criticism of Habermas' failure to apply his theory to society is that of his lack of consideration of women and the feminist movement. Thus, Fraser (1989) points out that Habermas says nothing about women in TCA. She argues that Habermas is gender-blind in his categorial distinction between system and lifeworld; this is seen in the fact that his theory is not capable of analysing the family as part of a nexus of power and economic relationships. Fraser also argues that the feminist new social movement contains both universalistic and particularistic elements, and thus emancipatory potential in Habermasian terms; however Habermas does not recognise this. Cohen (in Meehan, 1995) echoes this critique, arguing that the history of women's movements in Europe and the United States illustrate emancipatory advances which have already been achieved in both the public and private spheres.

Fraser's criticism that Habermas excludes women from his theory is correct; he acknowledges this in later works. Thus, in AS he recognises their importance as an NSM, compared to others, arguing that the women's movement possesses universalistic principles and is inherently radical. He states:

In this lies the radical difference of the women's movement. Other protests can be keyed to attempts to conserve or recapture what has already been. For women there is no such possibility. There is no viable return, there is no status quo ante which is desirable or is worth
restoring. For this reason there exists a-priori a critical potential in the women's movement. (1992a, p. 67)

However, Habermas has not attempted any empirical analysis of this emancipatory potential of feminism; he rectifies this, if not substantively, only in his most recent work, BFN. White (1988) partly excuses this omission of Habermas' by arguing that Habermas is more concerned to focus on the crises or pathologies of modernity than the specific condition of women; however, women can use his theory to inform their own concerns. Fraser (in Calhoun, 1992) and Cohen (in Meehan, 1995) acknowledge that analyses such as that of the role of women or the family can be usefully developed within the Habermasian theoretical framework. Indeed, as we have seen above, Habermas demonstrates this with respect to his discussion of systems encroachment on the family in the former West Germany, in TCA2.

Antonio (1989) and Shalin (1992) highlight the theoretical abstraction of Habermas' theory. As proponents of the pragmatist school of sociology, they recognise the pragmatist influences of Peirce, Dewey and Mead on Habermas' communicative theory. Nevertheless, they argue that Habermas' communicative theory resorts to evolutionary theoricisation and quasi-foundationalist universalism which diminish the sociological powers of his critical emancipatory theory, and contradict the supposed influence of pragmatism on his work. Shalin (1992) argues further that Habermas' critical theory could benefit from the pragmatist insights into embodied experience and objective uncertainty, or contingency.

Habermas, however, asserts that American pragmatism has played an important part in his theoretical development from the 1960s; indeed, in NC and AS, he frequently acknowledges the influence of the American political and philosophical democratic tradition on his thought. As we have seen above, in his discussion of individuation in PT, Habermas also argues that the universal can generate the pluralistic, differentiated and autonomic lifestyles that the pragmatists support. Equally, in his important differentiation of morality or justice, and ethics or the "good life" in MCCA, Habermas demonstrates that the universalism of the former provides the principles which allow such concerns as contingency and the affective to have a place in the latter. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The arguments above demonstrate that Habermas' theory is more empirically-oriented than many of his critics recognise. Benhabib (1986) argues that Habermas' theory of communicative action has empirical potential as it contains an explanatory-diagnostic dimension to critical theory lost in the instrumental rationalism of the earlier Frankfurt School. The above discussion has demonstrated how these explanatory and diagnostic aspects of Habermas' theory have empirical application. However, Benhabib also argues that a critical social theory must not only explain and diagnose the pathology of society but also indicate the emancipatory means by which this pathology can be defeated. Thus, Benhabib supports Habermas' belief that a critical social science must be a social science with practical intent. However, Benhabib believes that Habermas' communicative theory does not sufficiently demonstrate this practical intent. This, again raises the question of the theory-practice problematic in Habermas' theory.
Benhabib is correct in asserting that Habermas' empirical analyses are descriptive rather than normative; however, this is the latter's intention. Habermas does not want to make prescriptions as to what active communicative institutions should look like; indeed he argues that this is not possible. For Habermas, attempts to suggest the constitution of an emancipatory society or lifestyle lie in the sphere of ethics rather than morality, and it is with the latter his communicative theory is primarily concerned. This essential distinction, and its implications for Habermas' view of emancipatory practice, is discussed further in the next chapter.

One important criticism which has so far not been addressed is the extent to which Habermas writes successfully as a sociologist or social theorist rather than as a philosopher. Thus, while drawing in detail on the classical sociologists, Habermas does not refer to contemporary social theory at all in TCA. R. Collins (1987) argues that Habermas' interpretation of the classical sociologists is also wanting. In particular, he argues that Habermas over-emphasises Weber's world-historical view of rationality, and ignores Weber's account also of societies changing through political, economic and ideological struggle between social groups. Brand (1990) also believes that Habermas has exaggerated the instrumental rationality of Weberian theory. Equally, Rockmore (1987) and Mouzelis (1992) respectively argue that Habermas over-emphasises the systems elements of Marx's and Parsons' theories.

It is not possible in this thesis to subject the works of Weber, Marx and Parsons to detailed scrutiny to assess the accuracy of these comments. For the moment, this possible problem of Habermas' interpretation of the traditional theorists must be noted. What can be stated, however, is that in one sense these comments strengthen further Habermas' communicative theory. Paradoxically, while these criticisms, if correct, weaken Habermas' theory qua sociological analysis, they strengthen it in terms of its reconstructionist project: Habermas' critics assert, in effect, that the sociological theory of these theorists possess more communicative-rational elements, and thus may already be closer to the communicative paradigm, than Habermas recognises.

This question as to the accuracy of Habermas' sociological interpretation also raises another important question: the extent to which Habermas is a sociologist and philosopher, as he asserts in AS, or primarily a philosopher. Certainly, Habermas demonstrates a strong familiarity with sociological traditions in TCA, and, as the previous chapter demonstrates, also provides a detailed overview of major sociological schools in LSS. However, both of these accounts of sociological thought focus on the more traditional social theorists. It is noteworthy that Habermas does not engage with modern sociologists such as Giddens - whose theory of structuration (1979) might be considered of particular interest to Habermas given the latter's concern to integrate theories of systems with theories of action. Indeed, given that Giddens is arguably the only major, post-war sociological theorist of importance other than Habermas in the West, and Habermas' interest in engaging in dialogue with his contemporaries, this lack of acknowledgement is surprising. We return to this question of Habermas' familiarity with modern sociology in Chapter Eight.

One of the reasons for raising this question of Habermas' interest in sociology, is that after TCA most of Habermas' work is philosophically based. Although the sociological theoretical edifice of Habermas' communicative theory has now been
constructed, the philosophical underpinnings still need to be put into place. Habermas then, continues to develop, and justify, his communicative theory. This is evident especially in MCCA.
Chapter 7 - Discourse and its Challengers

Habermas' later works constitute those written up to and including AS. For the reasons explained in the introduction to Part Two, AS will not be discussed substantively. The other texts written in this later period are less important than those considered in the previous chapter; however, they still play a role in elaborating on particular aspects of the communicative paradigm Habermas presents in TCA. Each work consists of a number of essays covering a range of themes, but only those themes relevant to the Habermasian project, and the concerns of this thesis, are discussed. MCCA describes the philosophical justifications necessary to the validity of the procedures of communicative action; PDM engages with postmodernists to demonstrate the continuing importance of modernity, and the communicative paradigm; and, NC marks a return to political and historical analysis where Habermas attacks the revival of Conservatism in West Germany and Europe generally.

1. Morality and the Good Life

"Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action" (1990a) essentially addresses two themes: the present-day role of philosophy, and the philosophical justification for the procedural framework of communicative action which Habermas now refers to as discourse ethics. It is the latter theme which constitutes the substantive position which is presented in MCCA, and to which most discussion is devoted.

In TCA the philosophical basis for Habermas' communicative paradigm is only sketched in; in MCCA Habermas rectifies this. Indeed he states in AS that, while recognising their importance to his research project, he left the two important themes of discourse ethics and Kohlberg's theory of moral consciousness to one side in TCA. This was because, at this time, he felt that the introduction of the linguistic-pragmatic concept of communicative rationality was more important to the philosophical foundations of TCA.

In MCCA Habermas argues again for the important, if limited, role of philosophy in social science. Here Habermas returns to the concern first raised in TP, and particularly delineated in a lesser work, PPP: that of the role of philosophy in modern pluralist society. Habermas states that philosophy no longer has the foundationalist role ascribed to it by Kant and others. Nevertheless, Habermas argues, philosophy does have a more limited role as stand-in and interpreter. By the role of stand-in, Habermas means that philosophy can stand in for empirical theories with strong universalistic claims; the social sciences, for instance, draw from both the intuitive knowledge of competent subjects and from the systematic knowledge handed down by culture in its attempt to explain the universal bases of rational action and language. The role of a communicatively-based philosophy here is to provide a theory of rationality from which ideas can be provided for use in empirical settings by social science.

But, Habermas asserts, this does not mean that philosophy loses its identity; this is where the role of interpreter comes in. In TCA Habermas describes the splitting of or
segmenting of the cultural value spheres from the lifeworld. This poses the problem of the isolation of these cultural spheres from the lifeworld. The task of philosophy here, Habermas argues, is to overcome this isolation of science, law and morality, and art, and their respective expert cultures, by mediating between the everyday world and cultural modernity. In this way, a communicatively-informed philosophy takes on the role of an interpreter on behalf of the lifeworld, and on behalf of the expert cultures in their relationship to the lifeworld, and to each other.

Habermas demonstrates the continuing role of philosophy as "stand-in" with reference to Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory. Habermas asserts that there is a clear complementary relationship between philosophical and psychological theory in Kohlberg's work: this work involves the rational reconstruction of moral intuitions (philosophy) and the empirical analysis of moral development (psychology). Thus, Habermas argues that the psychological theory as to why individuals move from one stage to the next is grounded on a moral-cognitive theory which specifies that the later stage is morally better or more adequate than the earlier stage. Equally, this philosophical conception of morality also must fit the psychological facts. In sum, Habermas states:

The empirical theory presupposes the validity of the normative theory it uses. Yet the validity of the normative theory is cast into doubt if the philosophical reconstructions prove to be unusable in the context of application within the empirical theory. (1990a, p.39)

Habermas recognises that criticisms can be made of Kohlberg's developmental schema on theoretical, methodological and empirical grounds, and discusses these criticisms in detail. The account of Habermas' adoption of this schema in CES, in Chapter Five, indicates how Habermas modifies this schema to meet some of these criticisms and satisfy his ontogenetic thesis. Essentially however, Habermas argues that the problems of the Kohlbergian psychological schema do not falsify his own philosophical theory of moral-cognitive development, of the rational reconstruction of the intuitive knowledge of communicatively competent subjects; what is important is that the schema is in general accord with the philosophical theory, which Habermas believes is the case. Indeed, Habermas argues that the concern with the detail of the Kohlbergian schema detracts from the essential distinction between the conventional and post-conventional stages, and the importance of the latter for modernity.

In MCCA Habermas develops his notion of the post-conventional stage from his earlier account in CES by distinguishing between moral questions and evaluative questions, or questions of justice and the good life. Habermas states that his theory can only refer to the former: the latter is the responsibility of participants in a particular discourse. Thus, Habermas argues that at the post-conventional stage interactions become subject to a moral point of view separate from specific lifeworld contexts, where reflectively-tested claims to validity rather than the social currency of a norm becomes the determining ground for action. In terms of Kohlberg's developmental moral-cognitive schema, Habermas asserts, the transition of the conventional to the post-conventional stage marks the transition from adolescent to adult, and from "norm-guided action to norm-testing discourse" (1990a, p. 127).
Habermas justifies his belief in this post-conventional discursive procedure by arguing that when we discuss moral-practical questions of the form "What ought I to do?" we presuppose that the answers need not be arbitrary; we believe that we can, in principle, distinguish between right norms and wrong ones. He argues further that this process of arriving at moral decisions involves normative validity claims which must be grounded in the form of a logic of moral argumentation. This is not necessary to other claims such as propositional truth claims for instance, which require an analysis in terms of epistemology or the philosophy of science, and thus which are (at least initially) independent of a logic of discourse.

Habermas demonstrates the need for this discursive procedure through a discussion of the principles underlying practical discourse: this takes the form of a detailed, neo-Kantian philosophical account of the communicative procedure. Like Kant, Habermas wants to propose a practical reasoning which anyone could rationally will to be a norm binding on all. However, Habermas replaces Kant's answer to this, the categorical imperative, with a procedure of moral argumentation. Thus Habermas proposes two principles: the principle of universalisation, and the principle of discourse ethics (D). The former states that every valid norm requires all involved to accept freely and observe the rules and consequences of what is seen as in every one's interests. This is a Kantian-influenced bridging principle which allows the transition to the latter principle (U) which states that the validity of norms are only established by the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse. The former refers to the rules of argumentation which form part of the logic of discourse; the latter presents the idea of a moral theory which the philosopher as moral theorist must seek to justify.

Habermas argues that such a justification can be made. He asserts that every argumentation, regardless of its context, rests on necessary transcendental-pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation, which take the form of testable validity claims from whose propositionless content the principle of universalisation can be derived. Habermas argues that this criterion must also be applied to those sceptical of this claim. Thus, in attempting to refute Habermas' position the sceptic must inevitably subscribe to certain presuppositions of argumentation that are incompatible with the propositional content of the objections, such as relativism or ethnocentrism. Habermas refers to this as a performative contradiction that the opponent makes performative use of the very thing he wishes to negate in, thus demonstrating its necessity. In previous chapters we have seen how he can make use of this argument in challenging his critics.

Habermas argues that the principles outlined above shift the philosophical frame of reference from Kant's solitary, reflecting moral consciousness to the community of moral subjects in dialogue: what each can without contradiction will to be a general law becomes what all can will without contradiction to be a universal norm. Habermas argues further that modern philosophers such as Rawls, in his thesis of the "the veil of ignorance" are also locked into frameworks of solitary consciousness, or the subjective paradigm. In contradistinction to these monological procedures, Habermas emphasises a mode of communication which is reciprocal, empathetic and public.
However, Habermas is concerned to emphasise that his thesis of transcendental-pragmatic justification should not be seen to constitute an ultimate justification. Rather, he argues, discourse ethics takes its place among the reconstructive sciences concerned with the rational bases of knowing, speaking and acting, and can be built into theories of, and empirical research into, the development of moral and legal consciousness at both the sociocultural and the ontogenetic levels (as he has attempted to show in CES and TCA1) - in this way gaining indirect corroboration.

The distinction in discourse ethics between moral questions and evaluative questions then, is essential to the role of communicative philosophy. The former can in principle be decided rationally, in terms of justice or the generalisability of interests; the second in terms of issues of the good life or self-realisation. Thus, at the conventional level, moral judgements are evaluative in that they derive both their concreteness and action-motivating potential from the intrinsic connection of the good life and institutionalised ethical life: they are accessible to rational discussion only within the horizon of a historical form of life, or individual life style. At the post-conventional level though, moral questions are removed from their context: they can in principle only be decided rationally in terms of criteria of justice, or the universalisability of interests. As Habermas states:

> There is only one reason why discourse ethics, which presumes to derive the substance of a universalistic morality from the general presuppositions of argumentation, is a promising strategy: discourse or argumentation is a more exacting type of communication going beyond any particular form of life. (1990a, p.202)

This does not mean, however, that discourse ethics cannot suggest general guidelines, or structural aspects, which inform the good life. Habermas argues that, to some extent, certain conditions of social and political life are necessary to discourse: there has to be a modicum of congruence between morality and the practices of socialisation and education, and socio-political institutions. The last is particularly important because morality thrives only in an environment in which post-conventional ideas about law and morality have already been institutionalised to a certain extent.

Of course, Habermas recognises that discourse ethics cannot by itself ensure that the necessary structural or procedural conditions are met. Often lacking are the crucial institutions or socialisation processes. Equally, he states, material living conditions such as poverty may make a mockery of the demands of universalist morality; the evaluative, ethical issues are important here. Thus, Habermas states:

> What moral theory can do and should be trusted to do is to clarify the universal core of our moral intuitions and thereby to refute value skepticism. What it cannot do is make any kind of substantive contribution. By singling out a procedure for decision making, it seeks to make room for those involved, who must then find answers on their own to moral-practical issues that come at them, or are imposed on them, with objective historical force. (1990a, p. 211)

Thus, Habermas recognises the limitations of philosophy in the modernity of today: when it comes to major world problems such as third world poverty and hunger or the
nuclear arms race, philosophers, like everyone else, face complex moral-practical issues and need to get a clearer view of the situation they find themselves in. Here the historical and social sciences may be of greater help than philosophy.

MCCA is the most important of Habermas' later texts in terms of the philosophical development of Habermas' primarily sociological paradigm. In MCCA, Habermas argues strongly, and in more detail than previously, for the continuing, albeit limited, role of philosophy in social science. Habermas justifies this in his presentation of a detailed, neo-Kantian, philosophical account of, and justification for, communicative procedure, now referred to as discourse ethics. Also important is Habermas' use of Kohlberg's social psychological schema of stages of moral development which allows Habermas to draw upon the notion of a post-conventional stage which is essential to his theory of social evolution and his justification of modernity. In this text, Habermas clarifies this post-conventional stage further, in his distinction between moral questions and ethical or evaluative questions, questions of justice and of the good life. The distinction between, yet at the same time interdependence of, these two aspects of the post-conventional stage is also essential to Habermas' communicative project: both in terms of its universality and thus theoretical validity, and in its demonstration of how the universal can inform the particular. This also clarifies further the optimism which underpins this project.

The central criticism of this text concerns the moral-ethical distinction that Habermas makes. His critics argue that Habermas' distinction is too formal and abstract: in its attempt to retain its universal basis, it distances itself too far from social reality to be of use. Many critics then, argue that there must be some overlap between questions of justice and the good life. McCarthy (in Calhoun, 1992) argues that Habermas' resolution of the distinction between morality and the good life is problematic when there are fundamental divergences in value-orientation between participants, as there must be in a highly pluralistic society. Reaching an agreement with a universalistic outlook would necessarily involve rejecting value orientations which are too self or group-centred. Thus, only those value differences compatible with post-conventional moral orientation can survive practical discourse. This means, McCarthy believes, that there must be some agreement on what is good: formal procedures cannot be separated from substantive content as Habermas attempts.

Further, McCarthy also sees a case for arguing that agreement can be based on recognition of just political, democratic mechanisms which may allow participants to accept laws they see as unjust or unwise in the expectation or hope that they may be able to use the same democratic resources to change them. In sum, McCarthy argues that such an extension, which recognises that unanimity is only one possible outcome of discourse, is more realistic than Habermas' Kantian-based procedure of rational consensus.

Benhabib (1986), in a detailed critique of Habermas' position, also argues that there needs to be some kind of contextualist input to Habermas' work. Thus, Benhabib argues that Habermas' universalisability principle can be derived only with additional assumptions: the pragmatic rules which govern discourses have already been pre-interpreted in the light of material normative assumptions - such as that communicative ethics can only refer to responsible, equal, adult participants. Also, she continues, we cannot assume that the principle of argumentation alone can settle
substantive disputes, where minority participants may suffer substantial loss, unless we can also bring psychological, cultural, sociological argumentations into play to convince them of the desirability of proposed resolutions.

A second problem, Benhabib argues, is that the communicative ethic of Habermas sits uncomfortably between a legalistic and juridical conception of public life and a democratic-participatory ethos; this generates the potential danger of a legalism which under-emphasises the vital moral-transformatory aspect of discourse. Cohen and Arato (1994) make a similar point, arguing that the "good life" structural aspects of Habermas' discourse ethics do not go far enough. Thus, they argue, his theory has an institutional deficit: discourse ethics necessarily involves (although without having to delineate in specific terms) the recognition of a range of democratic institutions and a system of rights in the public sphere.

Benhabib argues also that we must avoid the rationalistic fallacy of a dualism of the rational and emotive by separating justification and application or contextualisation, a regard for the contingencies of life contexts. Benhabib does not believe we can simply apply a moral principle gained through discourse to a particular life situation, keeping the two distinct, as any description or categorisation of a life situation which enables us to apply the moral principle to it already entails some form of evaluation.

Further, Benhabib argues that once we reach the stage of a post-conventional universalistic moral orientation in which individuals can generate normative principles of action through formal procedures satisfying the criteria of universalisability, we can no longer arbitrate between competing moral theories, such as between Rawls or Habermas, on the basis of these criteria. At this point then, additional arguments are required to help arbitrate among universalistic ethical theories; thus, Habermas' developmental moral theory is underdetermined in this respect.

Finally, Benhabib asserts that the apparently quasi-transcendental nature of communicative reason obscures important insights in the new paradigm - in particular the utopian potential of a communicative access to need interpretations and the vision of a justice that fosters a community of solidarity. Benhabib (in Meehan, 1995) asserts that, in his inability to recognise the importance of community, solidarity, and the needs of the concrete other, Habermas ignores the feminist perspective. This criticism, that Habermas' discourse ethics neglects the experience and concerns of women, is echoed by other feminist philosophers (Dean in Meehan 1995; Fraser, 1989).

Benhabib (1986) argues then for the importance of a neo-Aristotelian input into Habermas' discourse ethics; this would take the form of a polity of rights and entitlements representing the generalised other, but also an association of needs and solidarity, representing the concrete other which - while respecting difference and plurality and not identifying any particular collective emancipatory subject - would uphold the universal ideals of equality and consensus. In sum, Habermas' discourse ethics must involve important, substantive, more contextual, "good life" aspects also.

In practical discourses, a certain conception of justice is revealed to rest on a certain understanding of our needs, the cultural traditions which justify them, and the socialization patterns which shape them. If
the subject matter of discourses is not artificially restricted, if the
process of self-reflection reaches these presuppositions, then issues of
justice and the good life flow into one another. (Benhabib, 1986, p.
336)

Habermas believes that his theory of discourse ethics can meet the criticism of empty
formalism levelled at him. In AS Habermas emphasises the concept of solidarity,
which he only briefly refers to in MCCA. Habermas argues that justice and solidarity
are complementary as discourse not only affords all, on an equal basis, to influence
the outcome, but also ties the participants into a membership of reciprocal recognition
in a communication community. Discourse also has an affective aspect as feelings
and emotions make us sensitive to moral phenomena, providing the basis for the
perception of something as a moral issue. In particular empathy plays a role in the
grounding of moral norms as well as their application: the taking of the moral point of
view means we have to adopt in our questioning the standpoint of others and not
elevate our own point of view. Thus Habermas states of post-conventional discourse:

This demanding cognitive achievement would scarcely be possible
without that generalized sympathy which becomes sublimated into
capacity for fellow-feeling, and points beyond our emotional ties to
those closest to us, opens our eyes to "difference" - in other words to
the individuality and autonomous significance of the other who
remains in his or her otherness. (1992a, p. 269-70)

Further, in JA Habermas develops his concept of discourse in two ways. First, he
distinguishes between discourses of justification and discourses of application.
Whereas the former derives its legitimacy from the discourse principle or procedure
of MCCA, the latter achieves this through the principle of appropriateness. Thus,
moral principles may be grounded or validated from the standpoint of
universalisation, but they only demonstrate their appropriateness, their suitability for
interpreting, understanding or dealing with a situation, through their application to
that situation. Thus Habermas states:

In discourses of application, the principle of appropriateness takes on
the role played by the principle of universalization in justificatory
discourses...What must be decided is not the validity of the norm for
each individual and his interests but its appropriateness in relation to
all of the features of a particular situation. (1993, p.37)

Habermas also extends his concept of discourse through distinguishing between moral
discourses, which must satisfy the three types of underlying validity claim of
objectivity, subjectivity and normativity, and pragmatic and ethical discourses which
respectively have only to satisfy the validity claims primarily of objectivity and
subjectivity. Thus, while still involving a discursive procedure, pragmatic discourse
is concerned with settling empirical questions or with specific strategies or courses of
action, rather than important value decisions which are more far-reaching; these are
the remit of moral discourse. Equally, ethical discourse concerns the correct conduct
of life or realisation of particular life projects as opposed to interpersonal or social
corns. These three discourses of the pragmatic, ethical and moral correspond
respectively to the empiricist, Aristotelian and Kantian traditions of philosophy. Thus, Habermas states:

To summarize, practical reason, according to whether it takes its orientation from the purposive, the good, or the just, directs itself in turn to the choice of the purposively acting subject, to the resoluteness of the authentic, self-realizing subject, or to the free will of the subject capable of moral judgement. (1993, p. 10)

With these elaborations then, Habermas' discourse theory is capable of responding to much of the criticism expressed above. Nevertheless, Habermas continues to assert the importance and distinctiveness of the abstraction and universalism of moral discourse. Thus in AS, Habermas criticises Rawls for bringing ethics into his moral position: in his concept of the "veil of ignorance", Rawls (1973) attempts to explain the moral point of view as a philosopher; but when discussing his "two principles of justice" Rawls speaks as a committed liberal-democratic citizen of the United States. Nevertheless, Habermas does recognise, through his notion of the structural aspects of the good life, referred to above, that there are necessary implications to social and political action of this universal moral core. Thus, he states in AS:

For any attempt - not only mine - to defend a cognitivist-universalist ethical theory involves the public assertion that in your own society and in others all practical and political questions have a moral core which is susceptible to argument. The logic of this position thus directly affects the self-understanding of the existing political culture, which can no longer be immunized against rational demands for legitimation. (1992a, pp. 201-202)

Here then, although Habermas argues for a clear separation between justice and the good life, or morality and ethics, there is a recognition that the two cannot be kept entirely discrete. Habermas accepts a weak substantive element to his discourse ethics which suggests certain institutions, cultural practices and ways of life.

Despite Habermas' criticism of Rawls, it is clear, as White (1988) argues, that these substantive elements are located within the liberal-democratic tradition. Indeed, Rasmussen (1990) asserts, that despite his disclaimer, Habermas' theory is context-bound in that it is essentially constructed from the assumptions underlying the historical development of democratic societies. Thus, Habermas' theory presupposes the kind of democratic institutions and system of rights that Cohen and Arato (1994) demand. It seems clear then that Habermas' separation of morality and ethics is not so great as he asserts. Habermas' recent text BFN, discussed in Part Four, demonstrates that this distinction has become attenuated further.

2. The Postmodernist Challenge

Habermas states in AS that after presenting his theory in primarily sociological terms in TCA he then had to reply to the postmodernist philosophical position which challenges the enlightenment thesis presented in that text; Habermas does this in "The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity" (1987b). Like MCCA then, PDM is a further attempt to strengthen the philosophical foundations of the communicative project of TCA.
In PDM Habermas traces the postmodernist challenge back to its "philosophy of consciousness" roots, in order to demonstrate that postmodernists still remain contained within this subjectivist paradigm. Habermas demonstrates this by returning to what he terms the "historical crossroads" at which Hegel and neo-Hegelians have made paradigmatic decisions. Habermas argues that at these crucial junctures of the philosophical discourse of modernity, these philosophers chose the paths still marked by the paradigm of the philosophy of the subject rather than those marked by the intersubjectivist paradigm of communicative action.

Habermas states that Hegel was the first to present the concept of modernity as an epochal period of Enlightenment which creates its own normativity. However, only during Hegel's Jena period, does Hegel recognise the importance of reflection to a critical concept of Enlightenment. Habermas argues that had Hegel continued developing the ideas of the Jena period, he might have taken the path of the intersubjective or communicative paradigm. Here, Habermas echoes his critique in TP. However, Habermas asserts, Hegel's later adoption of the absolute Spirit led to a regression to the philosophy of the subject again. Habermas argues that this development led to a further problem: Hegel subsumes individual, society and the formation of the political will into the state which represents the unfolding of the Spirit. This, of course, is antithetical to Habermas' conception of the public sphere as the intersubjectivity of the uncoerced will-formation within a communication community.

Habermas then looks at the differing positions of the neo-Hegelians. Left Hegelians such as Marx and the Frankfurt School emphasise the emancipatory potential of reason to challenge the one-sided rationalisation of the bourgeois world. However, as Habermas argues in his previous texts, Marxists emphasise the purposive rationality of the acting subject in the sphere of labour rather than the reflection of the knowing subject in the intersubjective communicative sphere. Thus, they continue to remain within the paradigm of subjectivity.

On the other hand, Right Hegelians such as the neo-conservatives also recognise the conflict potential of bourgeois society. However, their solution is one of inertia rather than emancipatory change: this requires a strong state, an authority of strong institutions and traditions which resist destabilising change or challenges. Habermas considers this position further in NC discussed below.

Despite their differences, neither the Left-Hegelians nor the Right-Hegelians call into question the achievements of modernity. This is not the case with Nietzsche and his supporters who challenge the emancipatory characterisation of the concept of modernity. In opposition to this view of the pre-eminence of modernity, Nietzsche proposes a genealogical approach which appeals to an archaic realm, or myth of origins, of creativity and purity, which precedes, and is superior to, the Enlightenment period of reason and science. Indeed, Nietzscheans argue, this reason and science conceals a perverted will to power which characterises modernity and its supporters.

As this approach attacks the historical core of communicative theory, Habermas is concerned to trace this post-Hegelian path, and examine its representation by Nietzschean thinkers. Habermas asserts that Foucault's postmodernism is particularly
representative of this Nietzschean view; thus Habermas is interested in subjecting Foucault's position to critique.

Habermas states that Foucault attempts to develop a radical critique of reason through a Nietzschean genealogy of discourse, of how discourses emerge, are formed and disappear. This approach assumes a pluralist view of discourse which does not recognise any singular narrative or over-arching consciousness or meaning. Foucault believes instead that the central dynamic which generates the rise and fall of discourse formations is power which appears in distorted and concealed form.

Foucault applies this analysis to the human sciences. He argues that these are pseudo-sciences driven by a will to power, of self-knowledge and self-reification, which perpetuates a dialectic of liberation and enslavement: this enslaves through objectification while appearing to liberate through knowledge and practice. This manifests itself in a technology of power, a disciplinary, justified violence of therapy and social techniques. Central to this is the human scientists' "gaze" which examines, supervises and objectifies, and finds its architectural expression in disciplinary; closed institutions such as asylums, prisons and schools.

Habermas subjects Foucault's position to extensive criticism. In particular Habermas opposes Foucault's genealogical approach which attempts to analyse the technologies of power and its relationship to knowledge. Foucault asserts that this approach, as opposed to the objectifying human sciences, achieves a scientificity similar to that of the natural sciences. Habermas, however, argues that this genealogical approach is relativistic, reductionist and crypto-normative; thus, its claim to scientificity is illusory.

Whereas according to Foucault's diagnosis, the human sciences submit to the ironic movement of scientific self-mastery and end up in an unsalutary objectivism...a no less ironic fate overtakes genealogical historiography; it follows the movement of a radically historicist extinction of the subject and ends up in unholy subjectivism. (1987b, p. 276)

Habermas states that Foucault's approach is relativistic because truth claims are confined only to the discourse from which they arise. Foucault tries to avoid this problem, Habermas states, by arguing that there resides a slumbering, historical knowledge of struggle against power and objectification in the marginalised, subjugated groups which oppose the established practices of power. From this perspective of counter-power then, genealogy can transcend all validity claims that are constituted only in the official circles of power. Habermas challenges this argument by pointing out that when a counter-power is victorious it becomes an official power establishment which generates its own counter-power. Habermas argues then, that this undermines Foucault's celebration of counter-power, and his claims to scientificity.

Further, Habermas argues, Foucault can only explain what is wrong with modern society, and how it should be opposed, by introducing some kind of normative notion. Also, Habermas asserts, Foucault's theory is reductionist in its blanket condemnation of modernity because it does not sufficiently recognise advances such as the development of the constitutional state, the gains in legal and civil rights, and the
moral practical processes underlying juridification and welfare. Finally, Habermas argues that Foucault and other postmodernists demonstrate a performative contradiction in their theoretical attempts to challenge rationality while basing their own arguments on the presuppositions or validity claims of rationality. Habermas states then, that like the other neo-Hegelians, postmodernists also remain within the subjectivist paradigm as they have not recognised the communicative path open to them.

This text gives Habermas' most detailed historical and philosophical overview of the differences between the subjectivist and intersubjectivist paradigms, and the necessary route which must be taken to adopt the latter. The text also provides the most elaborate account of the postmodernist challenge to Habermas' Enlightenment project, and Habermas' criticisms of the former's position and justification of his own. It is with regard to this philosophical discourse then that criticisms will be identified.

Three main kinds of objections are levelled at the central themes of this work. The first comes from those who are essentially supportive of the Habermasian project, but argue that he also has subjectivist residues within his intersubjectivist paradigm which weaken the latter. The second objection is also supportive of Habermas' paradigmatic position, but argues that Habermas could usefully integrate postmodernist concerns into his theoretical framework. This position then, argues that postmodernism does have something to offer to theories of modernity. The third main objection comes from the postmodernists themselves who challenge Habermas' characterisation of their position and attack his communicative theory.

In terms of the first criticism, Benhabib (1986) argues that Habermas still demonstrates vestiges of a subjectivist emphasis given that his reconstruction of the species competencies of an anonymous subject, humanity, assumes the role of a philosophical narrative of the formative history of the subject of history. For Benhabib this is similar to Hegel's notion of the world spirit as the subject of history. She criticises Habermas on two grounds:

This shift to the language of an anonymous species-subject preempts the experience of moral and political activity as a consequence of which alone a genuine "we" can emerge... this shift to the language of a hypostatized subject has as a further consequence that the historical process is neutralized. History begins to appear as the semantic gloss on a structural process which proceeds with necessity and invariably from one sequence to the next. (1986, p. 331)

The latter criticism Benhabib proposes here is answered in the previous chapter where the distinction between the logic and dynamic of the evolutionary process is made. Nevertheless, the generality of Habermas' consideration of what such a "we" might constitute, makes it understandable that his theory might be interpreted as being developmentally determinist. However, Dews, in his introduction to AS, argues that Habermas has moved away from the addressee as species subject from CES on, preferring to see the bearers of evolution as societies and the acting subjects integrated into them, and so this criticism does not now stand.

Others (Alexander in Honneth and Joas, 1991; Culler, 1985; Wagner and Zipprian, 1991) also argue that Habermas' theory is imbued with subjectivism. However, they
point to Habermas' speech act in this respect, arguing that his concepts of the communicatively informed illocution, and the perlocutionary-informed strategic action, are not so distinct as Habermas avers. The illocutionary framework, it is argued, relies on an egocentric teleological model initially because this concept of illocution is still underlain by a monological and instrumental residue, given that one is in communication with someone in order to get them to do something. Thus we have an apparent conflation of instrumental and communicative reason underlying the speech process. However, White (1988) argues that such arguments focus too narrowly on this aspect of Habermas' communicative action. White states that language is not simply an instrument in Habermas' account but also a pre-existing context in which commonality emerges in specific situations only in relation to a broader, common orientation to the shared validity basis of speech; this takes us beyond the strategic concerns of the systems to the communicative aspects of the lifeworld.

Rasmussen (1990) asserts that the overlap between the two paradigms reaches further than just that of the speech-act. Rasmussen argues that the project of modernity was formulated within the philosophy of consciousness with its concern for the development of a subject, while the philosophy of language, in its contemporary form at least, opposes this subjectivist emphasis. Therefore: "the skeptic might argue that the philosophy of language and the project of modernity have nothing to do with each another" (p. 4).

In support of this claim Rasmussen argues that there are significant similarities between Habermas' current communicative and his former epistemological theory. Thus, the same epistemological distinctions of the scientific, ethical or moral, and aesthetic remain, albeit in terms of relationships to the world rather than divisions of knowledge; the categories of normativity of the German enlightenment also remain, now under the rubric of discourse; the primacy of communication continues, although now seen as intrinsic to language or discourse, rather than as a statement of the way things should be; and, despite the procedural as opposed to the earlier substantivist claims of Habermas, there continues to be a clear political agenda which seems to be endorsed.

Rasmussen seems to be assuming that Habermas sees his communicative theory as a new paradigm separate from the earlier knowledge-based theory of consciousness. Rasmussen is of course correct if we were to accept that Habermas does see himself as making a clear-cut paradigmatic transition. But, such an interpretation is questionable. From the 1960s on, Habermas has included communicative elements into his earlier, more subjectivist-influenced theory. Equally, Habermas has carried over aspects of his earlier theory into his communicative theory, such as the universal epistemological distinctions recognised in the validity claims. Thus, Habermas' theoretical development is a dialectical one rather than one which sees itself as having made a paradigmatic shift.

The second type of criticism identified proposes that Habermas' theory can be improved, that specific problems can be resolved, through the incorporation of postmodern accounts into Habermas' theory. Tucker (1993) argues that Habermas' theory is too one-sidedly rational, and so doesn't sufficiently grasp the affective and
aesthetic aspects of social solidarity and the role of cultural traditions of play, creativity and collective memory in modernity and the new social movements.

In answering this criticism we can refer to Habermas' distinction between the moral and the ethical discussed above. Whereas the former is universalist, the latter is more context and tradition specific. However, as we have seen in MCCA there is a weak substantialist link between the moral and ethical which does not necessarily exclude the more affective and aesthetic aspects of solidarity. Also, Habermas recognises the aesthetic in his thesis of the rationalisation of the three cultural value spheres, and the role of philosophy in keeping these communicatively informed.

The third criticism refers to those postmodernists who challenge Habermas' general position. Rorty (in Bernstein, 1985), argues that Habermas is "scratching where it does not itch" (p. 164), in that he is concerned to provide a metanarrative of emancipation to legitimise our culture rather than let the narratives which hold our culture together achieve this. Thus, Rorty prefers the Foucauldian, historical narratives of who was currently getting and using power for what purposes rather than the philosophical metanarratives of ideology, power and emancipation proposed by rationalists like Habermas.

Habermas (in Bernstein, 1985), disagrees with Rorty that a philosophy of justification does not itch. He argues that Rorty commits an objectivistic fallacy in his replacement of the implicitly, normative conception of "valid argument" with the descriptive concept of "arguments held to be true for us at this time", as any attempt at argument, must be based on universal validity claims; in other words, here, Habermas employs again the argument of the performative contradiction. Habermas also argues that philosophy as the "guardian of reason" is essential at a time of irrationally-based neo-conservative politics which "does itch" for its opponents.

Holub (1991) states that Habermas' debate with postmodernism is often seen as a debate with Lyotard, although Habermas has never directly addressed the latter's ideas. Nevertheless, Lyotard, regarded as one of the founders of postmodernism, explicitly develops his theory through a refutation of Habermas' communicative theory. Lyotard argues that Habermas' emancipatory metanarrative can be falsified in two main ways. Thus, Lyotard asks:

Is legitimacy to be found in consensus obtained through discussion, as Jürgen Habermas thinks? Such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. And invention is always born of dissension. (1984, p. xxv)

For Lyotard then, societies consist of a range of belief systems and practices, or language games, which have differing rules; there are no underlying universal values or presuppositions which inform them all. Also, he argues, knowledge and science progress not primarily through consent, but through paralogy, the constant questioning and undermining of existing, accepted scientific frameworks. Bauman (1992), supports Lyotard's belief in the plurality of difference and dissent; thus, Bauman asserts, the search for consensus is an impossible one.

the foremost paradox of the frantic search for communal grounds of consensus is that it results in more dissipation and fragmentation, more
heterogeneity...Each attempt at convergence and synthesis leads to new splits and divisions. (p. 138).

Lyotard argues that this "double observation" of the heterogeneity of language games and of dissent destroys the consensus basis of Habermas' theory, and thus the theory itself.

Although Lyotard makes an important and influential critique of Habermas' communicative theory, Habermas does not respond in PDM. Habermas discusses other important postmodernists and poststructuralists in his text, but ignores Lyotard. It is also worth noting that even in Habermas' response to the article by Rorty (in Bernstein, 1986) where Rorty discusses Habermas and Lyotard's ideas together, Habermas does not refer to Lyotard in his response to Rorty. In this untypical dialogical absence, Holub (1991) and Dews (in Habermas, 1992a) act as Habermas' champions.

Holub (1991) argues that Lyotard does not seem familiar with Habermas' theory. Thus, for example, Lyotard argues that Habermas does not accept a plurality of language games. This fails to recognise that at the empirical, contextual level Habermas does accept this plurality; it is at the more formal level of pragmatics that the universals of validity claims exist, inherent in language itself. We can add here that Habermas makes this argument himself in LSS in his discussion of the theory of Wittgenstein, which has influenced Lyotard's theory of language games. Lyotard also argues that Habermas' notion of truth and consensus coerces or enforces a unification of the plurality and of dissent. However, Holub states, Habermas is concerned to allow all dissenting viewpoints to be raised and argued in order to achieve consensus through the argumentative redemption of validity claims involved in these differing viewpoints. Dews, in his introduction to AS, also adds that Lyotard fails to recognise that the universalisation of principles and the individualisation of lifestyles can exist together, with a proliferation of subcultures taking place precisely because the need for agreement of social rules of interaction have been satisfied at higher levels of abstraction. Here, we can also point to Habermas' distinction between singularisation and individuation in PT, discussed in the previous chapter. This answers the critique of both Lyotard and Bauman.

Both Holub and Dews also point out that Lyotard falls into the performative contradiction common to postmodernists. Dews argues that this epitomises the problem with postmodernism, and Lyotard can be seen as an exemplar of these problems.

The incoherence and omissions of Lyotard's thought, considered as the paradigm for a self-proclaimed postmodern philosophy, point toward some of the general, underlying problems with post-structuralist-inspired accounts of postmodernity. (in Habermas, 1992a, p. 24)

Dews summarises the problems of postmodernism by relating them to Habermas' communicative theory. A first problem is that one cannot provide a coherent account of postmodernity without a determinate concept of modernity which must be dependent on the theorisation of long-term historical processes; this Habermas provides. Also, postmodernists emphasise the normative content of aesthetic
experience apparently not recognising, in their criticism of Habermas, that Habermas
does acknowledge this in his spheres of modernity. However, the postmodernists fail
to recognise the importance of the other cultural spheres of the scientific-technical
and moral-legal aspects of reason in modernity which Habermas believes are as
important, or more important, than the aesthetic. A third problem is that there is a
discrepancy between the philosophical anti-humanism of postmodernism and a
continued commitment to political principles whose content cannot be derived from
aesthetic experience alone. Dews argues that this is not a problem in Habermas' theory as he can show how the participatory democratic ideal is embedded in modern
societies through communicative action and the moral-practical dimension of
historical development. Given these theoretical problems, Dews argues,
postmodernism has not demonstrated its superiority over the communicative theory of
Habermas.

No postmodern thinker has yet succeeded in demonstrating that the
vision of an "undamaged intersubjectivity" has lost its hold over the
modern political imagination; or that the autonomous logic of
communicative action which modernity has laid bare is inherently
incapable of sustaining a social order beyond the constraints and
oppressions of both authoritarian socialism and an increasingly
troubled late capitalism. (in Habermas, 1992a, p. 32)

On the other hand, however, in PDM Habermas demonstrates the important
theoretical problems of postmodernism; in doing this, he also demonstrates the
superior theoretical and practical validity of his own communicative theory.

3. The New Conservatism

"The New Conservatism" (1989a) is seen as a companion text to PDM. Holub
summarises Habermas' aim in each of these texts:

in the latter work he is concerned to show how the discourse that seeks
to escape modernity cancels itself in performative contradiction and
thereby leaves itself open to dubious political uses. In the former book
he explores the terrain on which these philosophical notions buttress a
conservative reaction to modernization and aesthetic modernism.
(1991, p. 161)

Whereas Habermas challenges postmodernism on the philosophical level in PDM, in
NC he challenges neo-conservatism on the political and historical level. The central
theme of this text then is the opposition to the increasing neo-conservative influence
in the West, and in particular the former West Germany. Here, we see Habermas' return
to the concern which motivates the writing of TCA. However, whereas in
TCA Habermas only identifies this concern, and provides a theoretical programme for
responding to it, in NC Habermas provides a detailed critique of the new
conservatives of the West German social welfare state. We have here then, as Wolin
states in his introduction to NC, continuing evidence for Habermas' faithfulness to his
early insistence on the practical implications of all social enquiry.

Habermas explains the current popularity of new conservatism through his thesis of
the exhaustion of utopian possibilities. Habermas states that the nineteenth century
Left utopians based their programme on the technical, rational control of society through social labour. As the social systems became more complex, the probability of dysfunctional secondary effects, such as crises, also increased. The state responded to these crises, and their potential class conflict, by the establishment of the welfare state. Habermas asserts that this welfare state is the post-war representation of the productivist utopia. However, the welfare state is failing to maintain stability (for the reasons Habermas discusses in LC) and is thus being increasingly questioned. Habermas refers to this uncertainty of the welfare state function as "the new obscurity." 

Thus I will formulate my thesis as follows: the New Obscurity is part of a situation in which a welfare state program that continues to be nourished by a utopia of social labor is losing its power to project future possibilities for a collectively better and less endangered way of life. (1989a, p. 54)

Habermas believes that the welfare state represents an advance in legal, moral and democratic terms, to which there is no identifiable alternative in societies of our type. Nevertheless, as we have seen in his work since LC, Habermas also recognises the problematic and contradictory nature of the state.

In short, a contradiction between its goal and its method is inherent in the welfare state project as such. Its goal is the establishment of forms of life that are structured in an egalitarian way and that at the same time open up arenas for individual self-realization and spontaneity. But evidently this goal cannot be reached via the direct route of putting political programs into legal and administrative form. Generating forms of life exceeds the capacities of power. (1989a, p. 59)

Habermas states that the neo-conservative response to this problematic nature of the welfare state is characterised by several components: a reduction of government overload by the transferral of functions to the market; a decoupling of the executive from the political will-formation, and thus a reduction in democratic principles which raise expectations too high and so threaten legitimacy; and, a two-front view of culture involving the cultivation of traditional cultural and moral values, and the discrediting of intellectuals as the cultural bearers of modernism.

Habermas opposes this response. He argues that here the neo-conservatives are confusing cause with effect: responsibility for disturbances of social integration that have their source in functional imperatives of the economic and political-administrative spheres are mistakenly attributed to the sphere of culture and the intellectuals. Habermas' solution to the problem of the welfare state is the formation of autonomous public spheres which achieve a combination of power and intelligent self-restraint that can make the state and the economy more sensitive to radical democratic will-formation. Thus, Habermas argues that the utopian possibility still exists; however, it does not take the form of the old productivist paradigm, which is now exhausted, but that of a communicative paradigm.

Habermas also argues that the neo-conservatives and postmodernists (who he refers to here as young conservatives) are mistaken in not recognising the existing cultural, political and ethical achievements of modernity. This refusal to acknowledge these
gains generates respectively a static or regressive view of society which could lead to the withering or loss of the achievements of modernity.

Habermas particularly levels this criticism at his opponents in what has become known as the "historians' debate". Here, we can also see Habermas' continuing involvement with his own war-time Germanic inheritance, and his concern to preserve the concept of reason of the early German philosophers. In the former West Germany, Habermas believes, this neo-conservatism has been represented particularly by a group of historians who are re-assessing the Second World War and the role of German Nazism in it. Habermas argues that these historian revisionists, in their attempt to historicise, normalise and distance the Nazi period, demonstrate a desire to return to a conventional national identity, and thus a particularistic point of reference. This, in terms of Habermas' notion of the conventional and post-conventional stages, marks a potential regression which threatens the precarious democratic gains of the Federal Republic since 1945. Habermas recognises that neo-conservatism has been growing in most main Western democracies over the last ten years, but argues that this is especially worrying in West Germany. Habermas believes that this trend must be reversed by looking to the political culture of the West, in particular the USA, which embodies a constitutional, post-conventional patriotism involving universal, normative concepts.

For Habermas, World War Two played a decisive part in shifting Germany in this direction. The German belief that it had taken a special path, a Sunderweg, that set Germany apart and gave it special privileges and status with relation to the West was discredited after Auschwitz. Auschwitz generated a reflection into public historical consciousness about things which had been taken for granted in Germany.

Unfortunately, in the cultural nation of the Germans, a connection to universalist constitutional principles that was anchored in convictions could be formed only after - and through - Auschwitz. Anyone who wants to dispel our shame about this fact with an empty phrase like "obsession with guilt"...anyone who wants to recall the Germans to a conventional form of their national identity, is destroying the only reliable basis for our tie to the West. (1989a, p. 227)

For Habermas, this question of historical interpretation, primarily debated in the academic arena by the historians, must also be debated in the public sphere:

It is not a question of... scholarly theoretical debates or of value freedom - it is a question of the public use of history. (1989a, p. 237)

Habermas argues that intellectuals have a special role and responsibility here: they should use their theoretical understanding and knowledge to address a public sphere, informed by universalistic values, in order to "intervene on behalf of rights that have been violated and truths that have been suppressed, reforms that are overdue and progress that has been delayed" (p. 73). Habermas clearly sees himself in this role as opposed to the counter-intellectualism of the revisionist historians.

Habermas also believes that the university has an important role in this context: this refers to the extent to which scholarship in a democracy should adopt a critical and sceptical function, or an identity-securing and socially-integrative function which
subordinates scientific criteria to that of national needs. Whereas the historians argue for the latter, Habermas asserts the former, thus returning to the educational theme first raised in TRS. In TRS Habermas discusses the role of the university in general terms; here he gives a detailed account of the historical and intellectual role of the university in the former West Germany.

In his historical account of the university, Habermas notes its increasing systems orientation to the needs of the economy and administration. This is in line with the neo-conservative view. But, Habermas argues, the university retains other functions more oriented to the lifeworld. Thus, apart from the technical function of science and research, he states, other functions include: the training of future scientists, preparation for the academic professions, participation in processes of general education, cultural transmission and enlightenment in the political public sphere. Thus, Habermas argues:

> The universities are still rooted in the lifeworld through this remarkable bundling of functions. Of course, within the university the general processes of socialization, cultural transmission and social-integrative will formation, through which the lifeworld reproduces itself, are carried on only under the highly artificial conditions of academic learning processes programmed for the acquisition of knowledge. As long as this complex has not been completely torn apart, the idea of the university cannot be completely dead. (1989, p. 107-8)

Habermas states that this idea of the university has been seen by many German thinkers as something universal because of its intimate connection with science, scholarship and truth. Indeed, Habermas states that Wissenschaft, or science, has such rich connotations in Germany that there is no equivalent for it in English (thus Schapiro, in his preface to TRS, defines it as science and knowledge). The idea of the university then, Habermas states, emphasises on the one hand the autonomy of science and scholarship, at a distance from the bourgeois society and the political public sphere, but on the other hand the general culture-sharing power of a science in which the totality of the lifeworld is concentrated in reflexive form.

Thus, Habermas states, the learning processes which take place within the university not only enter into an exchange with the economy and the administration but also stand in inner relationship to the functions through which the lifeworld reproduces itself. For instance, the learning processes extend beyond professional preparation to make a contribution to general processes of socialisation by providing training in the scientific mode of thought, in terms of an hypothetical attitude to facts and norms. Habermas particularly emphasises however, the importance of discourse to the lifeworld: the egalitarian and universalistic content of the university's argumentation may express only the norms of scientific and scholarly activity, and not those of society as a whole, but they participate in the communicative rationality in whose forms modern societies must reach an understanding about themselves. Thus, Habermas states:

> in the last analysis it is the communicative forms of scientific and scholarly argumentation that hold university learning processes in their
various functions together...Because the enterprise of the corporative search for truth refers back to these structures of public argumentation, truth - or even the reputation achieved within the community of investigators - can never become the mere steering medium of a self-regulating subsystem. (1989, p. 124)

Habermas believes that the university not only has a continuing communicative role but also plays an important part in challenging the neo-conservative anti-intellectualism and opposition to reform. Whether scientific and scholarly learning processes take place within or without the university, he argues, they still retain this argumentative function.

They are all sustained by the stimulating and productive forces of a discursive debate that carries with it the promissory note of the surprising argument. The doors stand open; at any moment a new viewpoint may emerge, a new idea appear unexpectedly. (1989, p. 125)

Critics of Habermas have given little attention to NC, presumably because, unlike PDM, this text does not develop theoretically Habermas' project, and because - from the West's point of view - Habermas' position in the historian's debate is not one that would raise much controversy. The main critique of this text then, not surprisingly, has come from those attacked in it. Holub (1991) states that Habermas has been attacked strongly within Germany by the neo-conservative historians; however, their criticisms focus mainly on technical errors such as that of citations, and inaccuracies through insufficient knowledge and understanding of research sources. Thus, the historians have not responded to the substance and purpose of Habermas' challenge. Holub states that Habermas' critics also accuse him of not being able to separate scholarship and politics; they do not, though, recognise that this criticism could also be applied to them.

Unlike MCCA and PDM, NC does not continue the theoretical exploration of the communicative project. Nevertheless, it is significant in two respects. First, despite the abstract theorisation of much of Habermas' work, he still continues to demonstrate that his communicative project is motivated by a central empirical concern: that of the growing pathology of neo-conservatism in society. As we have seen, Habermas attacks this on two fronts - its intellectual manifestation in the form of postmodernism, and its political and historical manifestation in the form of the "historians' debate". Indeed, in the latter, we also see Habermas return to more immediate, concrete concerns which are related to both his theory and his biography. Habermas continues this concern with his writings on attitudes to (including those of the neo-conservatives and revisionist historians), and developments in, the unified Germany, in PF.

NC is also important for Habermas' detailed discussion of the idea and role of the university. Habermas' examination of the communicative functions of the university constitutes his only substantive, translated, contribution to the role of education in his communicative theory. Thus, while not of particular significance for his general commentators, his discussion of the university is of central importance to adult
educators' attempts to theorise and legitimise adult education. This important educational theme then, is considered further in Part Three of this thesis.
Chapter 8 - Habermas' Theory: an Assessment

The previous chapters provide a review and critique of Habermas' macrotheory: these outline the development of Habermas' theory, identify its central themes, and examine these themes through the criticisms addressed to the theory.

This critical, dialogical account demonstrates that Habermas' theory can meet many of the important criticisms levelled at it; where it has not been able to do so, Habermas has, at times, revised or clarified his theory. This does not deny, however, that theoretical and empirical problems still exist in Habermas' communicative project. If Habermas' theory is to provide a valid theoretical grounding to adult education, it is now necessary to assess the extent to which this theory demonstrates the conditions of theoretical adequacy, identified in the Introduction, of explanatory power and reach.

This assessment adopts two approaches. First, the strengths of Habermas' theory are identified. A summative, thematic account of the development of Habermas' macrotheoretical project demonstrates that Habermas' theory satisfies sufficiently the conditions of explanatory power: the theory presents an historical and social analysis which is both descriptive and critical, demonstrates coherence and consistency, can engage successfully with its critics and theoretical competitors, and is open to modification and development. An examination of the empirical and normative aspects of Habermas' theory demonstrates that the conditions of explanatory reach are also satisfied sufficiently: Habermas' social theory can be applied to existing social and educational conditions and also identifies emancipatory, communicative features.

Following this, the important continuing problems with Habermas' theory are examined. This examination concludes that these problems do not invalidate Habermas' theory, but demonstrate areas in which its theoretical adequacy can be strengthened.

1. The Explanatory Power of Habermas' Theory

The developmental study of Habermas' work undertaken in Part Two demonstrates that Habermas' early works possess a synchronic quality characterised by core motifs and the themes which inform them. These themes develop differentially through his texts, and also generate further themes. This also demonstrates the diachronic quality of Habermas' work. The synchronic and diachronic nature of Habermas' early texts generate a theoretical consistency and coherence which runs throughout his oeuvre. The account of Habermas' early works in Chapter Four demonstrates these features.

The earlier works of Habermas are based on the central motifs which underpin all of Habermas' work: an analysis of the development of a positivistic-oriented society informed by a pathologically deformed rationality; and, the proposal of a communicative, counter-rationality which challenges this positivistic rationality. Chapter Four shows that each of Habermas' early texts contributes to this analysis by identifying different features of the pathology, and proposing complementary ways of challenging this pathology and asserting a more communicative rationality. Further,
each text contributes to the macrotheoretical nature of the analysis by drawing on different disciplines.

STPS delineates the historical process in the deformity of reason through Habermas' account of the development and structural transformation of the public sphere. For Habermas, the means to achieving this end of a public sphere, or democratic, communicative community, is the development of a critical theory which informs political practice. This relationship of theory and practice, which constitutes Habermas' central methodological concern, is discussed in TP. TP reflects STPS in giving an historical account of the development of the pathology of modernity, but in terms of a political and philosophical analysis, rather than a sociological one, and one which is more extensive in its critical analysis of modernity through its account of the rise of instrumental positivism and the contribution of major political and philosophical thinkers to this. In particular here, Habermas identifies the important influences on the pathology of reason of Hegel and Marx; yet at the same time identifies the existing and potential communicative elements of their theories. TRS continues the two motifs, of the analysis and challenge to the pathology of modernity, in a more focussed way, respectively through the discussion of the scientisation of society, and through an analysis of the role of education, as a manifestation or representation of the public sphere, in combating this.

In these early works, as well as developing his theory of communicative pathology around specific common themes, Habermas also introduces themes or ideas which are developed in later works to form a central part of his macrotheoretical framework. Habermas' identification of the problematic role of the welfare state in STPS becomes central to his thesis of the colonisation of the lifeworld in TCA. Also, Habermas' discussion of the work-interaction distinction in TP is later elaborated into his systems-lifeworld thesis, which is first introduced in LC. Equally, in his account of the cognitive development of the student in relation to structural changes in society in TRS, Habermas also introduces, in an incipient manner, the important ontogenetic-phylogenetic theme developed in CES.

Whereas, in these three earlier works, Habermas presents an analysis of the development of positivism, and the combative role of the public sphere, in LSS and KHI Habermas moves on to look at the role of social science and philosophy in terms of both their positivistic deformation, and their potential role in providing a critique of positivism. LSS demonstrates the problematic methodological basis of current social science through the failure of social scientists to reflect upon their methodological presuppositions. Similarly, in KHI Habermas studies the contribution of pre-positivist and early positivist philosophers to the decline of epistemology through the lack of self-reflection on their own epistemological assumptions. In KHI though, Habermas goes further than another account of positivism; he also attempts to resolve this methodological and epistemological deficit through the development of a critical theory of cognitive interests. This is based on a methodology involving the reflection on the underlying interests of social behaviour or theory in order to identify and transcend ideological and methodological presuppositions.

The review of Habermas' next major texts, in Chapter Five and Six of the thesis, demonstrates how Habermas shifts away from his knowledge-based account to a more communicative emphasis. He does this, at least partly, because his theory of
knowledge-constitutive interests was subject to substantial criticism which he recognised as valid. However, the analysis of his earlier work demonstrates that this shift was also probably influenced by the development of his thought which now brings to the forefront the communicative elements clearly present in the early theory. Habermas retains a methodological place for the earlier cognitive emphasis in his macrotheoretical framework then, but in the next stage of his theoretical development moves onto to a more substantive, communicative-based theory. Apart from demonstrating the thematic continuity of his thought, this move is significant for two reasons. First, this is an exemplar of the dialogical and reflective approach of Habermas in that he is willing to listen to, reflect on, respond to, and reconstruct his own theory on the basis of his engagement with, his academic contemporaries. Second, this demonstrates an organic rather than distinct, paradigmatic development in Habermas' thought: this is characterised by the overlapping of the two paradigms of the subjectivistic and the communicative in which the former is at the forefront of Habermas' early theory, but takes a diminished role in his later, more communicatively based work. This argument that Habermas' theoretical development has been organic rather than paradigmatic is supported by Habermas' assertion in KHI that the text is only "a prolegomenon" (p. i), a first step in the development of a critical social theory.

Habermas' next major works, LS and CES, continue the synchronic and diachronic nature of Habermas' work. Synchronously, they continue Habermas' dual project of explaining the pathology of modernity, and proposing the means of combating this. In doing this, they also introduce new important themes which provide a diachronic function in that they represent an initial working out of ideas which later play an important part in Habermas' seminal TCA. In this respect they can be seen as transitional works which mark Habermas' move from the epistemologically and philosophically-oriented KHI to the sociological and linguistically-informed TCA.

LC then, introduces several themes important to Habermas' communicative project: a historical account of the relationship of systems and lifeworld; the crisis of legitimacy which characterises the problematic nature of this relationship in modern capitalism and is a manifestation of the pathology of modernity; and, the role of the welfare state in contributing to, while attempting to resolve, this crisis. This systems-lifeworld schema provides the initial framework for the sociological reconstruction in TCA, and thus the substantive theoretical foundation for his communicative project. CES discusses aspects of Habermas' communicative theory at three levels. The first level, the linguistic theory of universal pragmatics, or communicative competence, which is internal to speech, underpins the second and third levels. The second level is constituted by a theory of the moral-cognitive development of the individual, influenced by Kohlberg, through which communicative competence is developed; the third level explains how this communicative competence is also developed in a corresponding or parallel manner at the level of society, through a revision of Marx's historical materialism, which emphasises the evolutionary role of learning processes. Here, Habermas provides his most detailed expression of his theory of the ontogenetic-phylogenetic relationship which is vital to his account of, and validation of, modernity; he has also now developed his narrative of rationality from the philosophy of history account of the earlier works to a more social-evolutionary account here. This social-evolutionary framework is the core element of Habermas'
communicative paradigm at the level of macrotheory. The importance of this evolutionary framework for Habermas' communicative project lies in two areas. It details and justifies the centrality of the study of rationality by critical sociology, and the concern of that sociology with any distortion or deformity of that rationality. Also, it explains and transcends the problems or weaknesses of earlier studies of rationality. It achieves the latter by a modified historical materialism which argues that a distinction must be made between the logic and dynamic of development: the logic of development concerns the possible unfolding of all the aspects of rationality; the dynamic of development may emphasise particular aspects at particular times. Thus, while there is an explicable and demonstrable path for the development of rationality for both individual and society, which both must fulfil in the transition respectively of childhood to adulthood and archaic to modern society, this path is not necessarily unilinear and inevitable - historical and biographical progress can regress or be distorted.

Here then we have the Habermasian answer to the Frankfurt and Weberian rationality problematics, and to the criticisms of historical objectivism and empirical weakness made of Marxism: capitalist, fascist, authoritarian or bureaucratic societies characterised by a reified and restricted rationality are not necessarily inevitable or permanent, but are rather distorted expressions of the logic of development which can be rectified. Herein also lies the optimism, first noted in STPS, which motivates Habermas: what such a rectification needs is an analysis of the society under question which can identify the dynamic which is generating any rationality problem; from this analysis proposals for resolving these problems can be made. This optimism is now more restrained or moderated, but the concern still remains. Thus, Habermas states in the later PF that success in this resolution, through the public struggle for democracy, is not guaranteed, "But, because we don't know, we at least have to try...Optimism, and pessimism aren't really relevant categories here" (1994, p. 97).

In CES, Habermas also returns to, and further develops, his theory of legitimacy and the problematic role of the welfare state in the form of his historical account of the development in society of levels of legitimacy and their underlying justifications.

TCA is correctly recognised as the seminal work which integrates the themes of LS and CES into a communicative, paradigmatic framework. At the level of macrotheory, Habermas presents a communicative paradigm which is based upon the reconstruction of his sociological predecessors. The central informing motif of Habermas' reconstruction is that the theories of his sociological predecessors, including the Frankfurt School, are locked into the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness. This, Habermas argues, gives an instrumentally-oriented, restricted view of rationality which has implications for both the analysis of the pathology of modernity, and for attempts to resolve this pathology. Habermas bases his reconstructions on the new paradigm of communicative action which differs both epistemologically and ontologically from the earlier paradigmatic emphasis.

TCA provides a substantive theoretical base and methodological legitimacy to this communicative paradigm through the identification of the communicative elements in the theories of major sociologists, otherwise locked into the subjectivistic paradigm, and the reconstruction of these into an elaborated systems-lifeworld thesis; this thesis analyses a systems-dominated modernity which is increasingly pathologising or
colonising the lifeworld. Following his reconstruction of Marx, which primarily takes place in CES, Habermas adds Weber, Durkheim, Mead and Parsons in TCA. Habermas reconstructs Weber through emphasising a communicative rationality which redresses the instrumentalist, systems-oriented imbalance of the latter's historical and social account of the development of capitalism. Habermas reconstructs Mead and Durkheim through the integration of their respective ontogenetic and phylogenetic emphases into an account of the development of rationality in biographical-individual and world-historical terms. Habermas reconstructs Parsons through his emphasis on the colonising tendencies of the steering mechanisms of the systems world, and his identification and assertion of the lifeworld-oriented, communicative elements which challenge these. Although primarily concerned with his reconstructivist project, Habermas also considers other sociologists: he examines the interpretivist school of thought to demonstrate its problematic account of the lifeworld, here returning to the hermeneutic problematic explored in LSS, and applies his communicative framework to the earlier Frankfurt theorists and other traditional Marxists, to demonstrate how the instrumentalisation of reason has influenced their theories and distorted or blocked their communicative elements.

TCA marks the summit of Habermas' macrotheoretical project. Through his writings Habermas has detailed the stages of his theoretical journey; however, although the route may be clear, there remain places where the path is less firm, and so fellow-travellers have suggested alternative routes. The works after TCA mark Habermas' retracing of his theoretical footsteps in order to shore up the path by clarifying, or developing further, aspects of his communicative theory. In this more retrospective sense the synchronic and diachronic thematic character of Habermas' thought continues.

Chapter Seven shows how Habermas returns to philosophy in order to demonstrate its continuing role in supporting and informing the social sciences. Whereas TCA presents a primarily sociological and theoretical analysis of society and its communicative potential, MCCA presents a philosophical and methodological account of the procedural basis, rooted in a theory of discursive ethics, of communicative practice. This involves a reconstruction of Kant's more monologial and subjectivist theory, and a detailed, critical discussion and justification of the Kohlbergian moral framework underpinning communicative competence. In MCCA Habermas also partly redresses the over-rationalistic emphasis of his earlier works through his introduction of the concept of solidarity, a reciprocity and empathy derived from the necessity of recognising the standpoint of others and deciding what constitutes a moral point of view, in the discourse process.

The philosophical emphasis of MCCA is continued in PDM. Here, the metaphor of the intellectual journey is especially apposite as Habermas uses this himself to trace how philosophers have chosen to follow the paths of the subjectivist paradigm rather than the communicative one at particular theoretical junctures. Here, Habermas is mainly concerned with the subjectivist path that leads to the postmodernist position. Habermas subjects this position to critique, in so doing justifying his own modernist path in opposition to that proposed by the postmodernists. This attempt to justify his philosophically-informed communicative paradigm against the increasingly
influential and popular postmodernist paradigm is important for two reasons. Habermas asserts and demonstrates the validity of his own paradigmatic assumptions, on his own theoretical terms, through his engagement with the postmodernists' position. This successful theoretical refutation of this postmodernist position also contributes to an undermining of the neo-conservative instrumentalist attack on modernity which is informed by, or is politically complementary to, postmodernist principles.

In his preface to TCA, Habermas argues that neo-conservative policy exemplifies the pathological, colonising nature of instrumentalised rationality in society. His attempt to develop his communicative theory in TCA is motivated by the concern to develop a theory and practice capable of challenging the principles which inform this neo-conservative position. NC also challenges neo-conservatism in the specific historical-political context of the historians' debate in the former West Germany. Here, Habermas identifies the constitutional principles of the United States, and the moral-legal, universal principles underlying them, as an important bulwark to the particularism underlying the nationalism of former West German neo-conservative historians. Habermas also considers further the ambivalent, emancipatory and colonising role of the welfare state, and examines the role of the intellectual in combating these particularistic and colonising tendencies in the public sphere. Finally, Habermas identifies and examines further the emancipatory, communicative role of education, previously raised in TRS, through his discussion of the role of the university in society.

This overview of Habermas' oeuvre, and its identification of the diachronic and synchronic nature of Habermas' thinking, demonstrates the developmental consistency and theoretical coherence of its main themes. These themes inform the Habermasian quest for a democratic society based on communicative principles; this quest involves the description or explanation of how these communicative principles have been distorted, and normative proposals for how these distortions can be challenged. Here, we see that Habermas' theory satisfies the criterion of explanatory power in terms of its descriptive and prescriptive, or normative functions, at the level of general theory. This criterion is further satisfied at the level of critique and openness: Habermas engages critically with important theoretical traditions and theorists from a range of disciplines not only in order to challenge these traditions and theorists, and demonstrate the superiority of his own theory, but also to revise and improve on his own theory where this engagement identifies problems. The adoption of this critical, dialogical methodological approach is central to the development of a more theoretically advanced, unified and legitimated theory.

2. The Explanatory Reach of Habermas' Theory

The above discussion demonstrates the theoretical adequacy of Habermas' communicative project in terms of its general explanatory power. As the previous chapters show however, a frequent criticism of Habermas' theory is that, while his communicative project may have some success or adequacy at the level of theory or explanatory power, it is less successful at the level of empirical and normative application, or explanatory reach. The increasingly theoretical abstraction of Habermas' work as his communicative project has developed, and his apparent refusal
to engage with the real world in his academic writings, means that his communicative project is honoured theoretically rather than in a way that has real applicability and practical use. Indeed, the justice-good life distinction in MCCA appears to demonstrate that this severance or diminution of the theory-practice relationship is inevitable, and necessary, to discourse practice.

However, the discussion above also indicates possible responses to this criticism; these are expanded on and supplemented here. The explanatory reach of Habermas' theory is demonstrated by the examination of the empirical and normative possibilities of Habermas' general theory, and his own application of this theory. At the highest level of theoretical abstraction are the core themes of Habermas' systems-lifeworld framework, and the ontogenetic-phylogenetic model of the development of rationality which forms its underlying dynamic. This framework has been criticised for its apparent systems emphasis, and its theoretical remoteness and non-applicability to societies outside the West. However, Habermas' phylogenetic, historical theory of societal evolution, and his sociological theory of the dualistic structure of advanced societies that characterises the existing phylogenetic level of rationality, meets these criticisms to an extent. Chapter Five argues that the Habermasian distinction between the logic and dynamic of development, elaborated in CES, allows for an assertion of an overall logical, developmental rational path, yet also recognises the possibility of different paths being followed, and counter-trends and reverses taking place. Despite these deviations however, the theory asserts that the development of communicative rationality will eventually reassert itself; examples of this are the collapse of fascism, and more recently, communism. Indeed, Habermas (1990b; in Calhoun, 1992b) uses this schema explicitly to explain the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in terms of the unequal relation of systems and lifeworld, and the successful challenge of the latter to the dominance of the former. Thus, Habermas' schematic evolutionary and structural theory, albeit still relatively abstract, has a greater explanatory reach, in both empirical and normative terms, than many critics recognise.

The ontogenetic aspect of Habermas' theory, which is most fully developed in MCCA, is also criticised for its abstraction and formalism: the post-conventional, discourse-based distinction between questions of justice and the good life, of morality informed by universal principles or an ethics oriented to social context, offers no guide to practical action or how to behave or organise society in a communicative, democratic manner. However, Chapter Seven demonstrates that this criticism is over-stated. Certainly Habermas does not, and cannot, in terms of his justice-good life distinction, prescribe the exact form a communicative society should take. Given his concern to distinguish between morality and ethics, this is a consistent position. Indeed Pusey (1987) argues that this is a necessary position for Habermas' proceduralist conception of democracy:

\[
\text{His answer is that we must believe in democracy. Every attempt to write programs or social structures into the future pre-empts the communicative interaction that is the only source for the rationally motivated agreements that would make it liveable. (p. 120)}
\]

Nevertheless, Habermas' moral-ethics distinction is less discrete than many critics suppose. The intuitive or inherent "deep grammar" linguistic presuppositions of
consensus, equality and reciprocity clearly imply certain democratic, political and social principles which must inform institutional and organisational frameworks in society. Equally, the conditions necessary to the discursive ethics procedure, and a communicatively-informed society, demonstrate the need for such liberal-democratic principles. In sum then, any attempt at developing a communication community must indicate "weak" substantive or "good life" implications in Habermas' theory; these indicate basic institutional and practical guidelines as to the nature of this "good life", and thus, to some extent, how discourse theory informs practice. Indeed, from STPS on, Habermas has argued that the establishment of public and private rights is essential to the rational development of advanced industrialised societies informed by post-conventional, universalistic, constitutional principles, and to the development of a democratic public sphere which should increasingly influence these principles. This recognition, from his earliest works, of the importance of democratic rights also has clear institutional and practical implications.

Indeed, Habermas, in his more recent writings, despite his concern to maintain the moral-ethical distinction, seems to be increasingly recognising these "weak", substantive implications. Chapter Seven identifies Habermas' extension of his notion of discourses, including his distinction between discourses of justification and of application; these demonstrate Habermas' concern to indicate how a stronger ethical input can be drawn from his moral theory. In his most recent work (BFN) Habermas provides a stronger affirmation of the importance of a communicatively-informed legal and democratic structure to advanced societies, and of the role of discourse theory within this. In sum then, while Habermas does not attempt to prescribe how individuals should live their lives, his theory previously implicitly, and now more explicitly, lays down clear principles and guidelines for the organisation of a democratic society based on communicative principles, and the kinds of discourses underlying these. This is discussed further in Part Four.

Habermas' writings also demonstrate an immediate empirical applicability which is not always recognised by his critics. In his earlier works, STPS, TRS and TP, Habermas provides a more empirical, analytical account of modern society, and the historical influences which have shaped it; in effect he describes the characteristics and history of the pathology of modernity. These early texts were written up to thirty years ago, in rather different political and ideological world conditions; nevertheless, as the overview of Habermas' oeuvre shows above, Habermas' basic empirical analysis still informs his later communicative theory, although in a modified manner.

Equally, in his later works, Habermas demonstrates the empirical applicability of his communicative paradigm. This is seen in his detailed analysis of the influence of the colonisation of the lifeworld on institutions of the previous West German social welfare-state in TCA2; it can also be seen in his communication-based reconstruction of the central empirical themes of the Frankfurt School. Also, in his more recent PF Habermas analyses current economic and political problems in the unified Germany, and examines the genesis of the Gulf War, in terms of the universalistic, communicative principles underlying, respectively, Basic Law and international law. Thus Habermas argues that the problems following the forced unification of the Germanies by the politicians has been generated by a "normative deficit" characterised by the lack of a communicatively informed discursive procedure and
consensus of both the peoples prior to the union, while the Western intervention into
the Gulf was necessitated by the violation by Iraq of the democratic, moral principles
underlying Western international law. Here then, Habermas applies his theory to
concrete events in an explanatory manner which also identifies and demonstrates the
importance of the communicative, normative elements of modern law.

The above demonstrates that Habermas' theory can be and is applied empirically.
Some more general normative elements, which possess existing or potential
communicative force have also been identified. For the strongest representation of
Habermasian communicative, normative potential, however, we must turn to the new
social movements. Although Habermas does not explicitly identify particular NSMs
as possessing especial potential in this respect, he does refer to specific NSMs at
different times in his work. Initially, in TRS, Habermas identifies the student
movement as a central NSM; in AS he recognises the strong universalistic basis of the
women's movement. In general however, Habermas is not willing to commit himself
further than a general, qualified recognition of the NSMs as possessing the strongest
empirical, communicative role in society. While perhaps not as directive as some
critics might like, Habermas does identify where the communicative, normative
elements most reside in society; this allows others to explore the emancipatory role of
NSMs in more detail.

More specific, however, is Habermas' characterisation of the university as a
communicative institution. This is ensured by the reflective, dialogical
methodological principles which underlie academic research and discourse. Here,
although Habermas does not explicitly demonstrate how this communicative potential
can be used to challenge instrumentalisation both within and without the university,
Habermas does, in a relatively unconditional manner given his more ambivalent
attitudes to the liberatory nature of the welfare state and the NSMs, identify a
particular institution which could play an important role in fostering a more
communicative society.

Finally, it is important to note that, far from being an abstract theorist, Habermas is
famous in Germany for his political, journalistic interventions in German events and
issues. Thus Pensky (in White, 1995) states:

It has been a curious feature of Jürgen Habermas' reception in the
English-speaking world that, for all the intense and exhaustive scrutiny
of his critical social theory, Habermas' role as a politically engaged
intellectual, polemist, and essayist in the political public sphere has
received relatively little attention. (p. 67)

Pensky argues that Habermas has been consistently concerned to ensure his theory
"situates itself in the particularities of the German situation", thus showing the
concrete relevance and applicability of his universalistic communicative theory.
Habermas' recent writings now make this clearer to the English reader. The
discussion of NC above demonstrates Habermas' input into the "historians' debate",
and his celebration of the politically-interventionist intellectual. As Haller, in his
introduction to PF states, Habermas claims this intellectual role for himself in
Germany. Equally, in PF Habermas draws on his communicative social theory to
examine a number of current political issues relating to the Gulf War, German unification, the immigration problem and the European Union.

The above demonstrates that Habermas' theory satisfies the conditions of explanatory reach. Habermas' communicative theory explains the important developments of modernity in its historical and social context, and locates the development of institutions such as the welfare state and education within this context. Also, Habermas uses his communicative theory to interpret current world events. In the prescriptive, normative sense, at the national or international level, Habermas' communicative project identifies the constitutional principles of the United States and Germany as containing universalistic principles appropriate to the post-conventional stage. At the institutional level, Habermas identifies emancipatory vehicles which embody, to some degree, the communicative principle. The new social movement possesses potential universalistic levels which can act as a challenge to the instrumentalisation of modernity. More specifically, there is the institution of the university which is a repository of communicative values and exemplifies discourse ethics in its academic procedures. Also, the very linguistic presuppositions underlying language, and the procedures involved in discourse ethics, indicate certain necessary communicative principles of organisation and behaviour. Finally, Habermas' political writings show more explicitly his commitment to the application of his theory. In various ways then, and at differing levels, Habermas demonstrates the empirical and normative relevance of his theory.

3. Habermas' Theory: Continuing Problems

The discussion above demonstrates that the interdisciplinary, communicative macrotheory of Habermas satisfies the criteria of explanatory power and reach: the theory possesses analytical quality, discursive or argumentative power, theoretical openness, thematic coherence and consistency, empirical applicability and normative potential. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all of the themes or disciplines Habermas draws on are equally well understood, explained or integrated; equally, while Habermas' theory has empirical and normative power, the question of whether the extent or range of this power is acceptable in what purports to be a critical social theory can be questioned. So far, the assessment of Habermas' theory has been a supportive one designed to present the theory in its strongest form; the thesis now turns to a more critical discussion of the weaknesses of, and omissions in, Habermas' theory.

Of course, given the ambitious nature of Habermas' work, and its level of erudition, it would be surprising, and perhaps academically questionable in both Popperian and Habermasian terms, if there were not areas of his theory which could not be improved on. The more important question is whether the communicative project as a whole is seriously weakened by the deficiencies in Habermas' theory.

The highest level of theoretical generality of Habermas' communicative project is its celebration of modernity and its values; this celebration has attracted strong criticism from supporters of a postmodernist position such as Foucault, Lyotard and Rorty. Chapter Seven outlines this critique, and demonstrates how supporters of Habermas like Dews (in Habermas, 1992a) provide a strong counter-attack, primarily in the
form of Habermas' argument of the performative contradiction. Nevertheless, it is also noted that while Habermas does consider the ideas of important postmodernists and poststructuralists in PDM, there is an untypical silence on Lyotard. Lyotard is generally viewed as the founder or most important representative of postmodernism (Bauman, 1992); Lyotard (1984) also develops his postmodern position partly as a challenge to Habermas' theory of modernity. Given this, Habermas' apparent refusal to engage with Lyotard is surprising. Further, as Habermas develops his communicative theory on the methodological basis of dialogue with his critics and contemporaries, this lack of engagement with such an important proponent of postmodernism as Lyotard weakens Habermas' defence of modernity against the postmodernist attack.

Furthermore, although the challenge of the performative contradiction is a powerful one against the postmodernist argument, it also has a totalising quality which results in the refusal to consider explanations for those aspects of change and society where, perhaps, the postmodernists do have something useful to contribute. Thus, the postmodernists Crook et al. (1992) argue that Habermas' theory is overly Hegelian in that, although he identifies important contemporary pathologies, he cannot properly explain them. This is because Habermas understands these pathologies only in terms of their place within the continuity of modernity; this "erodes his ability to consider the possibility that they point beyond modernity" (p. 235). Equally, Habermas does not acknowledge that other sociologists, while not subscribing to the postmodernist attitude, do accept that we have moved into a further stage of modernity characterised by important structural changes which cannot be explained wholly in terms of Habermas' instrumentalisation critique. Examples of this are the accounts of late modernity by Giddens and reflexive modernisation by Beck (in Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994), both of which are seen as describing a modernity, or "risk society", whose underlying dynamic is that of uncertainty and risk rather than the instrumental rational control of Habermas' diagnosis. Indeed, although Habermas does refer briefly to Beck's ideas in PT, he does so in terms of drawing from it to support his own position, rather than considering the ideas as a challenge to important assumptions underlying his own theory.

The fact that Habermas does not engage with modern sociology is in marked contrast to his continuing interest in the ideas and theories of modern philosophy. This is also reflected in the much greater interest devoted to Habermas' ideas in the philosophical literature (seen, for instance, in the special section on Habermas in "New German Critique", Spring/Summer 1994, No. 2, and the special issue on Habermas of "Philosophy and Social Criticism", 1994, Vol. 20, No. 4) compared to that of the sociological literature. This philosophical emphasis raises the question as to whether Habermas is really not more interested in and comfortable with philosophical theory and ideas than those of sociology. This might also explain the thinness of Habermas' empirical and sociological content after TCA, including any identification and exploration of potentially emancipatory NSMs, and his emphasis on philosophical theory and discourse procedure in his later works. If this is the case, the description of Habermas as a social philosopher might be more appropriate than that of philosopher and sociologist which he ascribes to himself in AS.
Habermas has also been subject to substantial criticism at the level of his macrotheory. Chapter Five identifies the most important criticisms and shows that many of these can be answered convincingly in terms of Habermas' theory. Nevertheless, there remain a number of problematic areas which must be recognised. Perhaps one of the most controversial and ambiguous areas in Habermas' theory is that of the systems-lifeworld distinction, and the role of the lifeworld in this. There remains an apparent over-emphasis on systems in TCA, despite Habermas' attempts to demonstrate this is not the case in later works such as AS and JA. There are two reasons for this emphasis. Habermas' theory is primarily concerned to explain the nature and causes of the pathology of modernity so necessarily focuses on the systems and its colonisation of the lifeworld. The emphasis on systems then, although undesirable as it has shifted attention away from the communicative elements of the systems world, is understandable in this respect. This is not the case though, with respect to Habermas' reconstructionist emphasis. Habermas develops his sociological account of purposive-rational dominance primarily through the detailed exploration of the structurally-oriented theories of Weber and Parsons in particular, and also Durkheim and Marx. However, there is no corresponding detailed theoretical exploration of accounts of the lifeworld, with the partial exception of Mead. Although Habermas does consider theorists of the lifeworld such as the phenomenologist Schutz in LSS and TCA2, this is primarily in terms of demonstrating the hermeneutic problematic which informs their theories. The identification of this problematic should also presumably, as with those theorists he has favoured, indicate where the reconstructionist possibilities of phenomenology lies. However, Habermas does not attempt to identify those communicative aspects of this theoretical position which might productively be brought, through reconstruction, into the lifeworld aspects of his communicative project. The work of M. Collins (1987), in his detailed exploration of the relevance of Schutz to a communicatively-informed adult education practice, suggests that such a reconstructionism is possible.

At the level of the macrotheoretical Habermas' account of the moral-cognitive development of the individual can also be criticised. Chapter Seven identifies Habermas' relatively uncritical use of Kohlberg, and the problematic nature of Habermas' characterisation of the post-conventional stage. With respect to the latter two main problems can be identified. The question arises, given Habermas' recognition in MCCA that the majority of adults may not have reached the post-conventional stage, as to how far this level is a counter-factual, ideal level rather than an empirical reality. If this is the case, then its analytical usefulness as the ontogenetic parallel to the phylogenetic development of rationality at the level of society, which is at least institutionalised to a degree in liberal-democratic principles and constitutions, must be questioned. Furthermore, given its counter-factual status, there are Platonic, elitist implications in this position. This might seem to accord a privileged position to those post-conventional thinkers who have contributed to the formulation of these liberal-democratic principles and constitution (although, in theory, the universalistic, moral principles underlying the post-conventional stage, should preclude advantage being taken of this).

Chapter Seven highlights a further problem: the question of how can one evaluate or assess the correctness or validity of one position or stance against another when the
positions concerned are at the post-conventional stage of being able to rationalise within the framework of universalistic and context-free principles. The validity of this criticism may be seen in Habermas' increasing engagement with, and reference to, the ideas of more normative political philosophers such as Rawls in recent works such as JA. The fact that Habermas now seems to be incorporating more substantive areas in his theory perhaps demonstrates his recognition that some normative elements must be brought into the post-conventional position if it is to engage in fruitful dialogue with his philosophical contemporaries.

However, Habermas' increasing emphasis on liberal, normative elements raises the question of to what extent there remains a strong practical or emancipatory element in Habermas' work. The examination above of this aspect of Habermas' theory demonstrates that many commentators believe that Habermas' communicative theory lacks utopian emancipatory potential, is not a social science with practical intent, but is rather steeped in the more pragmatic reformism that Benhabib (1986) suggests. Of course Habermas' continuing lack of direction as to which are the important, emancipatory institutions in society is consistent with Habermas' concern not to prescribe courses of action, not to lay down specific guidelines, which have not been discussed and collectively agreed through discourse procedure. Habermas does not want, nor does he think it is possible, to make prescriptions as to what an actively communicative society should look like. As he states in PF, unlike fellow philosophers such as Rawls, "I've never had any ambition of sketching out a normative political theory" (p. 101). Nevertheless, whereas in his theory's own terms this may make sense, it does, given the weak substantive elements that we can identify, demonstrate an apparently liberal rather than a radical or Marxist orientation.

Habermas denies this: he acknowledges that he is not a Marxist in the traditional, orthodox sense, but continues to assert that he is a neo-Marxist whose theory, although modified to meet the conditions of the 1990s, remains in the radical, emancipatory, rational tradition of critical theory. His recent works must lead us to question this radical emancipatory potential of Habermas' thought further however: although the texts of PF and BFN demonstrate Habermas' continuing interest in the communicative potential of the public sphere, there is also an increased emphasis on the liberal-democratic principles and rights which inform Western constitutions and political systems, and on the role of the state in guaranteeing these. In BFN also, Habermas attempts to develop a discursive politics which draws from the major liberal traditions as well as Habermas' own communicative theory. The question must be considered then as to the extent to which Habermas' critical theory has developed into a modern, radical liberal theory; or, as Outhwaite (1994) puts it, whether "Habermas might be summarily characterized as a Marxist Weber" (p. 3).

Perhaps the resolution of this uncertainty as to Habermas' political position again partly lies in the debate on where Habermas' main academic interest lies: the philosopher is more concerned with the universal, moral questions and leaves the more ethical, context-bound questions to the sociologist and other social scientists. Chapter Seven shows how Habermas in MCCA acknowledges the limitations of philosophers, as opposed to social scientists, in grappling with important, social issues such as inequality, unemployment and the environment. Perhaps Habermas...
sees his primary task then as providing the critical, conceptual and methodological tools for approaching these issues; as primarily a philosopher however, he can take the emancipatory task no further. Further, neither, as his philosophical position generates a discursive, proceduralist view of democracy, would Habermas expect or want to take this task further.

The discussion above demonstrates that, despite his overall theoretical achievement, important problems in Habermas' theory remain. Mouzelis sums this up graphically:

> In fact, his overall oeuvre is very much like an architectural edifice, which looks externally imposing from a distance, but on closer inspection loses much of its appeal, in that the doors and windows won't close properly, the roof is leaking, the plumbing and wiring systems are faulty, etc. (1994, p. 285)

However, as any builder will confirm, providing that the foundations are secure, and the walls and roof in reasonable structural condition, other problems are rectifiable at not too great a cost. Here, we can view Habermas as a master architect of the edifice of grand theory, but one who is less knowledgeable or skilled in the building details; these he leaves to those more competent in these areas. To repeat the point made above, perhaps Habermas, as a social philosopher, is concerned to demonstrate the social relevance and import of his theory, but is also willing to leave the sociological development of that theory to those more familiar with, or skilled in, the disciplines of social science.

This is supported by Habermas' (in Calhoun, 1992) assertion, discussed in Chapter Four, that the general framework of his theory is correct; therefore he is willing to modify the detail rather than the substantive, theoretical areas. His macrotheoretical framework, he believes, is a heuristic one that both he and others can continue to develop. This is, of course, essential to his dialogical, methodological approach. To paraphrase Benhabib's (1986) position on this, outlined in Chapter Seven, the fact that Habermas' theory may have less explanatory power or reach in some areas of his theory does not challenge fundamentally the validity or theoretical adequacy of his theory. This can only be challenged successfully if substantial parts of his theory, or the major assumptions and themes underlying them, are highly problematic in theoretical, empirical or normative terms. The analysis undertaken in this chapter demonstrates that this is not the case: while there are weaknesses in particular areas of Habermas' project, parts of the building are not as strong as they could be, the theoretical edifice is generally sound.

Further, no theorist who attempts to develop a macrotheory of the interdisciplinary nature and theoretical complexity of Habermas' project can expect to get everything right, or cover all eventualities. What is important is that the theory, and the theorist, is open to criticism and revision, that a critical, reflective methodology underlies the development of the theory. Habermas' dialogical method demonstrates this critical and reflective mode of theorising: apart from a few noteworthy exceptions such as Lyotard and Giddens, Habermas has continually developed and modified his theory in his engagement with his academic contemporaries and critics. We have seen that there are problems of theoretical lacunae and weaknesses, and empirical abstraction and normative ambiguity, in Habermas work. However, it is more difficult to fault
Habermas with regard to his critical, dialogical methodology. As Holub states, Habermas has been performatively consistent in this throughout his academic career.

Habermas' project is in harmony with his own philosophical presuppositions. He presents a theory by means of argument and controversy. (1991, p. 2)
PART THREE

Habermas in Adult Education Theory
Some adult educators are drawing increasingly from Habermas' writings to inform their theory and practice. However, most of these commentators display a limited understanding of the dialogical, developmental and macrotheoretical nature of Habermas' communicative project compared to their contemporaries in the social science disciplines. These adult educators refer primarily to the interests basis of Habermas' earlier knowledge-constitutive theory, or to the more linguistic and practical aspects of his later communicative theory. Other, potentially relevant aspects of Habermas' theory are ignored or misunderstood; particularly remarkable is that few theorists of adult education draw upon the explicitly educational aspects of Habermas' work. Indeed, Ewert (1991) states in his review of the educational writings on Habermas:

Habermas has not directly addressed education as a social practice. In the few instances in which Habermas directly mentions education, he mentions it as an example rather than as a main topic. For this reason, the significance of Habermas's work for education is best viewed from the perspective of the educational literature that applies Habermas's theories and concepts. (1991, p. 346)

This is not correct: it would be more accurate to state that Habermas has not addressed education extensively. Part Two of the thesis demonstrates that from CES on Habermas emphasises the importance of learning in the development of modernity. He also considers the communicative and emancipatory role of higher education in TRS and NC, and analyses initial education in the former West Germany in the context of his colonisation thesis in TCA2. Of course, the latter two texts were published in English translation after the period of Ewert's literature search, so that he, and other educational commentators on Habermas of the time, could not be expected to be aware of these. However, a reading of more recent adult educators would still lead one to the same conclusion as Ewert. Most adult education theorists apply Habermas' more general ideas, such as that of communicative competence, to the educational context; they ignore Habermas' specific discussions on the role of education in his theory.

This part of the thesis examines the ways in which adult educators, and other educators, have interpreted Habermas' work. Five major schools, or theoretical orientations, which refer to Habermas or critical theory in some context, are identified. The liberals, or critical thinkers, emphasise the importance of the critical reflective process for the adult learner for primarily, individual emancipatory ends. The critical theorists, while accepting the importance of critical thinking, also stress the structural influences on the learning process, and the importance of emancipatory education as a collective endeavour. The anti-foundationalist school is constituted by two approaches: the proponents of adult education as a practical field of knowledge assert the primacy of situated practice over critical and social science theory; the postmodernists extend this diminution of the role of theory to argue that in an increasingly fragmented and differentiated world no theory or set of ideals should be privileged over another. Feminist educators are concerned to identify the gender-
blind spots of critical theory, particularly through the acknowledgement of the affective aspects of the learning process. Unlike their counterparts in the social sciences however, the feminist educators provide less substantive discussion of the importance of Habermas or of critical theory; this orientation then is less distinctive and may overlap with one of the others. For this reason, the feminist educational viewpoint is not considered separately but within the other categories.

Cutting across these main schools of thought, two categorial distinctions are identified which are also important to a consideration of the contribution of Habermas' thought to adult education. The first refers to the liberal-radical continuum of adult education thought: supporters of the former emphasise the more communicative, humanistic aspects of Habermas' thought, while the latter are more interested in Habermas' sociological and ideological critique. The account which is adopted views the role of adult education respectively in either primarily individual and reformist or in collective and more emancipatory terms. The second distinction refers to the theory-practice continuum: supporters of the former argue that Habermas' macrotheoretical framework, and the critical theory which underpins it, is essential to a full analysis of adult education practice and policy; the latter, however, assert that the role of theory is over-emphasised to the neglect of situated practice. The account adopted here primarily interprets adult education respectively through sociological and philosophical traditions and from within a social, political and historical framework, or in terms of the less theoretical or a-theoretical immediate, local and practical educational context.

This section of the thesis also offers a critique of, and dialogue with, these differing educational interpretations. These interpretations are subject to a critique at two levels. First, they are assessed with reference to each other; thus, their contribution to, or role within, the general adult education dialogue with Habermas' writings is considered. Second, these interpretations are assessed with reference to the Habermasian oeuvre; thus the degree to which they accurately reflect or validly criticise Habermas' theory is also examined.
Chapter 9 - Mezirow's Interpretation of Habermas

1. The Theory of Perspective Transformation

A foundational theory of adult education is implicit in the work of philosopher-sociologist Jürgen Habermas. (Mezirow, 1985, p. 142)

Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation is the obvious starting point for an examination of the influence of Habermas on adult education theory. Mezirow is arguably the first adult education thinker to acknowledge the importance of Habermas. Mezirow explicitly bases his theory of learning upon Habermas' ideas; further, his theory of learning has been modified, and extended, in a way that reflects Habermas' own theoretical development. Finally, Mezirow adopts Habermas' dialogical style in his willingness to engage in critical discussion with his opponents. This dialogue demonstrates how Habermas' ideas have informed, supported, or helped generate adult education theory; this both highlights areas of interface between adult education theory and Habermasian theory, and indicates those areas of the interface which are problematic or subject to conflicting interpretation.

In his seminal, early work (1981) Mezirow draws on Habermas' KHI in which Habermas identifies the technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge-constitutive cognitive interests which are located in different areas of social existence: the technical, which is located in work; the practical, which is found in interaction; and the emancipatory, which is located in power and the need for critical reflection. Mezirow argues that each knowledge domain can be seen as involving a different mode of learning, respectively: learning for task-related competence, learning for interpersonal understanding, and learning for perspective transformation. Mezirow agrees with Habermas that it is the instrumental assumptions of the first which have been dominant in Western society and education, and that it is the third domain which is important to combating this dominance. Mezirow argues that his concept of perspective transformation, a process of transformative critical reflection on the constraining psycho-social assumptions which inform our identity, performs these emancipatory functions. This concept of perspective transformation, Mezirow asserts, fills an important gap in adult learning theory by acknowledging the central role played by the function of critical reflectivity. While other forms of reflectivity may occur at earlier stages, this critical reflectivity occurs only in late adolescence or adulthood.

However, critical consciousness - and particularly theoretical reflectivity - represents a uniquely adult capacity and, as such, becomes realized through perspective transformation. Perspective
transformation becomes a major learning domain and the uniquely adult learning function. (1981, p. 13)

Mezirow asserts that the means of achieving perspective transformation in adulthood is through self-directed learning; this can only take place through dialogue, or Habermasian discourse. This involves the adoption of Habermas' ideal speech situation, the implied recognition of the possibility of agreement, and the unrestrained conditions necessary to it, that exists in the very act of taking part in dialogue. He states:

I believe the recognition of the function of perspective transformation within the context of learning domains, as suggested by Habermas' theory, contributes to a clearer understanding of the learning needs of adults and hence the function of education. When combined with the concept of self-directedness as the goal and the means of adult education, the essential elements of a comprehensive theory of adult learning and education have been identified. (1981, p. 22)

This emphasis on the conditions necessary for ideal speech may generate an awareness of the structural constraints on the transformative process, and the need to overcome these. Thus Mezirow states that a critical social science must attempt a critique of ideology of "reified power relationships rooted in institutionalized ideologies" (1981, p. 18) which have become internalised in the individual's psychological history. Indeed, Mezirow goes further and argues that despite the "appalling heresy" (1985, p. 149) with which some colleagues may regard his assertion, adult education and adult educators should also be involved in a commitment to social action, to "the facilitation of both individual and collective actions" (1985, p. 149) to achieve the transformative situation. However, Mezirow believes the transformative process should still emphasise primarily the individual, self-directed learner.

Despite Mezirow's recognition of the social, collective dimension of adult learning, critics such as Collard and Law (1989) argue that the individual emphasis in Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation still does not sufficiently recognise the wider, social constraints and influences on the transformation process. Mezirow attempts to meet this criticism in his more recent writings (1990; 1991b) by developing his theory of perspective transformation further in the light of Habermas' more communicative-based theory. He does this first in his Habermasian distinction between instrumental and communicative learning. Mezirow states transformative learning may take place in the domains of instrumental or communicative learning. Reflection in the instrumental sphere involves an assessment of the efficacy of the strategies involved in the problem-solving process. Communicative reflection, however, involves understanding the meanings of others' communications, and their validity. It is the latter with which Mezirow is primarily concerned. Mezirow states that Habermas' concept of communicative action, and its ideal standards of discourse, serve as:

a philosophical foundation and as criteria for judging both education and the social conditions prerequisite to free and full participation in reflective discourse. (1990, p. 11)
Mezirow argues that this communicative process of reflection can take either individual or collective forms, as in respectively psychotherapy or civil rights and women's movements. This individual or collective action is located within three categories or types of interrelated, distorted meaning perspectives. These categories are: the psychic, which concerns such distortions as psychically-generated inhibitions generated in childhood; the epistemic, which is concerned with the nature and use of knowledge, such as in the perceived reification and immutability of social and environmental problems; and, the sociocultural, which refers to unquestioned beliefs about power and social relationships. Mezirow argues that epistemic and psychic distortions will probably be more individually-based, as they are concerned with communicative competence, the ability to negotiate meanings and purposes instead of passively accepting them. Sociocultural distortions however may generate a collective response and social transformation. He identifies this particular form of perspective transformation with Habermas' critical theory. Although Mezirow's concept of the sociocultural distorted meaning perspective brings him closer to the views of his more radical colleagues, Mezirow nevertheless distances himself from the latter in their more activist, emancipatory views of the role of the adult educator: "Adult learning transforms meaning perspectives, not society" (1991b, p. 208).

Mezirow asserts that there is no simple definition of what constitutes social action: social action means different things to different people, and thus may include change in interpersonal relationships, in organisations or in systems. In sum, while social action may be important, it is not the only goal of adult learning and education: just as there are diverse forms of social action, so there are diverse forms of perspective transformation, the sociolinguistic or sociocultural, epistemic, and psychological, and each has its own form of praxis. Mezirow states that to recognise the latter two forms is not necessarily "to unduly 'psychologize' adult learning or to diminish the importance of sociolinguistic distortions and the need for social action" (1991b, p. 211).

Given this, Mezirow argues that it is important that the adult educator does not adopt an explicit political role. Thus, Mezirow advances an ethics of adult education practice which emphasises a facilitative role in perspective transformation, "a responsibility for fostering critical self-reflection and helping learners plan to take action" (1990, p. 357), rather than a partisan interventionist or directive role.

In short, education is the handmaiden of learning, not of politics; but significant learning, involving personal transformations, is a social process with significant implications for social action. (1991b, p. 208)

2. The Critique: Dialogue with Mezirow

Mezirow's theory has generated a substantial debate in adult education, particularly in the pages of the American journal "Adult Education Quarterly" between 1989 and 1994. Three main categories of critique relevant to the thesis are identified. The first two discuss Habermas' theory: one assesses Mezirow's use of Habermas' theory; the second considers Mezirow's interpretation of Habermas so that it can demonstrate specific problems in the latter's theory. The third type of critique does not refer to Habermas, but instead assesses the internal coherence of Mezirow's position. Given
Mezirow's theoretical reliance on Habermas, this type of critique is also considered as the problems identified may indirectly reflect on the validity of Habermas' theory. The position common to the proponents of these critiques is one of a radical, transformative view of the role of adult education. Although these critics recognise that Mezirow has made an important contribution to the development of a theory of adult education based on Habermas' ideas, they also argue that Mezirow does not sufficiently recognise the critical, radical potential of the latter's theory.

The central criticism of Mezirow is that he emphasises the process of perspective transformation in individual and psychological terms rather than collective and structural terms (Clark and Wilson, 1991; Collard and Law, 1989; Cunningham, 1992; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994; Tennant, 1993). In his description of how adults have developed their meaning perspectives, Mezirow (1981) primarily cites the developmental, cognitive, and psychological theories of Bruner, Kelly and Piaget. Although Mezirow recognises the existence of constraints on perspective transformation, he presents these constraints as taking a primarily psychological form. Mezirow's critics assert that this emphasis on the individual and psychological is not representative of the structural and sociological emphasis of Habermas' critical theory.

Collard and Law (1989) are representative of this critique: they argue that Mezirow's theory is characterised by an uncritical and a-theoretical understanding of Habermas' theory; this can be seen in his lack of awareness of the important criticisms levelled at KHI. The authors cite Mezirow's justification for this, that: "As educators, we need not concern ourselves with the philosophical question of whether Habermas has succeeded in establishing the epistemological status of the primary knowledge-constitutive interests" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 17). Mezirow argues that this is not necessary because Habermas' analysis has "sufficient force" and makes "a compelling argument" (1981, p. 17) for his interest-based theory. Collard and Law (1989) make the ironic observation that here Mezirow denies the importance of theory and reflection in an article which purports to offer a critical theory which emphasises this reflective mode.

Mezirow (1989), in his response to Collard and Law, asserts that adult educators can recognise the importance of the difference between the three domains of knowledge without becoming "embroiled" in the debate between philosophers. However, this is not a satisfactory answer to Collard and Law's criticism. It is anti-rational for a proponent of critical reflection to refuse to reflect on his own theoretical premises. Further, as we have seen in Chapter Four, this position ignores Habermas' own recognition of the criticisms of KHI and his willingness to respond to these by revising his theory.

Collard and Law (1989) assert further that Mezirow's claim to a theoretical validity based on Habermas is problematic. Their central criticism, shared by other contemporaries (Clark and Wilson, 1991; Cunningham, 1992; Hart, 1990), is that Mezirow's recent writings reflect the problems of abstraction and generality in Habermas' theory. Habermas does not acknowledge sufficiently the problem of fostering communication or ideal learning in a social environment with entrenched social inequality. The authors argue that social action is a necessary prerequisite to discourse: reciprocal argument in a situation of equality of the participants cannot
take place until the struggle to achieve this situation has been achieved. Mezirow also does not take this important problem sufficiently into consideration; his is a utopian, detached view of the emancipatory function of adult education.

This criticism of Habermas' theory as too general and abstract is questionable. The examination of Habermas' theory in Part Two demonstrates that Habermas is primarily concerned to develop a general, explanatory framework informed by certain moral principles: he wishes primarily to leave the application of his theory and of these principles, which are based on more ethical concerns, to others. However, this examination also shows that Habermas does indicate in his works how his theory has empirical applications; a fuller reading of the Habermasian oeuvre would recognise this.

Despite the criticisms above Collard and Law commend Mezirow for attempting to come to grips with the a-theoretical character of North American adult education research; indeed, they argue, the continuing lack of theory in the adult education tradition of North America is demonstrated in that they are the first to subject Mezirow's ideas to sustained critique. However, Mezirow's attempt to theorise adult education on critical, Habermasian principles is not successful. Thus, Collard and Law state:

Mezirow's claims to have a theory are premature. At best, he presents mere fragments of a theory of adult learning and education or self-directed learning. Further, it is difficult to see how his ideas can be located within the European tradition of critical theory when they are largely devoid of the socio-political critique that lies at the heart of that tradition. Finally, his failure to address adequately questions of context, ideology, and the radical needs embodied in popular struggles denies perspective transformation the power of an emancipatory theory. (1989, pp. 105-106)

The authors recognise that Mezirow does refer to important structural concepts such as ideology, false consciousness, reification and collective social action. However, they argue that he does not integrate these into a critique of the dominant ideology; equally, "Mezirow is never clear about the nature of collective social action and the bases on which people come together" (1989, p. 105). Thus, Mezirow implicitly under-emphasises the significance of this form of action.

In his response to Collard and Law, Mezirow (1989) challenges their argument that he has not sufficiently recognised the importance of structural constraints on transformative learning and emancipatory education. He accepts that important constraints to the ideal conditions for learning exist, such as poverty and coercive systems. However, Mezirow argues that the ideal, such as emancipatory educational practice, is only a standard against which to assess existing educational and social practice; it does not exist nor is it necessarily a fully attainable goal. Mezirow makes the further point that in modern democratic systems, where at least by comparative standards there is opportunity for dissent and social change, collective action is more likely to take a reformist rather than revolutionary character. These two arguments, as the discussion on Habermas' political position in Part Two demonstrates, concur at
least partly with Habermas' position on the nature and possibility of collective, emancipatory discourse and social action.

Mezirow also argues that Collard and Law do not recognise the sophistication of his theory in that they focus only on sociocultural distortions, and ignore the epistemic and the psychic. Mezirow points out that each of the three dimensions involves different and variable modes of interaction and action. There is no simple linear relationship between transformative learning and certain kinds of social action; transformative learning experiences in the epistemic and psychic dimensions may not logically lead to collective action at all. Mezirow argues then that his theory of perspective transformation is a radical theory, in that it recognises the importance of emancipation and action at the social and individual levels. However, it is also a more realistic theory in that it offers a range of emancipatory or transformative routes, which reflect the differing needs of adult learners.

Is a dogmatic adherence to the notion that all transformative adult learning must result in collective social action, facilitated by an educator with an "overtly political agenda," - however inappropriate it may be to the nature of the problem addressed - the sole determining characteristic of what it means to be a "radical" adult educator? (1989, p. 174)

Mezirow accepts that any valid learning theory must be understood in the context of a comprehensive social theory; he has chosen Habermas' theory of communicative action as his heuristic for transformation theory. But, Mezirow fails to answer Collard and Law's criticism that he doesn't sufficiently engage with the critical social theory which informs Habermas' communicative action. Thus, the charge of a-theoretism or under-theorisation remains a potent one.

Hart (1990) also welcomes Mezirow's attempt to develop a critical theory of adult education; however, like Collard and Law, she argues that Mezirow does not sufficiently recognise the importance of power in his theory and so he contains the radical potential of Habermas' theory. This is demonstrated in Mezirow's questionable use of Habermasian categories. Thus Hart criticises Mezirow's "declawing" of Habermas' ideal speech situation or unconstrained discourse: this concept, she argues, does not stop short at the ability of individuals to critically reflect on their own experience, as Mezirow's interpretation seems to indicate, but points to power-free communication, and therefore to immediate moral-practical consequences. Equally, although Hart recognises that Mezirow wishes to cover a wider range of distortions other than those of dominance, his use of the term 'distortions' seems to reflect or draw on Habermas' notion of 'systematically-distorted communications' which does have dominance implications. Hart argues that Mezirow's use of these and similar concepts should commit Mezirow to the theoretical and political concerns underlying Habermas' conceptual framework.

Whether he likes it or not, by employing these categories Mezirow takes over their meanings and connotations as well and therefore inevitably gets tangled up with the issue of power. (1990, p. 128)

Hart argues further that Mezirow's theory also fails to recognise the power-relationships involved in Habermas' distinction between communicative and
instrumental rationality. Habermas is concerned with the current supremacy of instrumental rationality in society, and challenges this dominance by relocating instrumental rationality as a partial aspect of the more comprehensive and primary form of communicative rationality. Hart states then, that an educational theory based on Habermasian theories should also be anchored in the idea of dominance-free communication. Thus, Hart asserts, changing one's meaning perspective is a communicative process that cannot be achieved instrumentally or by instrumental learning as Mezirow claims; instrumental learning is always embedded in a communicative or normative context which legitimises its appropriateness.

Mezirow makes no response to Hart's critique; however, his response to Collard and Law at least partly addresses these criticisms. Mezirow (1989) argues that meanings are judged on the basis of consensually defined rational communicative criteria embedded in modern cultures; he also accepts that the emancipatory domain is not separate from, but is applicable to both instrumental and communicative learning. Given this, Hart's interpretation may be more an indication of the differing political positions, or in Mezirow's terms, differing meaning perspectives, that she and Mezirow hold, than a valid criticism of the latter's position. This differing position can be seen in Hart's assertion that the ethical position of the adult educator must be one of committed radicalness: the concept of emancipatory education binds the adult educator to, and places the adult educator within, struggle against the distorting effects of power in whichever ways are possible, and to a commitment to help non-oppressive communities. This does not mean, however, that the adult educator must be a political activist, but rather involves a recognition that education is not separate from society and politics, and so emancipatory action can take a range of collective forms. Despite this qualification, this is a narrower, and for Mezirow, more limited view of the role of the adult educator than Mezirow is willing to accept. As Mezirow states:

As citizens, educators should become partisan activists to work toward creating such a [discursive] society. As educators, we have an ethical commitment to help learners think for themselves rather than to consciously strive to convert them to our views. (1994, p. 230)

This reflects Habermas' position: Chapter Seven demonstrates that Habermas makes a clear distinction between morality and ethics, and the role of philosopher and citizen. Mezirow adopts a similar approach in his view that the adult educator should be a facilitator of discourse in the educational context, but cannot tell the participants in that discourse what decisions to reach, or how to think or act.

Clark and Wilson (1991) examine Mezirow's ideas from within his own theoretical framework of perspective transformation. The authors argue that Mezirow "fails to explore the constitutive relationship between individuals and the sociocultural, political, and historical contexts in which they are situated" (1991, p. 90); this problematises the radical claims made for the theory of perspective transformation. Although Mezirow does recognise that meaning perspectives have a social context, he nevertheless fails to develop the implications of this; throughout his writings on transformative learning he gives primacy to human agency over circumstance.
The authors also argue that this lack of context applies to Mezirow's concept of rationality. While Mezirow's more recent work recognises that discourse is a contextually constrained process in terms of history, situation and biography, what it does not recognise is that the very elements which "distort" reality actually provide it with meaning. Thus, while acknowledging the constraints, Mezirow defuses or qualifies them in his continuing belief in ideal discourse. Mezirow continues to propose argument and evidence as ideal conditions which assert a transhistorical, decontextualised view of rationality, even as he increasingly acknowledges the contingency and value-driven nature of rationality. Mezirow's ideal conditions then, fail to incorporate the possibility of multiple valid viewpoints which are historically contingent.

This critique of Mezirow parallels that made of Habermas. We have seen in Part Two that Habermas is also criticised for reifying the process of communication and reason, and asserting its universality independent of context. Equally, we have seen Habermas' response to this: that the grammar of communication or reason is common to all cultures, although it may take different forms. Mezirow (1991a) argues similarly in his response to Clark and Wilson: he accepts that the ideal conditions of discourse are seldom if ever reached in practice, given the unequal distribution of resources and power in our culture; nevertheless, he argues that these ideals are clearly implied in the very nature of human communication, and provide the basis for a concept of adult education development as movement toward fuller and freer participation in rational discourse and action. Such an ideal of rational discourse, he believes, is institutionalised in courts, scientific laboratories, universities and responsible journalism. While there are varying viewpoints or theories, he states, we must have a means of assessing the validity of them. When neither empirical tests or consensual validation is possible, Mezirow argues, then we must turn to a consensual judgement regarding the justification for the contested assertion, thus rational discourse. This involves the rational superiority of the transcultural qualities of truth, truthfulness, authenticity and appropriateness, "a higher level of abstraction, not one which somehow seeks to transcend culture, but one which identifies the essence of how our culture prescribes this process of learning" (1991a, p. 191). These conditions for discourse, he argues, are also the conditions for adult education.

The ideal conditions for rational discourse also provide a firm foundation for a philosophy of adult education which recognizes the central role of adult education to be the creation and development of just such communities of critical discourse and action guided by these ideals. The ideal conditions for discourse become the ideal conditions for adult learning. (1991a, p. 189)

These ideals are not contingent in the sense of context but in that they themselves are always open to rational reassessment. Certainly, Mezirow argues, there may be multiple valid viewpoints in the sense that a judgement in communicative learning might recognise the partial validity of opposing viewpoints and arrive at a best judgement among them or a compromise. If a consensus cannot be reached people must agree to live with their differences or settle by resort to traditional forms of authority. In this response also Mezirow reflects Habermas' emphasis on the procedures underlying the process of rational discourse or argumentation. At the
same time however, like Habermas, Mezirow does argue that there are certain transcultural values or qualities which inform these procedures. Thus discourse ethics suggests:

the foundation for a political philosophy by implying that freedom, tolerance, equality, education, and democratic participation are essential conditions of human communication and learning rather than mere artifacts of the Enlightenment. (1994, p.226)

Cunningham (1992) makes a final, important criticism of Mezirow: she questions Mezirow’s distinction between adult and children’s learning, and the degree to which perspective transformation depends on cognitive structure development. Indeed, she proposes that perspective transformation should be viewed in terms of human rather than adult learning; thus Mezirow’s boundary impositions may be motivated by power concerns such as professionalisation or status appropriation.

In his response to Cunningham (1992), Mezirow argues that children must learn the rules of society before they can raise questions about the principles upon which the rules are predicated. Adolescents become able to identify and critique principles as the result of having acquired formal operations. Thus, it is primarily in adulthood that we are able to raise questions about the paradigms upon which the principles are predicated and that we can engage in premise reflection. This argument reflects, in general, the Habermasian schema of cognitive and moral learning levels discussed in Chapter Seven, and in particular the important distinction between the conventional and post-conventional that Habermas makes.

3. Mezirow: A Preliminary Assessment

Collard and Law (1989) point out that a core problem of Mezirow’s theory of perspective transformation is its problematic claim to a theoretical status which is based on Habermas' ideas. Further justification for the problematic nature of this assertion can be seen in Mezirow’s equation of this concept with the emancipatory concepts of Freire and Habermas:

The resulting transformation in perspective or personal paradigm is what Freire refers to as "conscientization" and Habermas as emancipatory action (1981, p. 7)

While Mezirow later qualifies this equation (1991) as only referring to perspective transformation of the sociolinguistic kind, this remains theoretically untenable. There are, of course, important similarities between Habermas and Freire in their respective emancipatory projects, but there are also significant theoretical and methodological differences (Collins and Plumb, 1989; Newman, 1994). Mezirow’s conflation of these two projects demonstrates an eclectic, a-theoretical approach which marks much of his writing: Mezirow draws from a wide range of psychological, sociological, andragogical and computer-based methods and approaches (1990), and radical and liberal adult educators (1991b), without recognising or discussing their differing methodological and theoretical assumptions. This a-theoretical approach is not representative of Habermas whose central mode of theoretical development is to engage in extended critical dialogue with his intellectual predecessors and contemporaries in order to refine and redefine his critical theory.
Mezirow's problematic theoretical understanding of Habermas' theory also exists in the unquestioning manner in which Mezirow uses Habermas. Mezirow recognises Habermas' shift in thought to a more communicative emphasis after KHI, unlike many other education theorists who continue to use the earlier 1960's paradigm to inform their research. These adult educators demonstrate either an apparent lack of familiarity with Habermas' theoretical development of the last twenty years (Hindmarsh, 1993), or a refusal to recognise its importance (Usher and Bryant, 1989). Nevertheless, Mezirow's parallel shift to a more communicative emphasis takes place without an acknowledgement of the problematic features of the earlier formulation, or the reasons for the need to move on from that formulation. Part Two demonstrates Habermas' willingness to receive, and respond to, such criticism so that he can more effectively develop his ideas.

A further problem is Mezirow's assertion that Habermas' communicative theory forms the basis for his own theory of perspective transformation. In his later writings (1990; 1991b; in Welton, 1995), and in his specific responses to his critics (1989; 1991a; 1992), Mezirow shows a familiarity with Habermas' theory of communicative action. Equally, Mezirow (1991b; in Welton, 1995) demonstrates an understanding of Habermas' identification of instrumentalism and the colonisation of the lifeworld as the central pathological characteristic of modernity, and of the emancipatory role Habermas ascribes to the NSMs. However, this understanding exists at the level of description rather than that of analysis or critique. Mezirow is concerned with basing his theory of perspective transformation on Habermas' communicative theory primarily in terms of individual autonomy, perception and transformation. It is through these that adult learners may recognise inequalities of power and attempt social change through the "continuing revision of existing economic and bureaucratic systems" (in Welton, 1995, p. 67). Mezirow's theoretical understanding of Habermas' sociology stops here: Mezirow does not demonstrate an understanding of the macrotheoretical, structural and developmental aspects of Habermas' critical theory, or the theoretical traditions or disciplines they draw on, which underpin and inform this theory.

Furthermore, there are certain sociological and philosophical themes in these more structural aspects of Habermas' theory which could be made relevant to adult education, but which Mezirow fails to recognise. One such theme is the systems-lifeworld thesis, primarily presented in TCA2, where Habermas argues that the economic and political institutions increasingly dominate the lifeworld of lived experience and the private world. This distortion of the lifeworld also involves the "colonisation" of education and the role of the NSMs in combating this. Mezirow briefly acknowledges Habermas' colonisation thesis but only in general and descriptive terms, as a constraint on the individual, rather than in institutional, social and analytical terms. Thus, he does not recognise its significance for Habermas' social theory or for emancipatory education. Another theme relevant to adult education is Habermas' revision of Marx's historical materialism in CES which emphasises an evolutionary social dynamic based on the generation of progressive problem-solving learning processes.

A final important theme is Habermas' distinction between issues of ethics and morality in MCCA. This is central to Habermas' notions of the post-conventional
stage and communicative discourse. Mezirow recognises the importance of
discourse to adult education, but shows no awareness of the important distinction
between morality and ethics which Habermas makes, nor of the reasons for this
distinction; indeed he seems to conflate the two. The relationship between morality
and ethics remains currently a matter of considerable modern political philosophical
debate (Kymlicka, 1990), and one that has important implications for adult education
theory and practice. Mezirow does not recognise this debate, nor does he recognise
Habermas' position in this debate.

One important question this debate raises is how far the post-conventional stage of
cognitive-moral development pertains only or primarily to adults. There has been a
long-standing debate as to whether there are distinct, separate learning processes
which can be seen in the adult only. Chapter Two discusses this debate, showing how
Knowles modifies his early position on the distinctness of adult learning. Mezirow
however, despite similar criticism, has refused to modify his position, arguing that
this is supported by psychological research, including that of Piaget and Kohlberg.
Thus he asserts that "it is primarily in adulthood that we become able to raise
questions about the paradigms upon which the principles are predicated and to engage
in premise reflection." (1992, p. 250). In this, Mezirow does seem to reflect
Habermas' position: in TRS, CES, and especially MCCA, Habermas makes it clear
that he sees the transition from adolescence to adulthood, in moral-cognitive terms, as
that of the transition of the conventional to the post-conventional stage. This is
discussed further in Part Four.

This preliminary assessment of Mezirow's interpretation of Habermas' theory
demonstrates that this interpretation must be seen as problematic. Mezirow asserts on
numerous occasions (1981; 1985; 1989; 1991b) that his theory of learning is based on
Habermas' critical social theory and philosophy. However, the examination of
Mezirow above demonstrates that, in important respects, Mezirow only demonstrates
a superficial or partial understanding of Habermas' theory; this is particularly the case
in its structural and discipline-informed features. Mezirow's claim to a theoretical
credibility derived from Habermasian theory then is weak in terms of these
considerations.

However, the above criticisms of Mezirow's interpretation of Habermasian theory
may be applied to most other adult educators who refer to Habermas; this is
demonstrated in the next chapter. Furthermore, we must recognise that the critique
presented above can be balanced by a recognition of those areas in which Mezirow
usefully and validly develops his learning theory through Habermas. As we have seen
above Mezirow demonstrates a strong understanding of Habermas' ideal speech
situation, and the universalistic democratic ideals and procedural principles
presupposed by it. Mezirow also recognises, in general terms, the importance of the
cognitive and moral aspects of Habermas' sociolinguistic theory to his own theory of
perspective transformation, and to adult education. It appears then Mezirow's
learning theory is limited to a more general understanding of the communicative and
linguistic aspects of Habermas' macrotheoretical project: on this more realistic and
limited basis perhaps, Mezirow's claim to a Habermasian-informed theory may be
accepted.
There may also be another area of Mezirow's application of Habermasian theory which is valid. As we have seen above, Mezirow is criticised for not sufficiently recognising the more structural features of Habermas' theory, and their application to the emancipatory possibilities of adult education. This is a valid criticism. However, Mezirow challenges his critics by arguing that their view of the emancipatory possibilities of adult education is also unbalanced, and that there is room for a more individual, humanistically-based interpretation. It is to this debate that we now turn.
Chapter 10 - The Critical Theory/Thinking Debate

1. Critical Theory in Adult Education

Thus, although critical thinking and perspective transformation through adult learning have been attributed to critical theory and specifically to Habermas (Mezirow, 1981), in reality this is only a new manifestation of personal growth psychology. (Griffin, 1988, p. 177)

The critics of Mezirow argue that his theory of perspective transformation emphasises the communicative aspects of Habermas' theory, those which are more individualistic and humanistic, to the neglect of the latter's social and ideological critique of modern society. Thus, Griffin (1988; in Bright, 1989) argues that adult educators like Mezirow and Brookfield (1987) propose an adult education practice based on a reflective or thinking process which generates primarily individual action. Griffin challenges the appropriation of the concept 'critical' by Mezirow and others, arguing that critical thinking is not based upon critical social science or social theory, but is humanistic and psychologistic in its view of society. Society is conceived in reductionist terms: as the threat to individuality posed by culture and socialisation rather than as the historical and structural forms of social relations whose content is primarily economic and political. Supporters of critical thinking and perspective transformation are attracted to Habermas' critical theory by the latter's emphasis on concepts like communication and emancipation because these concepts are also important to the humanistic view of society. But, Griffin argues, the critical thinkers' use of these concepts diminishes their critical content. Indeed, Griffin states, critical thinking is little more than the old idea of a humanistically-informed liberal education for democratic citizenship in new guise.

In short, the absence of authentic social structural concepts of history, state or power empties analytic concepts of much of this critical function, so that 'transformation', 'adaptation', 'reflectivity', 'dialectics', or even 'criticism' itself convey only an 'individual and society' meaning rather than one explicable wholly in terms of social science or social theory. (1988, p. 176)

Griffin proposes a critical theory of adult education which argues that issues of power must be central to any social analysis. Adult education policy and practice takes place within an oppressive capitalist society; therefore adult education theory must be informed by an ideological critique and a collective emancipatory praxis. Griffin makes his radical view of adult education theory explicit: essentially the role of an adult education theory which is informed by the critical theory of the Frankfurt tradition must be to challenge capitalism. Thus, he states, "it could not, as a theoretical discipline, be construed in any other terms than those of struggle and conflict" (in Bright, 1989, p. 137).
Griffin argues that the critical thinkers' lack of a structural and ideological critique has important implications for the perceived professional role of these adult educators. Critical thinking may generate a practice which is supportive of, rather than opposed to, capitalism. This is seen in the wide range of, often instrumental, applications of critical thinking.

Critical thinking, perspective transformation, andragogy, can all be put to universal purposes, whether these be the reinvigoration of democracy, the struggles of oppressed groups, or the learning needs of managers of international corporations. (1988, p. 178)

Indeed Griffin argues that adult educators have explicitly adopted the more humanistic aspects of the critical theory of Habermas in order to legitimise their professional role: "Critical thinking is the latest fashionable challenge...to adult educators constantly in search of new professional roles to play" (1988, p. 176). Despite his espousal of a critical theory perspective however, Griffin (in Peters et al., 1991) also reflects the concern expressed by many of his colleagues in the social sciences that Habermas' theory is too abstract and formal to give clear indications as to radical educational practice; thus, it "will probably serve only to widen the gap between theorists and practitioners in adult education" (p. 263).

Collins (1985; 1991; 1995a) echoes Griffin's concern at the manner in which adult educators are coopting critical emancipatory terminology in the service of their instrumental, adult education practice. Collins supports Griffin's argument that modern adult education practice in the English-speaking world, including that of the critical thinkers, is largely shaped by psychological, individual orientations and steered by a technical rationality.

Critical thinking in adult education, it seems, is either to be relativized so that it does not come into direct confrontation with the predominant ideologies, texts, and authorities of the field or it is reduced, with technocratic abandon, to a series of critical thinking 'skills' or 'competences'. Either way, the critical edge is lost. (1991, p. 6)

Collins argues that the treatment of critical theory, and particularly that of Habermas by adult educators, is problematic. Collins states of Habermas:

His critical question, of immense pedagogical significance, yet to be confronted by adult practice, is 'How can the relation between technical progress and the social life-world be reflected upon and brought under the control of rational discussion?' (1991, p. 25)

Whereas Griffin's critique is presented at a more general level, and is more critical of Habermas, Collins presents a detailed analysis which is more explicitly informed by, and supportive of, Habermas' social theory:

It is to the work of Jürgen Habermas largely contained in the two volumes describing his theory of communicative action...that adult educators can look for the basis of a substantive learning theory. (in Welton, 1995a, p. 90)

Collins adopts Habermas' political analysis in arguing that the tendency to technical rationality is increasing under an advancing neo-conservative, or New Right, political
ideology in North America and Britain. In the adult education world, this has encouraged adult educators to move in from the margins and gain greater professional recognition by reflecting the neo-conservative ethos of the "cult of efficiency". Collins asserts that this "cult of efficiency" is increasingly invading the everyday areas of our lives, including education. He argues that theorists have demonstrated this in various ways: Marcuse with his notion of one-dimensionality, Illich with his concept of the erosion of the Commons, and Habermas in his thesis of the colonisation of the lifeworld.

Collins asserts that this technical ethos is generating a crisis in modern adult education practice; to combat this, he proposes a renewed sense of vocation and a critically informed pedagogy. By vocation, Collins refers to an intellectual and ethical commitment, a sense of mission which informs educational practice, and which sees efficiency and expertise as secondary to larger issues such as human fulfilment and equality.

Collins argues that much of adult education, which is imbued with technicist assumptions, stands in the way of this more genuine emancipatory kind of learning. Thus, he states, methods such as standardised techniques, individual learning, self-paced learning, computer programmes (as outlined in Mezirow, 1990 for instance) coopt emancipatory terminology in the service of quite prescriptive adult learning curricula. He argues further that the increasing tendency to professionalisation (as opposed to a vocationally-informed professionalism) in adult education has bestowed power and monopolistic privileges on professionals whose qualifications are regarded as indicators of technical competence. Indeed, he continues, this belief in the worth of professionalisation has led to mandatory continuing education for professionals which invades their personal autonomy, and further legitimises the criteria of efficiency and competence. This has resulted in the transference to experts of many vital activities that were and still could be performed in the domain of the everyday lifeworld; the professionalisation of adult education has lent its weight to the world of specialists, the system-world.

Collins recognises that some proponents of self-directed learning such as Brookfield (1987), as opposed to technicists like Knowles (1978), do demonstrate a critical awareness of how institutional, sociopolitical and cultural constraints influence the scope and quality of adult education. Nevertheless, Collins asserts, their analysis does not permit enquiry into the ethics of self-directed learning as a technique and guiding principle, an ethics which is informed by "the accommodative, intrusive, and coercive effects of a technical rationality" (1991, p. 29). Collins argues that one can conduct such an enquiry by turning to the theory of Habermas.

The fact that the authors are unaware that the instrumentalism (directed self-direction, as it were) of their systematic formulations for achieving self-directed learning actually "colonizes", to use a term of Habermas, the terrain they have staked out under the rubric of "andragogy" underscores the need for us to explore means of integrating ethical/practical and systematic aspects of our field of practice. (1985, p. 117)
As we have seen in Part Two this colonisation of the lifeworld is viewed by Habermas as the central problem of modernity. Collins argues that this colonisation must be opposed both in the systems and lifeworlds "because the preservation of what is vital in our everyday life-world depends upon the fostering of its vital, communicative, constituents within the system-world" (1991, p. 95).

Collins argues that the formal institution has an important role here. He makes a number of practical suggestions as to how the adult educator can introduce critical discourse and democratic practices in institutional areas such as professional relationships, the curriculum and teaching practice. However, he also argues that adult educators committed to a transformative pedagogy must extend their role outside these institutions to the lifeworld. Here, he identifies the important role of new social movements such as the women's, peace, and environmental movements, which are concerned to preserve and foster the vital, communicative constituents of the everyday lifeworld. This reflects Habermas' recognition of the possible communicative and emancipatory role of NSMs in TCA2 and AS.

Welton (1987; 1991; 1995) echoes the concerns of Griffin and Collins in his attempt to promote a critical theory of adult education. Welton dismisses the critical thinkers' appropriation of critical theory because they do not demonstrate the necessary historical, philosophical and sociological awareness of the underlying Marxist and Frankfurt traditions.

The prevalent tendency in contemporary educational discourse is to restrict the meaning of critical to processes of validating arguments. This approach (often labelled "critical thinking") cannot be identified with critical theory as understood in the western philosophical and Marxist tradition. (1991, p. 24)

Welton also echoes Collins in identifying Habermas' theory as central to a critical, emancipatory adult education: "Habermas' work is of central importance for critical educational theory and practice" (1995, p. 136). Welton argues that Habermas' theory is particularly important to modern critical theorists as Habermas has had "the task of addressing himself not only to the inherited problems of the Marxian legacy but also to the blindspots of the Frankfurt School itself" (1991, p. 36).

Here, Welton draws attention to Habermas' ontogenetic-phylogenetic framework, his revision of Marx's historical materialism in CES, which asserts the role of learning processes in social evolutionary development. These learning processes are characterised by problem-solving rules and procedures which generate increasing technical and moral-practical knowledge.

Habermas places learning processes at the centre of his critical project. This signifies a major shift within western critical theory - shall we call this the "learning turn"...?...there can be no doubt that critical theory's missing link until Habermas was its inability to link crisis and potential to a theory of how adult learning releases this potential in particular times and places, resulting in new institutionalized forms of freedom and enhanced individual and collective competence enabling persons to be self-determining historical actors. (1991, p. 37)
Welton (1991; 1993; 1995) agrees with Collins that NSMs are important to the emancipatory process. However, whereas Collins still places the main emphasis for the development of communicative values on the adult educator and on adult education practice, Welton proposes a radical social learning model of the wider society which primarily emphasises the role of NSMs in this process. Welton states that the colonisation of the lifeworld has produced a "blocked learning capacity of the system, directed by the state and corporate steering mechanisms" (1991, p. 39); this has generated potential oppositional NSMs in civil society. It is here that emancipatory adult learning will mainly take place; adult educators must therefore investigate the learning and emancipatory potential of these NSMs.

For Welton then, critical adult education theory has a fundamental role in encouraging emancipatory values and practices in society, in the lifeworld in particular, but also in the systems world. This role, informed by the communicative theory of Habermas, effectively proposes a new paradigm of adult education theory and practice.

Critical adult education practice, we argue, has as its normative mandate the preservation of the critically reflective lifeworld...and the extension of communicative action into systemic domains...Expressed boldly, this formulation - in defense of the lifeworld - holds the promise of replacing the old andragogical paradigm. (1995, pp. 5-6)

2. Beyond Reason: Hart and the Feminist Perspective

Hart (1985; 1990) presents a more feminist-oriented critical theory in her application of Habermas to adult education. Hart also supports the role of NSMs in combating the technical trend in society and adult education. However, whereas Collins and Welton assert the importance of a range of NSMs, Hart applies Habermas' ideas specifically to women's groups. She argues that these groups provide exemplary material for adult education to study entrenched social distortions such as normative patriarchal structures.

If the acquisition of a practical consciousness that is capable of rationally addressing moral-practical questions is accepted as a major educational objective, consciousness-raising groups and collectives can be considered genuine adult educational situations. (1985, p. 121)

Hart argues that this can be demonstrated through Habermas' theory of communicative action. Communicative discourse thematises contested norms and interests and then subjects them to critical scrutiny through the testing of their underlying validity claims. Women's groups apply this discourse in their examination of the underlying norms of masculinity and femininity which mask hidden power relationships and patriarchal interests. Further, these groups also wish to develop new consensual, dominance-free forms of interaction which satisfy Habermas' communicative criteria. Hart believes that this discursive and prefigurative ethos of women's groups probably constitutes the most systematic attempt to develop a Habermasian communicative practice.

However, Hart recognises, this argumentative process requires highly developed communicative competencies, and presupposes a number of conditions which may
not always be present. Indeed, she states, an underlying individual-psychological unconscious deep structure of norms and interests may exist which precedes conscious, discursive speech; the rational, cognitive processes may not possess the capacity to make these accessible. Here, Hart gives the example of women's sadomasochistic fantasies. In such instances, Hart believes that there may be an "inadmissibility of certain needs and interests because they would come into conflict with the emotional and motivational requirements of the collective situation" (1990, p. 131). This contradiction can produce anxiety and guilt which may lead to strategic manoeuvres to avoid the emergence or thematisation of this guilt.

Hart states that if we are to understand and respond to this behaviour, we have to go beyond Habermas and beyond reason; we have to go beyond creating the conditions of rational discourse to creating the conditions for a counter-environment, which helps deal with these more psychically, deep-rooted distorted aspects of communication. These unconscious motivations or repressed needs, she argues, seem to call for more explicitly therapeutic rather than educational interventions. Thus, Hart argues that the creation of power-free communal relationships, or an anti-oppressive environment may contribute to the counteracting of repressed, "wrong" needs, eroding these and replacing them with nurtured, more progressive needs and desires.

This goes beyond the cognitivist, rationalist emphasis of Habermas. Thus Hart asserts that Habermas' emphasis on total human rationality neglects the affective dimensions of human action and interaction, "the life-affirming, positive force of the affectual or 'libidinal' undercurrent of all human interaction" (1990, p. 134). This cannot be reduced to the rational will and the force of better argument, but nevertheless contains important utopian potential as it "touches the deep structure of non-hierarchical, caring and solidarity relations" (1990, p. 134). Here, Hart echoes Benhabib's (1986) arguments, discussed in Part Two, that the critical-analytical dimension of emancipatory education should join with the relational if it is to retain its utopian promise. Thus, Hart states:

The fostering of solidarity relations among all the participants in a context of caring is therefore as vital a component of an overall liberatory educational practice as the fostering of critical reflectivity. (1990, p. 135)

Hart proposes a critical adult education theory and practice then, which although influenced by Habermas, goes beyond the rationalism of his theory, and that of the position of other critical theorists of adult education. Hart (in Welton, 1995b) asserts that Collins and Welton, despite their concern to challenge the professionalisation of adult education "remain dependent on an institutionalized view of the professional adult educator" (p. 204) which is imbued with class, ethnocentric and particularly masculinist, assumptions.

Here, Hart reflects the criticism of Habermas raised by feminists from the social science and philosophy disciplines, which is referred to in Part Two: that there is a dimension of experience which is not immediately accessible to rational discourse, and is not sufficiently recognised by Habermas or his supporters. Habermas' theory of communication, and an adult education practice based on it, should be extended to
encompass the non-cognitive, affective dimension of human experience. This requires the recognition and affirmation of the experience of women, and of their central role in the reproduction of lifeworld values and practices.


We have seen above that the critical theorists of adult education highlight problematic areas in the position of the critical thinking school. Mezirow and Brookfield are the two adult educators who have been most challenged in this respect. The previous chapter demonstrates how Mezirow has produced a spirited response to some of the criticisms of his opponents. Mezirow has been joined in this recently by Brookfield. In his earlier works (1986; 1987) Brookfield refers to Habermas perfunctorily, generally and uncritically, and primarily in terms of his knowledge-constitutive interests; more recently however, Brookfield has demonstrated a greater understanding of, and concern to refer to, Habermas' communicative theory.

Brookfield (1993a) acknowledges the influence of Habermas and critical theory on his own position: "the Frankfurt school of critical social theory...is pre-eminent in my own intellectual formation." (p. 65). Nevertheless, he tries to avoid letting this critical tradition overly influence his educational practice by adopting a more eclectic and pragmatic approach which draws on liberal, socialist and postmodern approaches to adult education. He states:

In effect, what I am trying to do is blend - in an informed and appropriate dialectic - universalist elements of the modernist valuing of rational analysis as a hedge against oppression with relativist elements of the postmodern emphasis on contextuality and multiplicity of perspectives. (1993a, p. 66)

Brookfield argues that this approach is a necessary and realistic one in the context of adult education. Adult students and adult educators have significant problems with theoretical work: they find much theory too abstract, remote and complex; they do not feel they have the intellectual skills or background to subject theory to critique; and, they may feel it is not relevant to their practical concerns, or, in the case of radical theory, it is politically and academically suspect.

Brookfield argues further that in adult education it is important to start from the familiar and congenial cultural traditions rather than those rooted in a more alien European critical tradition. Brookfield cites radical pedagogues, such as Horton and Freire, in support of his argument for grounding activities in terms of the participants' traditions and concerns. Brookfield argues then that adult education in the United States must start from its own pragmatic and individualist tradition. This does not mean however, as the critical theorists argue, that adult education has to be instrumental; the cultural tradition of liberalism also contains important oppositional elements. Brookfield (1993b) identifies self-directed learning as an example of this. Thus he challenges the critical theorists' attack on self-directed learning, arguing instead that this can contribute to a critical practice of adult education. Brookfield states:

the concept of self-directed learning, if interpreted politically, could play an important role (along with critical theory, critical pedagogy,
and other work on transformative and emancipatory education) in providing a rationale for a critical practice of adult education. (1993b, p. 228)

Brookfield recognises, of course, that many self-directed programmes are instrumentally-oriented, or go to the extreme of relinquishing the role of the adult educator as such. But, he argues this doesn't have to be the case; self-directed learning has significant emancipatory potential. Indeed, given its acceptance by mainstream adult education, Brookfield argues that it "could become one of the most politically charged Trojan horses the field of adult education has ever known" (1993b, p. 240).

Brookfield believes that self-directed learning involves raising questions about who has power over learning content, processes and resources. Equally, self-directed learning involves a reflective awareness of the cultural influences upon the needs and desires involves in this process. Given this, adult education programmes will inevitably have to address the politically contentious issue of where the control lies; this is necessary because self-direction emphasises individual responsibility for framing choices. Thus adult education can be "inherently politicizing as learners come to a critical awareness of the differential distribution of resources necessary to conduct their self-directed learning efforts" (1993b. p. 239). Brookfield states then:

> If the political dimensions of the idea of self-direction could be made explicit, this could have a powerful effect on the way many people think and act as adult educators. For all the accomodative potential so skillfully identified by Collins and Griffin, there is still something intrinsically critical, freeing and empowering to many people about the idea of self-direction. (1993b, p. 232)

Brookfield states that we will never be fully informed about, or be able to distinguish fully between, constraining short-term and empowering long-term interests; nevertheless we should act as if such ideals could be realised. Here, we see an argument that implicitly presupposes the Habermasian ideal speech situation or discourse ideal, which Mezirow also emphasises.

4. The Debate Assessed

Brookfield proposes a strong argument for the emancipatory potential of self-directed learning; however, the issue he does not explicitly deal with is the action which adult educators and learners should take once they become aware of the structural constraints to self-direction. From the critical theorists' viewpoint then, despite Brookfield's attempt to demonstrate the critical potential of his concept of self-directed learning, it can be argued his thesis is less emancipatory than he claims.

Therefore, Brookfield's arguments can be subject to the same major criticism as that levelled at Mezirow. Mezirow argues that he has a unified and coherent Habermasian-informed theoretical base, but this claim is problematic given the criticisms identified in Chapter Nine and above. Brookfield makes no such claim: his is an avowedly eclectic and pragmatic approach; Habermas' theory is only one influence on this. Neither educator provides the fuller, structural, social analysis
which critical theorists argue is necessary for a valid and emancipatory adult education practice informed by Habermas' critical theory.

It is clear then, that the arguments of the critical theorists demonstrate a stronger understanding of the structural and emancipatory aspects of Habermas' critical theory than the critical thinkers. The former also draw on Habermas' ideas to present a more critical analysis of the current state of adult education theory and practice. Griffin (1988) levels his criticism of the selective, instrumental and professionalised use of critical theory at Mezirow and Brookfield as they are the two main representatives of the critical thinking school; however, this criticism can also be applied to other adult educators who support this school. Garrison (1991), in a paper which attempts to develop a theoretical framework of adult education based on a theory of critical thinking, states that the paper is informed by Habermas' philosophical orientation. This rather grand claim, however, is justified only by a very brief reference to selected aspects of Habermas' theory of communicative action. Equally, in terms of professional instrumentalism, Little (1991; 1992), who demonstrates more familiarity with Habermas' critical theory, attempts to show how the latter's ideas can be applied to social science research programmes and institutional sites of adult education, for example in areas such as programme administration and instruction. This account does recognise that existing practices, power-relationships and language have to be reassessed in the light of a critical theory which draws on the "unquestioned vital cultural tradition" of society, or the Habermasian lifeworld. In this respect Little's attempt to provide specific guidelines for communicative practice in formal adult education is similar to Collins (1991). However, Little's account is more utopian and exclusively educational than Collins as it does not consider realistically or specifically the institutional or extra-institutional constraints or interests that might be involved; neither does it consider the potential wider, political and social role of radical adult education practice, such as its possible relationship with NSMs.

The critical theorists demonstrate another advantage over the critical thinkers in their greater awareness of the problematic aspects of Habermas' theory. Hart (1985; 1990) and Collins (1987; 1991) identify the important common criticisms of Habermas, which refer to the patriarchal, over-rationalistic and general, abstract nature of his social theory. Hart discusses in particular the omission of affectual considerations in Habermas' theory. Collins proposes that while Habermas' theory should provide the guiding, unifying framework for developing a theory of adult education, other theorists, such as the phenomenologist Schutz, are also important to this theory.

The critical theorists then, demonstrate a stronger and more critical grasp of Habermas' theory than the critical thinkers. However, this is a more general and limited critical understanding than that put forward by their colleagues in the social sciences. Although Collins (1991) and Welton (1991) recognise that these more extended critiques exist, and Welton (1995) demonstrates a familiarity with recent discussions of Habermas in the social sciences and philosophy, they do not address the critiques in detail. These critiques (such as Benhabib, 1986; Bernstein, 1986; Ingram, 1987; Rockmore, 1989, discussed in Part Two) are important to a fuller, critical understanding of Habermas: in their detailed examination of the theoretical assumptions and interpretations which inform Habermas' macrotheory, they identify
problematic features of the communicative project unrecognised or insufficiently examined by the critical theorists in education. An example of this, as we have seen, is Habermas' growing emphasis on the procedural, and the reformist implications of this emphasis.

Further, the critical theorists' interpretation of Habermas also has its own problems and omissions. One important problem concerns their own critical understanding of Habermasian theory. The critical theorists cite the Marxist influence on Habermas in support for their radical interpretation of Habermas' theory, but they do not sufficiently recognise that Habermas revises Marx' historical materialism in favour of his ontogenetic-phylogenetic framework. Welton (1991) does recognise this revision, and, like Habermas, believes it to be historically necessary. However, neither he nor his educational colleagues recognise that critics such as Roderick (1986) assert that this revision calls into question the radical credentials of Habermas. This has been discussed above in Part Two. The fact that the critical theorists do not sufficiently consider the question of the extent to which Habermas' theory is radically-informed, has implications for the emancipatory basis of their own educational theory.

The emphasis on the structural by the critical theorists also demonstrates the problematic nature of their radical interpretation of Habermas; indeed this is the obverse to the criticism of individualism which is levelled at Mezirow and the critical thinkers. This over-emphasis on structure can be seen in Welton's (1991) discussion of the evolutionary dynamic of societal and individual rationality in Habermas' evolutionary schema. In this discussion Welton only considers the social aspects of this schema. However, the biographical aspect of Habermas' evolutionary schema, the moral and cognitive development of rationality at the level of the individual, is equally important: it has a clear relevance to the question of the importance and distinctiveness of adult education. This is discussed further in Part Four.

Griffin (1988), in particular, lays himself open to the criticism that he presents a narrow, one-sided interpretation of critical theory and the adult education role. He identifies the primary role of adult education in terms of a collective struggle, whereas Mezirow (1990; 1991b) argues that adult education may take a variety of forms, of which class struggle is only one, albeit important, form. Indeed Gibson (1986), upon whose account of critical theory Griffin relies, criticises critical theory for its central assumption that all educational and social ills lie in capitalist societies, and thus that educational and social action must be directed to challenging such societies.

Collins' (1991) interpretation is more tempered: he argues against the instrumentality of many adult education techniques, but accepts nevertheless there is a role for these techniques provided that they are guided by an underlying emancipatory principle. Collins (in Welton, 1995b) also proposes a position which is explicitly less radical then Welton, and particularly Griffin and Hart, in his acceptance of "in its most optimistic vein, perspective and institutional transformations within the nexus of prevailing economic, political and social arrangements" (p. 197). This is closer to Habermas' position. Throughout the development of his theory Habermas recognises the necessity of the instrumental and the strategic, in such forms as scientific research, and economic and administrative institutions, if they are informed by
communicative values. Equally, Habermas presents a more reformist, rather than traditional revolutionary, attitude to political and social change.

Nevertheless, Collins, like the other critical theorists, does not sufficiently recognise the liberal, pragmatic features of Habermas' theory which are identified by the critical thinkers. Thus, Brookfield (1993) justifies his own a-theoretical approach to critical thinking by pointing out that Habermas has drawn on the ideas of Peirce, Dewey and Mead in the development of his social theory. Support for this interpretation can be found in many of Habermas' writings. Habermas acknowledges his debt to the pragmatic intellectual tradition in the development of the sociological and philosophical aspects of his communicative theory in AS; he also cites the influence of American constitutionalism on his political ideas in NC. Furthermore, Habermas (in AS and in Calhoun, 1992) admits to supporting reformist, procedural change, which may rely on oppositional new social movements, rather than institutional, social change. Also, in recent academic writings (MCCA, JA, PT) Habermas has shifted away from the primarily sociological and historical analyses which mark the development of his paradigm of communicative action. These later works are concerned particularly with the details of the discourse procedures underlying communicative action. Given this apparent more recent pragmatic emphasis, many critics (Roderick, 1986; McCarthy in Honneth and Joas, 1991), as we have seen in Part Two, argue that Habermas has moved away from the more radical ideas expressed in his earlier writings.

This more pragmatic aspect of Habermas' critical social theory throws important light on the debate in adult education between the critical thinkers and critical theorists. In particular, Mezirow's perspective transformation theory, while still subject in many respects to the valid critique of the critical theorists, demonstrates insights into Habermas' theory which the latter ignore or under-emphasise. Thus, Mezirow's counter-argument to the critical theorists that adult education can have goals other than collective social action, may have validity in Habermasian terms. Equally, Mezirow (1989) reflects Habermas' approach in arguing that the Habermasian ideal of a communicative, democratised society, is a standard against which to assess educational and social practice; it does not exist nor is it necessarily a fully attainable goal. Mezirow also makes the further point that in modern democratic systems, where at least by comparative standards there is opportunity for dissent and social change, collective action is more likely to take a reformist rather than revolutionary character. This also seems to reflect Habermas' position in his works.

Although Mezirow's theory lacks the structural, theoretical aspects so important to Habermas' metatheory, it does accurately reflect the more liberal, pragmatic aspects of Habermas' thought not sufficiently recognised or acknowledged by the critical theorists. The respective humanist and radical traditions of the critical thinkers and the critical theorists have strongly influenced their reading of Habermas. The narrow interpretations which have resulted are too simplistic: both sides fail to recognise that the development of Habermas' thought constitutes a macrotheoretical project which attempts to draw central features from, and integrate, opposing philosophical, political and sociological traditions.
Chapter 11 - Interpretations from Initial and Higher Education

This thesis is primarily concerned with adult education interpretations of Habermas' work; however, educators in initial and higher education have also been influenced by Habermas' thought. Examples of such educators are Young (1989) in initial education and Barnett (1990) in higher education; these theorists illuminate aspects of Habermas' work which are neglected or under-emphasised by adult educators. The importance of considering these other sectors can also be demonstrated in other ways. Higher education in Britain has a clear relevance to adult education: there are growing institutional links between higher, further and adult education in Britain; there is also an increasing number of adults who are studying at university. Also, Habermas' most substantive writings on education, in TRS and CES, have referred to the communicative role of the university and its students. The relevance of initial education is more debatable. Mezirow (1981) argues that children have not sufficiently developed the necessary moral-cognitive skills to be capable of critical reflection or communicative practice. However, Young (1989) denies this, arguing that Habermas' communicative theory can be applied, to some degree, to children. Whether this is the case or not, Young should not be omitted from any study of the academic literature on the application of Habermas' theory to education; his work is the most sustained and comprehensive attempt to demonstrate how Habermas' theory explains educational policy in the West, and can be used to inform education theory and practice, albeit in initial education. For these reasons, it is important to subject the interpretations of Habermas in the initial and higher education sectors to the same critical, dialogical examination as that applied to the adult education world.

1. Interpretations from Initial Education

Habermas's work contains insights that seem crucial for any understanding of the relation of theory to practice; in particular, his attempt to provide a unified theory of knowledge, justice, action and rationality which can provide the grounds on which a social science with 'practical intent' can be constructed. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 144)

Carr and Kemmis (1986) base their research practice on Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests. The authors argue that the relationship of the researcher to the research act, and of theory to practice, must be perceived in a different way from that of the positivist or interpretive researcher: an emancipatory approach to research must involve the researcher and practitioner as active participants who, collaboratively, develop their knowledge through educational, social and political action. Thus Carr and Kemmis propose an action research framework which rejects positivist notions of rationality and objectivity, and proposes instead a reflective process through which teachers can become aware of how their practices and understandings are shaped by broader ideological conditions, and take action to change these. To do this successfully, teachers must form communities of
self-critical action researchers which recognise that 'truth' is determined by the way it relates to practice. Teachers must also involve students, parents, employers and communities where possible in their research and educational programmes; nevertheless, as the practitioners centrally involved, the teachers' judgement should remain a professional prerogative. In their notion of reflective, self-critical communities, Carr and Kemmis refer to Habermas' communicative theory, arguing that its emphasis on the validity claims underpinning the ideal of the speech act, can inform such communities.

The authors argue further that, as well as having a responsibility for promoting a critical self-reflection on its own self-educational processes, the profession has a responsibility also to promote critical reflection in the wider society. Given the current political and educational climate, they realise this wider social brief might be utopian but state that it should be attempted; a critical action research programme must involve the social and political also. Here, the authors refer to Habermas' TRS which also emphasises the relationships between the educational community, in the form of the university, and the wider community. Carr and Kemmis state:

What needs to be remembered, then, is that educational practices are social practices; educational reform is social reform. It must be understood in a social, cultural, political and economic context. In order to sustain educational reform in the service of educational values, practitioners must develop not only educational theories but also social theories. A critical educational theory prefigures a more general critical social theory. (1986, p. 207)

Kemmis (1991) is concerned to demonstrate further the critical and oppositional, as opposed to 'domestic', character of his action research programme. Thus, he states that a critical social or educational science is oppositional in four senses: it is epistemologically oppositional to the positivist and interpretive foundations upon which much social and educational research is based; cognitively oppositional in its awareness that our understandings and perceptions are socially constructed and may be ideologically-distorted; culturally oppositional in its recognition that substantive modes of the culture are systematically structured to ensure the self-interests of some at the expense of others; and, it is politically oppositional in its engagement with the world through social and cultural action.

Despite this emphasis on the social aspects of their practice, Carr and Kemmis (1986) wish to dissociate themselves from those more utopian, critical theorists who, they argue, offer a powerless and irresponsible radicalism which cannot offer realisable strategies. Thus, Carr and Kemmis are concerned primarily to emphasise the practical nature of action research; indeed, their central criticism of Habermas' theory is that it is too abstract and thus "the source of considerable frustration to those who look in vain to Habermas's work for the praxis of critical theory; its use in real social action" (1986, p. 151).

Gibson (1985) supports this criticism. He argues that a central weakness of the more utopian critical theorists is their view of capitalism as the cause of all social and educational problems; this view also leads to questionable and unrealistic, oppositional political and educational strategies which challenge capitalism.
However, Gibson is also critical of Carr and Kemmis' more practice-oriented action research theory. Gibson argues that, despite the authors' attempt to avoid the problems of the more general, absolutist critical theory, their theory still displays some similar weaknesses in its tendency to objectivism and elitism. This can be seen in the authors' privileging of their own theory, and in the emphasis on this theory as the prerogative of the professionals. Although Carr and Kemmis claim that their action research is inextricably linked to wider social and political action, their practice is in reality too insular and institutionally-based. Young (1989) echoes this critique.

This criticism is questionable in one important respect: objections of elitism and objectivism can be levelled at virtually any theorists, critical or otherwise, who assert the superiority of their theory; indeed Gibson also argues that this is a problem with Habermas' theory. Gibson also criticises Habermas on other grounds, identifying many of the problems raised in Chapters Five and Six. However, like Carr and Kemmis, his primary concern is the abstract nature of Habermas' theory. He states: "Habermas appears to inhabit a distant, unfamiliar world; a rarefied region of theory and jargon that does not touch the world we know" (1986, p. 41). As Part Two demonstrates however, this criticism is itself too general, and fails to recognise that Habermas does attempt in various works to empirically ground, or indicate the empirical implications of, his theory.

Gibson also recognises the importance of Habermas' theory to initial education. Gibson refers to Habermas as "a giant figure in contemporary social theory" (1986, p. 33) who "is having an increasing influence on education" (p. 41). Gibson argues that Habermas' critical theory is vital to education in the current political and intellectual climate; he highlights here Habermas' communicative emphasis on the emancipatory conditions of justice, truth and freedom which are implied in the speech act. These are important for analyses of education at the personal and interpersonal levels, such as in the classroom; the institutional level, in the school and the educational system; and, at the social or structural levels.

Critical theory opposes the instrumental rationality which is increasingly pervading these interpersonal, institutional and structural levels in both education and society generally. Gibson also believes that a modified, less utopian critical theory can help "secure the intellectual foundations of the teaching profession" (1986, p. 174), the important disciplines of philosophy, sociology and psychology which have informed educational practice and which, Gibson states, are being undermined by current educational policy.

Further, Gibson argues, critical theory reflects the concerns of education in its emphasis on developing understanding, pursuing truth, increasing democracy, realising human potential and achieving a more just society.

there is a strong sense in which the endeavour of critical theory and education coincide...Habermas and his predecessors hold out the prospect, urge that it can be achieved by reason, and show how reason and the good life are implied in each other. Their aim, like that of education, is a more rational society. (1986, p. 41)
Gibson demonstrates the value of the critical analysis in his detailed account of the instrumentalist nature of government policies on initial education in Britain, seen in, for example, the increasing centralism of education and increasing emphasis on vocationalism. This is a useful addition, from an initial education perspective, to the examples of technical rational dominance in adult education, which are put forward by Collins and others, and in higher education by Barnett (1990; discussed below).

2. Young's Interpretation of Habermas

Young (1989; 1992) is the only theorist of initial education, and arguably in education generally, to base his theory and practice on a detailed explication of Habermas' works; the detailed examination of his interpretation here reflects this. Young states that his aim is "to construct a relatively complete and coherent theory of education based on the work of Jürgen Habermas" (1989, p. 167). Young supports Habermas in his belief that modernity can be reformed from within without succumbing to the attacks on it; these attacks take the political form of neo-conservatism, or the New Right, and the epistemological form of "a burgeoning self-doubt, now fully flowered into the funeral lily of post-modernism" (1992, p. 10). To demonstrate the continuing importance of modernity, Young explores Habermas' work in the context of the educational theory and practice of initial education, and of the wider historical and political background which informs that policy and practice.

For the latter, Young (1989) draws on the Habermasian account of legitimation and rationality crises, and of the colonisation of the lifeworld, to describe the current crisis of capitalism. Young argues that the traditional political groupings of the Left and the Right are unable to cope with this crisis as they see the solution only in terms of power and money, in political and economic terms. However, Young argues that the proposed solutions are strategic and instrumental: both Keynesian welfare expansionist and supply-side welfare reductionist policies exacerbate rather than resolve the crisis.

Thus Young challenges the current instrumental, market-led strategies of New Right governments for dealing with the crisis. He argues that these New Right governments are responding to their states' failure to meet the claims made upon them by diminishing their state overload; in education, this takes the form of transferring the burden of educational expectations to the market. However, Young asserts, such strategies actually block access to the solution, which lies in subordinating system imperatives to democratic, ethical-political rules.

But, Young is also concerned to emphasise that the solution to this social and educational crisis does not necessarily lie in the ideas of the Left movements. This includes the more dogmatic proponents of critical theory who propose a generalised resistance to authority, involving the use of schools and children as instruments in revolutionary praxis.

Young states:

A dogmatic critical method, presenting only its own critique of economy, ideology, etc., can only lead to the kind of left authoritarianism whose solution to the problem of modernity is simply
another version of asserting the system imperatives over against the individual's development. (1989, p. 59)

Young asserts that these theorists do not recognise that there is no clear addressee to which emancipation can be entrusted, that there is no determinate relationship between theory and practice. He recognises that Habermas accepts the possible emancipatory role of new social movements, but only on a tentative rather than definitive basis. Young believes that Habermas views the addressee of critical theory in universal terms; it is, in the Hegelian mode, all those oppressed by the master-slave relationship, including masters. Thus, despite his criticism of the traditional political parties, Young believes that both the Old Left and the New Right may still have something to offer in terms of their social analyses and political concerns.

The middle road passes between the horns of the individual/collectivity dilemma... Navigating this middle road requires great balance, balance between the strength, the motivating force, of neoconservatism's individualistic liberalism, since it recognises that the source of freedom is self-affirmation, and the agility, the coordinating awareness, of the Old Left's analysis of the collective and structural effects of individual actions. (1989, p. 84)

Young asserts that education can draw upon both the Right and Left traditions, to develop a communicatively-oriented kind of learning relationship in which reflexive learning can take place. Thus, he argues, educational thought is still deeply influenced by classical and liberal traditions of autonomy and individual responsibility. Equally, mass education systems are perhaps the only organised means, apart from the culture industry and the mass media, which are able to reach potential addressees of critique. Furthermore, both academics and teachers possess a degree of institutionalised insulation from social norms and sanctions governing expression of opinion in other contexts of life. Finally, Young argues that schools keep alive an intuitive idea of critique, of the possibility of transcendence, through various child-centred educational experiments. Here, he echoes Gibson (1986) in his identification of education with rationality.

Traditionally, education has had a commitment to reason, to rational problem solving. It has had this commitment precisely to the degree that it has had a commitment to knowledge and truth. (1989, p. 23)

For Young the core theme of Habermas' theory is rational, discursive consensus; this also centrally informs Young's difference with the utopian theorists who emphasise instead the necessity of political and social action and organisation. Young argues that both proponents and opponents of critical theory sometimes fail to recognise that the discursive methodology of critique is a reproduction of our understanding of the way species come to know, and thus is necessarily a method which has the power to transcend cultural differences. Given that we have already reached a certain historical level of learning which emphasises the democratic procedure, Young states, the onus of proof falls on those who want to depart from such means: they must demonstrate that their form of action at least does not fall back below the historical learning level already generally reached. Thus Young argues of critical theory:
Its crucial point of practical attack, in societies which display the evolutionary level of the possibility of democratically open discourses, is the identification and removal of the distortions of speech. In a sense, critical theory is the level of critique appropriate for societies which have already institutionalised areas of open practical discourse - democracies. (1989, p. 169)

Here, Young recognises the importance of Habermas' account of evolution as the development of higher learning levels. Given the importance of education in this evolutionary process, Young states, the political crisis may also be seen as an educational one: "In such terms, the present crisis may properly be called a crisis of educational rationality" (1989, p.23).

Young argues that, in combating this crisis, critical theory should promote the values of democracy and individual rights rather than that of the views of revolutionary movements; thus the democratic process should be one of reform. Young argues that this is Habermas' view also; further, like Habermas, Young asserts that the nature of this reform cannot be prescribed. Given this, those critical theorists of initial education such as Shor (1987), who present a prescriptive view of education as primarily a transformative vehicle, demonstrate a tendency to "theoretical despotism". Young argues that this "despotism" may attack the lifeworld of the students, causing it to break down, so making it more vulnerable to colonisation.

It is not the main function of critical educators to attack the life-world of students - to 'make trouble'. Rather, it should be to assist students to make an effective job of reconstructing the already problematic parts of their life-world through communicative, problem-solving learning. In conjunction with this, some limited degree of gentle reconstitution of connected, but not yet questioned, aspects of the life-world may be necessary. Anything else is an idealist form of educational praxis. (1989, p. 71)

Young argues then, that radical pedagogy, while valuable in many ways, nevertheless is wrong to disturb the lifeworld of students. This pedagogy makes a similar mistake to that of traditional pedagogy, Young asserts, in its failure to recognise that ways of knowing are not separated history and subject-free products to which we can relate from the outside. Thus, he argues:

The distinction between traditional and critical theory is crucial if we are to be able to separate educative experiences from non-educative or even mis-educative experiences, even where the latter are produced in critical theory's name. (1989, p.72)

Young supports his anti-radical position by arguing that Habermas has recognised an awareness of the dangers of utopian critique in his own (mostly untranslated) writings on education. This takes the form of specific educational proposals in the German context, which were written before 1969. Habermas is critical of the growing technologisation of universities, but nevertheless makes recommendations which accept the former without losing the non-technical aspects of education, such as the development of the moral and political consciousness of students. Young also argues that Habermas reiterates these ideas in later writings, notably TRS and NC, where
where Habermas discusses the democratisation of universities, and the latter's relationship with, and responsibility to, the wider society.

Young recognises the difficulties and constraints in applying a properly critical approach to schooling; this must involve changes in curriculum, teacher-student relationships, administration and organisation. Nevertheless, he states, the process of critique can go on at all levels with related but locally appropriate strategies; the mistake of much early, critical educational practice was to import the strategies appropriate to politics into the classroom. Effective social problem-solving then, Young states, demands a broader, participatory model, such as that expressed in Habermas' concept of the public sphere. Habermas' undifferentiated public sphere must be elaborated, Young argues, into an analysis more appropriate for complex, socially differentiated societies. This must involve a functional differentiation of centralised and decentralised democratic decision-making forums which are based on both plenary and non-plenary interests. Thus, he states:

A hierarchy of interests is unavoidable. Only democratic forms of organisation at each level could prevent this hierarchy of the generality of interests turning into a sedimented hierarchy of sectional interest, or bureaucratic power. (1989, p. 155)

Young's account of how this public sphere might be constituted is presented only at a general level; he describes how Habermas' communicative thesis can be applied to educational practice in the classroom, however, in more detail. Young accepts that there is a continuing debate on the validity of Habermas' cognitive-rational developmental schema, and the rational discursive possibilities it proposes. Thus he states: "The jury of science is still out as far as the Kohlbergian project and Habermas' appropriation of it are concerned" (1989, p. 111). Young recognises further that such rational possibilities must be even more questionable in the case of the education of children. However, Young believes that a dialogical practice in schools can be proposed in the form of a progressive, problem-solving pedagogy. At particular problem levels, children could be capable of a degree of critical dialogue, or formally equivalent reasoning to that of adults, providing that these problem levels are not beyond their capacity nor are the children under conditions of emotional pressure. Indeed, Young argues, critical dialogue in schools may be essential to the capacity for more developed, rational discourse and understanding in adult life.

Further, if children do not engage in critique as they learn, they may not have the courage for critique later...I also want to argue that it might not be possible to understand, let alone master, a body of knowledge unless there is engagement in critique. (1992, p. 60).

Young (1992) argues that Habermas' linguistic theory is too general and abstract. The linguistic potential of Habermas' communicative theory can be developed, however, by moving from this more abstract and general level to the analysis of concrete and situated speech. Young proposes the approach of 'systemic linguistics'; this recognises that language functions against the background of a culture characterised by regular communication expectations and linguistic structures. Analysis of this situated speech takes the form of a detailed study of actual examples of classroom
interaction which can identify communicative constraints on, or opportunities for, enhancing the problem-solving power of learners.

Young defends this linguistic theory by referring to the paradigmatic differences between Habermas' earlier and later work. Young argues that traditional education is informed by the epistemological considerations which are located within a philosophy of the subject paradigm. However, systemic linguistics is informed by the communicative paradigm of Habermas which emphasises ontological considerations in both its analysis and the educational practice based on that analysis. Young states:

Standing squarely in the critical theory tradition, I will argue that many of the problems of teaching and learning in school classrooms flow from a fundamental confusion about the nature of knowledge and, in particular, of methodology. (1992, p. 13)

Young argues that Habermas, in his turn to communicative theory, recognises that the question of how members of a community come to agree on the truth of a statement precedes the question of the method of enquiry: that "we, in the Western world anyway, have been asking the wrong question about knowledge; or rather, we have been asking our questions in the wrong order" (1992, p. 7). Thus, rather than asking ourselves as individual subjective consciousnesses how we can know something is true, we should start by asking ourselves how members of a community come to an agreement that something is true.

Instead of asking 'What methodological safeguards will let me be sure of the evidence of my senses?' we can ask: 'How is it possible for communities to agree on methodological rules?' The latter question is, in a sense, prior to the former, because it is only when there can be agreement that new knowledge becomes accepted as 'scientific'. (1992, p. 12)

Young argues that, in distinguishing between these two questions, one can identify two kinds of teaching practice. The first he refers to as "method classrooms" which express an epistemological concern with attaining objective knowledge. Young asserts that these "method classrooms" are found in traditional teaching practices which are informed by the Cartesian theory of attaining truth by the correct application of a method by individual, isolated consciousnesses. This method may be based on either a logical-empirical or hermeneutic approach. Young coins the term "discourse classrooms" for the second kind of teaching practice; these are informed by an ontological concern with the presuppositions of teachers and learners about themselves, and their relationships, and about the processes of knowledge and discourse. The teaching practice here emphasises critical reflection and communicative dialogue in the process of enquiry. Thus Young states:

Critique itself is now not an application of epistemologic rules, but a process based on a 'biological-anthropological' theory of critique, resting directly on an ontology of communities of inquiry and the interpretation of meaning in them. (1992, p. 33)
This theory of critique applied to education develops a critical attitude to self, culture and the world; it is only through such a critique that global as well as societal and individual problems can be recognised and addressed.

Education then must start in the school if children are to grow up into reflective, critical adults. Thus, Young states:

Education for life, if that phrase means anything, is education for reflective change and adaptation of the self, for co-operative change in relationships with others, and holistic and respectful change of the environment we share. And evolutionary teaching must necessarily be critical. (1992, p. 4)

3. The Radical Response to Young

Holt and Margonis (1992), in their response to Young's (1989) earlier work, recognise the importance of some of Young's arguments for education; examples are the relationship of the lifeworld to students' meaning sources, and the importance of the increased participation of students in the classroom. However, the authors argue that Young emphasises primarily the conservative aspects of Habermas' work, and does not sufficiently recognise its more radical features. This can be seen in Young's political analysis of the crisis of capitalism. The authors fear that Young's attempt to weave a middle road through the Left and Right prescribes an approach to crisis management that merely attempts new techniques and more powerful rational approaches. For the authors this approach under-emphasises the role of power, and the struggles against domination that they think are essential if justice for groups such as women and the poor is to be secured. "The middle road becomes the road more travelled by those who are already privileged, rather than a road leading to a more equitable society" (1992, p. 241). The authors argue that Young adopts this stance because he does not follow Habermas so strongly in identifying groups with emancipatory potential, such as the feminist and environmental movements, which assert the values of the lifeworld against the encroachments of the economy and bureaucracy. Indeed, Young criticises attempts to build political messages into schools and gives no guidance on how educational endeavours might be coordinated with political movements.

This criticism conflates two points. Certainly, Young refers only briefly and cautiously to the role of NSMs, but, as Part Two argues, this seems to reflect Habermas' own uncertain attitude to them. However, Young does not explicitly challenge the radical educators' support for the relationship between education and NSMs; rather, he attacks the practice of those educators who introduce political ideas which may challenge too strongly, and thus erode, lifeworld-generated and sustaining meanings and resources which are identity-forming for students.

The authors, however, also challenge Young's acceptance of the importance of continuing lifeworld meanings for students, arguing that "The divergence between Young's reconstructive pedagogy and the methods of radical critical theorists are in our view, monumental" (1992, p. 247). Here, they refer to Freirean theory which, they believe, would oppose Young's position: in supporting the existing lifeworld of the student, Young contributes to the continuing oppressive status quo. In contrast to
Young's position, "Freire distrusts students' existing feelings of security, because they reflect relations of domination" (1992, p. 247).

This criticism makes a useful point in modifying Young's apparent over-emphasis on the validity of the students' existing lifeworld meanings; however, it again seems an exaggerated one. It is clear from Young's writings that he is concerned to relate the student experience to wider social and political concerns, necessarily involving the need for students to change or reconsider existing perceptions and values. This particular criticism of Young should also be placed in the context of the authors' explicit self-identification as radical pedagogues, and thus the objects of Young's attack.

A more valid criticism however, is that Young, like Habermas, ignores the influence of class, gender, and race in his theory. The authors state that in the light of research which has been carried out in education:

> Young's insistence upon describing school interactions in which class interests play no role in structuring interactions or in guiding pedagogy strikes us as indefensible. (1992, p. 248)

This analytical deficiency can also be seen in Young's description of the educational and curriculum process which takes no account of student background, socio-historical context or interests involved in the course content. This is because Young emphasises primarily the linguistic elements, and in particular the ideal speech situation, in his approach to education. While this does reflect Habermas' theoretical concerns to a degree, the authors argue, Young's account ignores the more structural aspects of Habermas' theory which are relevant to education. In not considering these, Young has provided a reductive interpretation of an ideal pedagogical situation, which in turn is likely to lead to an overly technical approach to teaching.

Holt and Margolis suggest three ways in which a critically -informed education based on Habermas' work can develop. First, they argue that a more in-depth study of TCA2 would contribute to an enhanced understanding of Habermas' communicative theory; this is particularly important because it is in this text that Habermas most systematically develops his theoretical analysis of the relationship between the lifeworld and steering media, and between system integration and social integration. Thus, while most commentators refer to Habermas' theory of the colonisation of the lifeworld by the steering media, they don't always recognise that Habermas nevertheless argues that society requires this steering media of money and power. This analysis would help educationalists suggest "when communicative action is essential and when we should rely on functional reasoning" (1992, p. 249). This failure to consider the sociological theory in TCA is characteristic of educational commentators. It also applies to Young: despite his relatively wide theoretical grasp of Habermas, he hardly refers to the sociological discussion in TCA2 which forms the theoretical base to Habermas' communicative theory.

Holt and Margolis also argue that the relevance of Habermas' theory to initial education would be informed further by a critical assessment of Habermas' work; Young has not attempted this. Here, they argue, Young could have drawn from extensive critical theory research on practices and problems in schools to present a critique of Habermas' ideas as they might relate to schooling and education. Equally,
Young could have subject his own privileging of Habermas' philosophy to critical assessment also. One could add also that Young and other educationalists could draw on the non-educational critiques of Habermas discussed in Part Two. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, this lack of systematic critique of Habermas' ideas is common to all educators who engage with Habermas. Nevertheless, as Young explicitly bases his educational theory and practice on a systematic account of Habermas' ideas, the relatively uncritical support of these ideas does render Young's adoption of Habermas problematic; this is particularly the case given Habermas' own continuing engagement with his critics in developing his theoretical position.

Finally, Holt and Margolis assert that there needs to be further investigation from all educationalists, including Young, on how Habermas' ideas can inform educational practice. This is a relevant observation and one which would probably be accepted by Young. At the same time however, it is unfair to Young; Holt and Margolis do not sufficiently acknowledge that Young, arguably, has gone further in the attempt to relate Habermas' theory to educational practice in its institutional and wider social context, than any other educational theorist. The authors do not recognise also that Young has identified and explained important Habermasian themes unacknowledged by other educators. Important here are Young's (1992) recognition of the significance for education of Habermas' theoretical shift from an epistemological emphasis in KHI to an ontological and communicative emphasis in TCA, and Habermas' discussion of the democratic potential of universities in TRS and NC. Also worthy of note, particularly given that Welton (1991) refers to the evolutionary learning dynamic to support a radical, critical theory of adult education, is Young's use of Habermas' evolutionary schema of learning levels to justify his opposition to the explanations and practices of the more radical, utopian educators of initial education.

4. **Interpretations from Higher Education: Barnett**

We have seen that a number of initial educators have been influenced by Habermas in their theoretical development; this is less the case with respect to higher education. Barnett (1990; 1992) is the only interpreter of higher education in the English-speaking world, to the knowledge of this writer, who bases his analysis of higher education primarily on Habermas' theory, albeit in less detail than Young. Barnett argues that the history, language and practice of higher education has been characterised by a liberal outlook, or emancipatory element; however, this liberal ethos is currently being undermined by an increasingly functionalist, instrumental ethic in education and society in Britain and the West. Barnett is therefore concerned to develop a theoretically-based, liberal-informed justification of higher education which challenges this increasing instrumentalism.

Like Young, Barnett supports Habermas' belief that modernity is being attacked by neo-conservatism and post-modernism. Barnett (1990) explains this attack in terms of a double undermining, the epistemological and the sociological erosion, of higher education. With reference to the former, new developments in theory and knowledge such as the philosophy of science, sociology of knowledge, and post-structuralism are undermining the liberal notion of knowledge as an elaborated, systematic, objective and continually developing conceptual framework. The latter is characterised by the increasingly functional role of the university, geared to the needs of the state and the
economy, where students' relationship to knowledge has become more instrumental and limited. Thus Barnett states of the current situation of higher education:

On the one hand, it is confronted with an undermining of its epistemological base, because the assumption of securing objective knowledge and truth has been placed in doubt in the wake of modern philosophical and theoretical developments. On the other hand, the assumption that the guardianship and dissemination of knowledge should be conducted in an institutional setting relatively independent of social interests has proved vacuous, because higher education has become a pivotal institution of the modern state. (1990, p. 203)

Barnett argues that this increasing instrumentalisation and anti-intellectualism is now influencing all aspects of higher education institutions. Although higher education is developing some potentially communicative elements like review panels, peer reviews and the collective framing of mission statements, Barnett believes that these will also be increasingly influenced by instrumental attitudes.

Discourse about higher education focuses on structure, finance, numbers and performance indicators: it is about means, method, and systems for planning and resource allocation. The values or ends for which higher education stands are seldom raised as a serious matter for discussion. (1990, p. 112)

Barnett accepts that these more instrumental and vocational aspects of higher education may be necessary; however, he also wishes to assert a more communicative and emancipatory role for higher education. Barnett argues then, that we must adopt the philosopher Berlin's distinction between the conservative and the liberatory or radical interpretations of the liberal idea. Barnett believes that both forms can coexist in higher education. In the same way as Habermas distinguishes between the instrumental and the communicative, but in a non-exclusive way, higher education can accept its more economic, instrumental work-based function, but should also include the communicative elements of understanding, self-reflection, self-appraisal and self-empowerment. Here, we see a similar recognition of the place of instrumental education to that which other educators make in their respective spheres of education: Young (1989) in initial education, and Collins (1991) in adult education.

Barnett reasserts the more emancipatory aspect of the liberal idea in higher education by turning to Habermas. Barnett states that Habermas' work "forms a backcloth" to his attempt to reassert the emancipatory role of higher education. On the theoretical level, he argues that Habermas' emancipatory interest structure can counter ideology to an extent through a critical discourse which offers a critique of conventional knowledge expressed in the other two interest structures, especially the technical-rational. At the practical level, Barnett states, given that the fundamental source of ideology lies in our unequal social relationships, we must reduce the distorted communication underlying this inequality by basing our educational practice on the communicative ideals of the ideal speech situation. Such a discourse would necessitate increased, participative communication between students, students and teachers, and within the academic community. For Barnett, the academic community
has a particularly important role here: despite its multi-disciplinary nature it shares a common interest in self-reflection and self-criticism. Barnett states: "It is this propensity to engage in self-critique that is perhaps the key distinguishing feature of the academic community." (1990, p. 100)

This intrinsic self-referentiality of the academic community means that academic discourse contains within its own deep structure implicit rational validity claims as a kind of metadiscourse. Essentially then, whatever the degree of instrumentalism a university is experiencing, the university, and the idea inherent in it, will continue to carry an element of reflection and criticism to some extent; higher education then provides a communicative standard and hope for the future. Thus, Barnett asserts that higher education is the supreme site for rationality in society, and could become the model of rationality for society. Despite the growing instrumentalism of education:

higher education contains within itself, if only it would realize, an essential rationality: academics, students and disciplines have to be rational. But institutions of higher education do not. They can either follow the path of instrumental reason or they can recover their true character as a modern polis, a site of developing communicative reason. As communities sharing a common but critical discourse over ends, values and achievements, institutions of higher education can become a microcosm of the rational society, a reminder to society of what society itself might be. (1990, p. 121)

For Barnett then, criticism is the essence of higher education in that it allows the student to enter a state of intellectual freedom in relation to his or her study, and the world around it. This criticism must be theory-based, and may exist at two levels. The first refers to critique internal to a theory or discipline which is concerned with standards of truth and evaluation. The second level of critique is more important: this is critique which comes externally from another theory or discipline, and is concerned with freedom as it is intended to reveal the hidden ideology and interests informing the discipline under critique. Barnett refers to a critical discourse operating on another critical discourse as metacriticism. He states: "If the idea of higher education being argued for in this book can be summed in one word, that is it." (1990, p. 170-171).

Barnett argues that the academic area of the humanities possess most critical potential because its disciplines promote higher-order capacities from the students, as the students are expected to place their experiences in a wider context of values and social affairs. Barnett identifies particularly the disciplines of philosophy and sociology as important to critique from the outside: philosophy can bring to light a discipline's tests for truth, and the criteria by which truth claims are normally evaluated; sociology, especially if coupled with a historical perspective, can help reveal the social interests which lie behind society's and higher education's approval of the discipline under scrutiny. In sum, Barnett states:

Where time is short, and choices have to be made, philosophical and sociological perspectives are likely to prove to be the most valuable in developing the critical approach to knowledge. They can provide the makings of a common framework for a critical understanding of
knowledge which any student on any programme of study should have at least some acquaintance with. (1990, p. 170)

What this necessarily requires, Barnett asserts, is genuine critical interdisciplinary courses. These, despite other differences, and given certain common critical criteria to each, will provide a bridge for communication through a collectively shared, unified ethos and discourse across the academic community. Thus Barnett states: "Critical interdisciplinarity is, simply, a modern embodiment of the idea of 'a community of scholars'' (1990, p. 188). He believes also that such a genuine, critical, interdisciplinary culture will open up academia more to the problems of society, and the will of the general public, and thus to a more democratic accountability.

Barnett's analysis of the critical, emancipatory role of the university, and the importance of the disciplines of philosophy and sociology in this, is a faithful reflection of Habermas' theory. This also echoes Gibson's (1986) concern to protect these disciplines in education. However, Barnett's account can also be subject to the same kinds of criticisms as those levelled at Young and other educators. Thus, while supporting Habermas' emphasis on the role of philosophy and sociology, Barnett shows little familiarity with the detail of the former's philosophical and sociological theory, except in its communicative aspects. Equally, Barnett presents an uncritical account which shows no recognition of the problematic aspects of Habermas' theory. Also, Barnett does not attempt to indicate how the university might fulfil its wider role of enhancing democracy and a critical attitude in society; further, he shows no awareness of the possible role that Habermas and other educators see for new social movements here. Despite these problems, Barnett's account, like Young, highlights important themes in Habermas' work and demonstrates their relevance to education. Barnett and Young's work have been ignored by most adult educators; nevertheless, their distinctive contributions to the application of Habermas' theory to education must be considered when assessing the possibility of the theorisation of a Habermasian-informed adult education.
Chapter 12 - Anti-Foundationalism in Adult Education

The adult and other educators discussed so far, with the possible exception of Clark and Wilson (1991), accept that theory in some form, or theory-informed practice, is necessary to explain and locate educational practice and issues. In other words, theory is seen as a necessary foundation if policy and practice are to be informed in a valid and productive way. These educators argue that it is Habermasian theory, whether narrowly interpreted, or viewed as metatheory, whether standing alone or informed by other theoretical positions, which can play this important foundational role. This Habermasian theory, or metatheory, is discipline-based: it draws at different times from a range of formal disciplines, or forms of knowledge, such as psychology, history, anthropology, political science, linguistics, sociology and philosophy, with particular emphasis on the last two. Other adult educators, however, present an anti-foundational and anti-disciplinary stance which argues that adult education cannot be grounded in theory or the formal disciplines, and propose instead a more practical and situationally-based approach, which is increasingly informed by a postmodernist stance. Indeed, Bright (1989) argues that this position suggests adult education "cannot be regarded as a legitimate and distinctive epistemological subject" (1989, p. 39) and thus its academic status must be questioned. This thesis is essentially concerned to assess the possibility of an ascribed theoretical foundational role to adult education; it is important, therefore, to consider critically and dialogically the position of Bright and other educators who argue that such a theoretical foundation is impossible.

1. Theory as Practice

Bright (1985; 1989) challenges the belief in a foundational adult education. He uses Hirst's (1974) epistemological taxonomy to distinguish between two kinds of knowledge: forms of knowledge, are distinct, intrinsic forms of expression and structuring of experience; fields of knowledge however, are inter-disciplinary, externally derived from, and dependent on, particular disciplines or forms of knowledge, and may be theoretically or practically oriented. Adult educators generally accept that adult education is a field of knowledge which draws from a range of disciplines; most assert that this is a theoretical field of knowledge given its relationship to several disciplines; Bright, however, challenges this view.

Bright (1985) suggests that the very titles of courses in adult education, such as "The Sociology of Adult Education", demonstrate that their epistemological bases reside within the independent disciplines: adult education utilises their academic content in a relatively literal or undifferentiated manner; this includes the adoption of a methodology which reflects this dependence. This gives adult education academic respectability and status while at the same time removing the need to develop a theoretical overview of adult education which would define and justify its existence. Such an overview can only be achieved, Bright argues, by bringing out the necessary differences between theoretical source disciplines and theoretical adult education: if there is no or very little difference between these, then adult education as a theoretical
field cannot exist. Bright argues that this problem is exemplified in the relationship of adult education to psychology: virtually every major concept in the discipline, such as learning and development, has relevance both without and within adult education courses, yet is used in the latter in an unmodified and relatively unfocussed form.

Further, Bright argues, in addition to not attempting to specify the curriculum content of individual courses within its academic domain, adult education can also be criticised for not attempting to integrate its source disciplines within an overall theoretical framework. Thus he states:

adult education has not clearly established the terms and domain of its epistemological boundary and independence within the wider context of its dependent relations with the intrinsic disciplines. (1989, p. 36).

In sum then, Bright argues that adult education relies on the traditional academic, independent, theoretical discipline model for its content and method, and ignores its own essentially different epistemological character; thus, it has committed "epistemological vandalism". Bright believes that this is the case because adult education is practically-based as opposed to theoretically-based; thus its adoption of source disciplines has obviated the need for further theoretical development. Bright proposes then, that adult education is a practical or socio-practical field of knowledge or enquiry, oriented towards the practitioners, with its own epistemological base which draws on the formal disciplines as and when needed. Thus Bright states:

Generally, socio-practical fields are identified by their reference to function, i.e. purposeful action and practice directed towards solving contextually urgent problems and, other than this, are not limited in substantive content by structural, theoretical concerns. Similarly, such fields are not limited to particular theories, types of theories or 'notions of truth' and may embody many theoretical types and variations. (1985, p. 181)

Bright argues that as it is the issue or problem which directs which theories are drawn from and how, and which methods are used, the epistemological base of adult education is constituted by the recognition of differing manifestations of the content-method relationship both within adult education, and to that of the source disciplines, depending on the particular context of the problem. Thus, whereas the theoretical disciplines are seen to retain their epistemological and methodological independence, socio-practical fields are "determined by functional pragmatic considerations" which might draw "both from existent bodies of theoretical knowledge and from practice itself" (1985, p. 182). Bright's central assertion then, is that adult education can only be practically situated, and thus cannot develop a theoretically and epistemologically-coherent base which is informed by the formal disciplines or forms of knowledge. Bright is concerned to break down the boundary between theory and practice, by arguing that theory can be generated by practice, and indeed theory itself can be seen as potentially a socio-practical field depending on the nature of the problems that it addresses. It is particularly in this consideration of a more flexible relationship between theory and practice that Usher and Bryant (1989), develop the anti-foundationalist position further.
Usher and Bryant support Bright's position that adult education should be seen as a socio-practical and theoretically eclectic field of enquiry. The authors also echo Bright in arguing that adult educators must look to practice to develop their theory.

Adult education as a field of study has systematically failed to recognize practical knowledge and the mode of understanding associated with it...By vainly seeking for knowledge in disciplines it has failed to see that there is knowledge in its practice, and that generating its own theory must start from that knowledge. (1989, pp. 178-179)

Usher and Bryant examine the relationship between theory, practice and research in adult education. Their central thesis is that adult educators are trapped in inappropriate models and assumptions about the nature and purposes of research, the place of theory and the relationship between theory and practice. Adult education has been primarily seen as a field of study which is based on a triangular model where theory and research are the two aspects of the base, and practice is the superstructure or apex which is always applied to the former two aspects. In contrast to this model, Usher and Bryant argue that none of the three elements is necessarily foundational, but each can enhance an understanding of the other. Equally, they argue, adult education is not unique or distinct as other adult educators assert: while it may have differences from the general world of education, it is still very much part of that world.

Usher and Bryant are concerned particularly to oppose the traditional understanding of psychology and sociology as foundation disciplines for adult education; they argue that "adult education is conflated to the psychology of learning and the sociology of the learner" (1989, p. 3). Psychology and sociology, they state, are essentially concerned with theoretical activity, with practice interpreted through theory. In contradistinction to this, the authors assert, education should be located primarily within a practical paradigm as it is concerned with practice. Thus, theories should be drawn from eclectically when they are seen as relevant, applicable and of operational benefit, rather than viewed in foundational terms.

The authors also question the foundationalism of the disciplines themselves, citing the significance of hermeneutics in demonstrating that the notion of an ultimate epistemological foundation, or theory of knowledge, is problematic. They argue that knowledge claims must be based on context and history within which truth and rationality are located. In a dialogical rationality within social practices we can confront our existing beliefs and ideas; the disciplines may play a role in this, but not in a foundational capacity.

In their account of the relationship between theory and practice, the authors are also influenced by Schön (1987), who proposes a theory of professional practice characterised by reflection in action, and Carr and Kemmis (1986), discussed in the previous chapter, who put forward a critical action research programme. In opposition to the traditional technical-rational model which privileges theory over practice, Usher and Bryant propose the concept of situational theory, a theory which enters in and emerges from a practice situated within a framework of values and constraints. The authors argue that practice is always under-determined by theory:
practical judgement and reasoning which is action-oriented must ultimately stand the
test of practice rather than theory; this involves a situational or contextual knowledge
and hermeneutic understanding.

Practical knowledge cannot therefore be derived purely from
theoretical knowledge and practice is not something which can be
merely 'read off' from theory. The learning of theory cannot tell
anyone how to practice; in a very real sense practice is learnt in
practice. Practice is located in practical knowledge which is
situational and action-oriented. (1989, p. 76)

Usher and Bryant also propose a distinction between two types of theory, informal
and formal theory. They argue that the term "educational theory" can only refer to an
educational practitioner's informal theory, and not to a theory external to the practice.
Thus any alleged gap between theory and practice only exists because the theory
which has been adopted is that of external or formal theory. When practice becomes
problematic it is informal theory which must be worked on.

The authors argue that this involves educationalists becoming reflective practitioners
who examine in action their own informal theories or "theories in action"; in this way
they will come to know better the structures, rules and assumptions which influence
this action, whether as researcher or practitioners.

However, the strength of informal theory, the fact that it is reflective and rooted in
practice, may also be its weakness: there may be individual and institutional
constraints which impede critical scrutiny. The authors argue therefore that problems
in practice indicate a failure of informal theory which can only be resolved by
dialogical engagement with something outside of it, formal theory. Drawing on the
Aristotelian schema of knowledge, the authors argue that action is always informed
by some "universal" formal theory or general ethical principle, as practical
knowledge, "since it is concerned with appropriate action in the world, must consider
the rightness of the action" (Usher and Bryant, 1989, p. 180). However, this universal
is always mediated in the light of a particular situation. Formal theory is outside the
immediate world of everyday practice and can facilitate the "re-presentation" of a
practice problem, not through direct application but as a source of metaphor and
sensitising with which to view in a different way, and to reformulate, the problem.
Thus practical knowledge is reflexive as knowledge of the universal is itself changed
as a result of its use in particular situations. Here then we have a constant interplay of
formal and informal theory.

However, the authors argue, the practitioner must also be aware of the potential
oppressiveness of formal theory within informal theory and practice, as the
knowledge the former generates normatively regulates social practices such as
education. It is important therefore to "surface" the extent of the influences, and the
extent to which they contribute to practice problems. This requires a problematising
of formal theory, a dialogical process which mediates or generates a "fusion of
horizons" between formal and informal theory.

In applying this complex theory of the relationship between theory and practice to
adult education, the authors state:
Adult education, by abandoning the traditional 'academic disciplines' model can develop a critical theory and approach appropriate to its nature as a practical activity. Disciplines have a part to play but their role is to help ensure that horizons of understanding are as 'open' as possible. Locating adult education theory in practice and practice problems ensures its coherence as theory. (1989, p. 192)

Usher and Bryant draw on Habermas' idea of a critical social science as the reflective practice of freeing oneself from one's interests, and as the discursive reconstruction of undistorted knowledge. This is seen particularly in Habermas' analysis of distorted communication; the authors refer to Habermas' use of the psychoanalytic relationship to demonstrate this. However, the authors also argue that an important weakness with Habermas' theory is his failure to recognise the importance of situatedness. They challenge Habermas' belief that it is possible to step outside one's situatedness and engage in critical reflection informed by universal standards or criteria located in the idea of a consensus of rational discourse. The authors state that: "this is where Habermas' analysis is flawed...Such a 'consensus' will itself inevitably be situated" (1989, p. 136)

In particular, the authors disagree with Habermas' claim that hermeneutics is not able to take account of the influence of power and ideology in society and its institutions. In opposition to this claim, Usher and Bryant argue that although interests and distortions can never be entirely escaped, particular prejudices can be transcended. The very fact of being able to talk meaningfully about objective constraints and distorting factors, the authors state, means that they have already been interpreted or hermeneutically understood. Furthermore, they argue, the ideal of genuine, unconstrained discourse which exists potentially in any dialogue, also reveals hermeneutically the ideological constraints of situatedness. Thus, they state:

Hermeneutic understanding does not merely operate at the level of the explicit but, through its recognition of situatedness, can penetrate beneath this level to the more underlying factors to be found there...Habermas' causal explanations' are thus unnecessary, since hermeneutic understanding can undertake the task of reconstruction which Habermas (as we have seen) considers necessary. (1989, p. 136)

This critique by Usher and Bryant demonstrates a surprising partiality in its reading of Habermas. Thus Usher and Bryant, despite a publication date of 1989, only refer to the earlier writings of Habermas, KHI and TP; this ignores the more developed notion of communicative action and discourse theory in later texts which might, at least partly, meet their concern for "situatedness"; this has been discussed in Part Two. One can also question their dismissal of the causal, explanatory, concerns of Habermas. Even if one is concerned to hermeneutically explore situatedness, it may be argued that this exploration must be done with reference to something outside the hermeneutic process, or the process becomes self-referential and circular (a criticism that Habermas makes of hermeneutics, in LSS). Indeed Usher and Bryant's apparent appropriation of Habermas' ideal of rational discourse, and of the 'universal', recognises implicitly that this transcends context and situatedness, and thus can be referred to outside of these.
Usher and Bryant, like Bright, do see a continuing role for theory, albeit of a less foundational and more situated and mediated kind than other adult educators and educators. The fact that theory is not seen as privileged, but historically and context-informed, is in essence the stance taken by the increasingly influential postmodernist school. It is not surprising to find that in his later writings Usher (1992; in Usher and Edwards, 1994) adopts a more explicit postmodernist stance. This is discussed further below.

The more radical critical theorists accept that adult education is practically-based, and that it has drawn from the disciplines in an uncritical and over-dependent manner; however, they do not agree with the anti-foundational position of Bright, and Usher and Bryant. Armstrong (in Bright, 1989a; 1989b) argues that source disciplines such as sociology are uncritically used in courses for adult educators: there is little attempt to distinguish between differing theoretical principles and methodologies; these are also often presented in an eclectic manner and taught in a technicist way for professional purposes. Nevertheless, Armstrong does not wish to reject the disciplines, but wishes to foster a critical, reflexive attitude which recognises them as social and ideological constructs whose boundaries praxis can cut across, and from whose knowledge it can draw from. Armstrong therefore proposes that a theoretical foundation to adult education can be developed which is based on a critical practice or praxis which may be informed by the disciplines.

Griffin (in Bright, 1989) also challenges the source disciplines epistemologically, and analyses them in terms of the ideological, social and economic relations they legitimise and perpetuate. Here then, like Armstrong, he echoes Usher and Bryant's argument that the foundational status of the disciplines are problematic. In opposition to these, though, Griffin also supports Armstrong in proposing a critically-informed theoretical foundation to adult education. Thus Griffin (in Peters et al., 1991) states that "Adult educators must have some sociological grasp of social change, social structures, and social relations" (p. 200). However, he also argues that all knowledge or enquiry is socially and culturally constructed; there can be no ideologically indifferent theory or practice. Thus, Griffin asserts, repeating the themes raised in Chapter Ten, that the theory construction and the knowledge base of adult education primarily reflect professional interests embedded in the class divisions in society.

The critical theory perspective construes theory itself as originating in the practice of social relations of production, particularly as - in the form of ideology - it expresses the interests of a dominant class...At the same time, the critical perspective claims to uncover the true nature of the need for theory in the instrumental rationality of professional practice. (in Bright, 1989, p135)

Griffin argues then that we must make a clear distinction between knowledge and ideology by focusing on the way our analytic categories arise within the social relations of production, and in cultural reproduction. The practice-based educators
discussed above do not undertake such an analysis; their work therefore must be seen in terms of the instrumental purposes of professional practitioners. Further, Griffin and Armstrong oppose these anti-foundationalists by proposing a form of foundationalism: however, this is a foundationalism which is not based on the disciplines, but on critical theory.

Here, we see a similar position to that of Habermas: his critical project draws from the disciplines, but is not dependent on them. As Part Two demonstrates, and Griffin (in Bright, 1989) recognises, Habermas challenges the conventional, epistemological paradigms and disciplines through critical dialogue, and reconstructs them to form a critically-informed, integrated, macrotheoretical framework. However, Bright (1985; 1989) also makes an important point in highlighting how adult education theorists have applied the source disciplines in an uncritical, undifferentiated and undiscriminating manner. We have already seen, in Part Three, how this is paralleled in the uncritical, selective, and theoretically superficial treatment of Habermas' ideas by many theorists of adult education.

This partial understanding or application of Habermas' critical theory is also evident in radical adult educators such as Griffin. Griffin's epistemological dismissal of the disciplines, as the discussion in Part Two shows, may go further than Habermas might wish: Habermas is both concerned to support a limited role for philosophy, and recognises the validity of important sociological theories in their communicative, or potentially communicative, aspects. In their own radical terms the attitude of Armstrong and Griffin to the disciplines is valid; however, in terms of Habermas' critical theory it is not. The foundational base of such radical critical theorists then, insofar as it is informed by the critical theory of Habermas, may also be epistemologically and ideologically suspect; this reinforces the criticism of the lack of balance adult educators demonstrate in their interpretation of Habermas' theory which is raised in Chapter Ten.

2. The Postmodernist Critique

Postmodernism presents the strongest challenge to Habermasian theory at present: it challenges Habermas' historical, philosophical and sociological analysis of the continuing and progressive role and potential of modernity; it also denies the critical adult education theory and practice which is based on this analysis. Green provides a useful summary of postmodernism's main features:

For postmodernists experience is transitory and ephemeral; reality is fragmentary and unknowable; and history is arbitrary and directionless. The individual subject has no stable identity and consciousness is merely a temporary conjunction of shifting discourses and perspectives which allow no fixed point of reference. (1994, p. 72)

In sum, postmodernism challenges the possibility of foundational social theory; it also necessarily denies the possibility of a theoretical, foundational basis to adult education. Despite this, postmodernism is increasing its influence in the social sciences and education. As Green states: "debates in the sociology of education have assumed an increasingly postmodern tone" (1994, p. 67). Any attempt to provide a
theoretical, foundational base to adult education then, must challenge the postmodernist critique of modernity and its traditions and disciplines.

Postmodern arguments have become increasingly influential in discussions on theory in education and adult education. Bagnall (1995) argues that two attitudes to postmodernism exist in education: the first is a postmodernism of resignation, a negative, passive, compliant acceptance of the inevitability of the status quo, and a postmodernism of resistance, a positive, adversarial postmodemity of critical opposition to the status quo. Kemmis (1993) is an example of an educationalist who supports the former interpretation: he argues that those who support the Foucauldian current of postmodernism may end up in passive despair, as all educational methods and technologies are seen as merely the expressions of the will to power. However, it is the latter, optimistic view of postmodernism, which is more dominant in current education and adult education debate.

This viewpoint is represented in Usher and Edwards (1994) who, perhaps, provide one of the clearest and fullest statements of the postmodernist position on education at present. These authors draw on a wide range of postmodernists and poststructuralists such as Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida to demonstrate the relevance of postmodernist thought to educational practice. The authors acknowledge that education in the West might be seen as "the vehicle by which the Enlightenment ideals of critical reason, humanistic individual freedom and benevolent progress are substantiated and realised" (1994, p. 24). However, they argue, in a postmodern society this humanism and rationality may be legitimising oppressive practices and "the very possibility of education providing its espoused goals are thrown into doubt" (1994, p. 226).

Thus, Usher and Edwards argue against the fixed and closed Enlightenment ideal of what constitutes desirable and undesirable emancipatory practices; in its place they emphasise resistance and context. The authors state:

Oppression and emancipation are not polar opposites, the one excluding the other, as the logocentric discourse of modernity implies. As we have suggested, they are co-implicated in ever shifting patterns from on-going struggles. It is for this reason that resistance rather than emancipation has become the key to much postmodern discourse. Postmodern resistance is about historically situated subjects reconfiguring the complex and contradictory patterns of emancipation/oppression. (1994, p. 226)

The optimistic view of postmodernism is also held among educators who previously subscribed to a radical or Marxist position. These more radical postmodernists adopt this position to explain both why the radicalism of the 1960s and 70s failed and where the emancipatory potential of adult education lies in the 1990s. These educators would not accept Habermas' analysis in PDM that postmodernism has reactionary philosophical and political links with the New Right, as they believe that postmodernism has the potential to advance freedom and autonomy. Green states:

Postmodernism, with its scepticism towards the "Enlightenment metanarratives" of universalism, unity, reason and progress has had something to say ... particularly for Left sociologists who have sought
to abandon their former allegiance to Marxist and socialist theory but without seeking refuge in the Right's neo-liberal philosophy of Hayek and Friedman. (1994, p. 68)

Giroux (1992), a prominent critical theorist of initial education, is representative of this position. Giroux states that he has moved away from his earlier position of resistance theory (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986). This proposed that educational sites could be major arenas of pedagogical and political struggle, and teachers were "transformative intellectuals" who could play an important part in that struggle. At that time, Giroux states, he underestimated the increasing structural and ideological constraints on teachers, such as the influence of the New Right on the curriculum and ethos of schools in the United States. In order to combat this New Right influence, Giroux proposes a "border pedagogy" which emphasises the importance of heterogeneity and difference in educational practices.

Border pedagogy is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life. It presupposes not merely an acknowledgment of the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations of culture, power and knowledge. It also links the notions of schooling and the broader category of education to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society. (1992, p. 28)

Giroux acknowledges that Habermas is correct in asserting emancipatory aspects of modernity such as the principles of critique, freedom and democracy. Giroux states, however, that Habermas is wrong in dismissing all forms of postmodernism as antimodernist and conservative: postmodernism engages in the relationship between discourse and power in a way which Habermas, with his "grand narrative", patriarchal, Eurocentric view of reason is unable to do. Thus, Giroux states that an emancipatory practice must also draw from postmodernist and feminist pedagogy:

Modernism reminds us of the importance of constructing a discourse that is ethical, historical, and political. At the same time, postmodernism provides a powerful challenge to all totalizing discourses, places an important emphasis on the contingent and the specific, and provides a new theoretical language for developing a politics of difference. (1992, p. 73)

Usher and Edwards (1994) acknowledge Giroux's recognition of postmodernism in his revised theory of critical pedagogy. However, they argue that Giroux's position continues to be problematic as it privileges the teleological goal of a radicalised democracy, and the authority of the critical pedagogue. The authors state that Giroux's attempt to propose a discourse of postmodern education is both undertheorised and overtheorised: overtheorised because it is does not demonstrate how the educational goals can be translated into practice, and undertheorised because of the underlying assumption that these goals are generally agreed and shared. In terms of the former, Giroux does not analyse the role of the state and its influence on education and society generally in promoting and maintaining inequality and the status quo; in terms of the latter, "critical pedagogy, and the notion of border
pedagogy, presupposes the very democratic social formation to which it aspires" (1994, p. 220). Further, Giroux excludes from consideration the desires and agendas of learners, which may concern outcomes other than democracy; he also excludes education in the lifelong context, continuing to emphasise primarily initial education. Thus, the authors argue:

Apart from the problematic nature of the goal of democracy and/or emancipation - the desire for such goals in the face of the different and contradictory positioning of subjects is highly questionable. (1994, p. 219)

The authors identify Ellsworth (1989) as an example of a more valid postmodernist thinker who deals with the two problems of the questionable nature of the goal of democracy and emancipation, and whether students enter education as active or passive subjects. Usher and Edwards also commend Ellsworth for developing her postmodern account in the context of an exploration of concrete educational practices; this, the authors state, is significantly lacking in the educational literature.

Ellsworth argues that the critical pedagogy of Giroux and others continues to perpetuate relations of domination in educational institutions. These critical pedagogues are asserting a paternalistic rational superiority in their belief that they know better than the students the aims and methods of study. She states: "Giroux leaves the implied superiority of the teacher's understanding and the undefined 'progressiveness' of this type of pedagogy unproblematic and untheorized" (1989, p. 307). In particular, Ellsworth argues, critical educators do not take into account the prejudices and interests they bring to the teaching situation.

The concept of critical pedagogy assumes a commitment on the part of the professor/teacher toward ending the student's oppression. Yet the literature offers no sustained attempt to problematize this stance and confront the likelihood that the professor brings to social movements (including critical pedagogy) interests of her or his own race, class, ethnicity, gender, and other positions. (1989, p. 309)

Ellsworth argues that the influence of the 'subjugated' interests of the educator can only be acknowledged and encountered if the educator is removed from two key discursive positions: the origin of what can be known and the origin of what should be done. The challenge then is to construct classroom practices that engage with the discursive and material spaces that such a removal opens up for the students and the educator.

Ellsworth's attempt to construct such a practice involved her establishing a coalition of overlapping affinity groups of students with similar shared experiences and oppressions. This made communication within the class a form of cross-cultural or cross subcultural exchange, "of building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy within the culture and the classroom" (1989, p. 317), rather than the allegedly free, rational, democratic exchange between equal individuals implied in the critical pedagogy literature. Ultimately, Ellsworth states, the activities of the group had to make sense to the group, and this 'making sense' could not be achieved in terms of any single master discourse, including that of critical pedagogy.
Ellsworth sums up her practice as an attempt to "work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive" (1989, p. 324). This emphasis on the experience and difference of the student is central to the postmodernist perception of the role and identity of the student. The adult educator Westwood (in Westwood and Thomas, 1991) is also representative of this position. Westwood, like Giroux, has developed her postmodernist position from a more radical, and in her case, Marxist stance (Westwood, in Thompson, 1980).

Westwood states that now she is attempting to make "a philosophical intervention which seeks a deconstruction of foundationalism" which will have "profound implications for the social sciences, for politics and practice, and, consequently, for adult education" (1991, p. 44). To start this process Westwood gives an account of major changes which have occurred in society in the areas of the economy, politics and culture. Westwood argues that radical adult education has historically worked at the interface of economics, politics and culture where these changes in postmodernism have taken place; this gives it a privileged position.

adult education is peculiarly well placed to engage with the account of the present conjuncture as postmodern. The issues that have been foregrounded by debates around economics, culture and identity have a special resonance with a field which has, throughout its history, been contested terrain. (1991, p. 55)

Westwood argues that radical adult education has long been aware of the importance of class, gender, ethnic and regional differences, and has constructed programmes on the basis of this. However, postmodernism leads to a re-examination of the power-knowledge complex in adult education through an excavation of the discourse which constructs adult education, and positions subjects within this discourse as the subject/objects of knowledge. This decentralised view of the subject "allows adult education to look anew at 'the adult' and 'the learner' in ways which will enhance our understandings of learning processes" (1991, p. 55).

Westwood (1992) demonstrates this new position in a research study, on a black mental health group, which is based on postmodernist ideas particularly influenced by Foucault. Westwood states that the research study made issues around racism, sexism and class relations central to its framework, in order to combat the pathologising, racist accounts of black people in mental health. The challenge to these accounts was achieved through "narratives of sickness", the biographies of black people diagnosed as schizophrenic, which were generated through extended interviews. This gave these black people a voice and allowed them to construct their own identities as narrators; this also allowed them to challenge their objectification as psychiatric case studies, and thus also challenge the knowledge/power complex. They opposed the power complex further by using the official statistics on black mental health, which medical science uses to objectify and normalise those under its scrutiny, as well as justify its own power. Westwood used these statistics to demonstrate the over-representation of black people among those sectioned and diagnosed as schizophrenic. Thus, Westwood states: "In calling attention to this and using the official statistics we are reappropriating one part of the knowledge/power complex and the social audit" (1992, p. 196).
Usher (1992) also emphasises the differentiation and deconstruction of the self in his recent, more explicit postmodern work. This stance can be seen most clearly in Usher and Edwards (1994) discussed above. However, whereas this text considers education in general terms, his earlier publication (1992) focuses on adult education. Here Usher argues that adult education theory is trapped within an ambiguity: theoretically, educationalists base their explanations on the dominant, liberal humanist tradition or on the more structural neo-Marxism, Freirean or feminist schools of thought. However, in terms of concrete adult education practice, foundationalism is denied and a more hermeneutic learning experience is emphasised in which knowledge and meaning are created through the interactive situation of teacher and learner. Thus, Usher argues that adult education's problem is that it both seeks and rejects closure. On the one hand it is historically hermeneutic and critical, questioning knowledge and totalising explanations; on the other hand there has been a contrary tendency to closure by privileging either liberal or structuralist explanations. Thus, Usher states:

This is the ambiguity at the heart of adult education. It has one foot in the Enlightenment project, another in a post-modern consciousness. (1992, p. 211)

However, when the Enlightenment project "becomes a search for certainty and control through definitive knowledge, totalising explanations and the elimination of difference" (1992, p. 212), it has oppressive consequences for the notion of the autonomous learner. Usher argues that the "grand narratives" of the humanistic project, including oppositional discourses like critical pedagogy, have often been oppressive to women, black people and the poor; they have been disabling rather than enabling in that "empowerment" has been something done by the liberated pedagogues to the unliberated students.

Nevertheless, Usher recognises that adult education is inextricably tied up with the liberal tradition: humanist discourse is part of everyday, and educational, discourse; its language and concepts "saturate" all discourses, including that of the postmodern. Usher argues that the postmodern position must acknowledge this, and open itself up to what is valuable in the humanistic tradition; however, it must also recognise the latter's oppressive elements. Usher cites the example of APEL, the accreditation of prior learning, to demonstrate this. Usher argues that at one level APEL widens access to further and higher education, but at another level it abstracts the student experience from its hermeneutic and holistic context thus objectifying the experience. Usher argues that while APEL may empower and autonomise adults then, it may also do the opposite.

Usher states that postmodernism in its critical role must disrupt the given in adult education by providing a necessary counterbalance of critical scepticism, a degree of uncertainty and the deconstruction of the theorisations and discourse within which the practices of adult education are located. It can do this particularly in adult education, Usher argues, because of its more hermeneutic tradition of critical and questioning practice, of recognition and celebration of difference. Echoing Westwood, Usher asserts that adult education can provide a site for resistance which doesn't privilege either the liberal or radical power-knowledge discourses and where powerful discursive practices can be contested. Adult education's role, even if this makes it a
marginal activity, is to oppose the theoretical, agency/structure dualism of liberal-humanist theory, and encourage a discourse of the situated subject which recognises that we are constituted through historical, cultural and discursive practices.

In its desire to become powerful and respected, adult education needs to remember its own history as an oppositional discourse, as a 'grit in the machine' marking the space from which adult education can speak with its voice and subjects can speak with theirs. (1992, p. 213)

Plumb (in Welton, 1995) also argues that adult education theorists must recognise that society has developed in important postmodern directions. Unlike most of the other postmodernist thinkers discussed above, however, Plumb draws strongly on Habermas' theory in presenting this position. Plumb's argument takes the form of a narrative, a theoretical "guiding thread", rather than the universalistic metanarrative which Lyotard (1984) opposes. This narrative traces the structural and cultural developments of modernity, described by Habermas, to a society increasingly influenced by a postmodern culture.

The basic plot of this narrative is that the rapid and pervasive commodification of culture and the growing predominance of the image over discourse is producing a dramatic de-linguistification, de-differentiation, and de-politicization of culture. (p. 171)

These postmodern developments have important effects on modernity. These are, respectively: the undermining of the importance of discourse, and of validity claims open to appraisal; the breaking down of the distinctions between and within the three cultural spheres, and between the systems and lifeworld; and, the lessening of the importance of culture as a site of struggle over social norms and values. These developments, Plumb argues, are breaking down the systems-lifeworld relationship of modernity:

The system no longer requires the lifeworld to the extent it once did to perform the tasks of social integration and motivation formation...the implications of this cultural weakening are traumatic for critical adult education. (p. 180)

These postmodern developments have encouraged instrumental adult education practices, and eroded the basis for critical adult education's opposition to this basis. Thus Plumb states: "commodification is destroying culture faster than restorative cultural practices like critical adult education can reproduce it" (p. 186). Indeed, Plumb believes that this destruction of the lifeworld may have already gone so far that there no longer exists a sufficient basis for communicative rationalisation, and thus for an effective challenge by critical adult education theory and practice.

Critical adult education is outflanked by these developments and, given its modernist theoretical foundations, is incapable of mustering an adequate response. (p. 188)

Plumb argues further that these postmodern developments challenge the radical credentials of critical adult education: the emphasis of modernity, and of critical adult education, on the struggle to achieve hegemony and consensus, has no place in the emancipatory, heterogeneous vocabulary of postmodernism.
Despite these developments of postmodernity, Plumb still sees a role for critical adult education. The tradition of critical adult education, he argues, is one of critique and dialogue, and an ambivalent attitude to some aspects of modernity, which makes it particularly well-placed to reconstitute itself in the postmodern world. However, Plumb does not indicate what form this reconstitution should take, other than to state that critical adult education already possesses "considerable resources to sustain the tension of discourse and action, of openness and resolve, of the variegated boundaries, of the heterogeneity that prevail in modern times" (p. 190). The message may be optimistic then, but the subtext is not.

3. Postmodernism and the New Right

Finger (1991) also identifies the important role of critical adult education in challenging the development of postmodernism; his analysis, like Plumb's though, is not optimistic. Echoing Plumb, Finger argues that the postmodernisation process is an expression of today's crisis, characterised by features such as fragmentation and individualisation, which have been generated by the process of modernisation. He states, "As such, post-modernism simply continues and exacerbates the key characteristics of modernization" (1991, p. 141). However, Finger states, critical theorists have refused to accept this. Thus, Habermas argues in NC that postmodernism, in its refusal to privilege emancipatory theory gives little hope for social change, and so is conservative or neo-conservative in nature. This analysis, Finger states, is misconceived: there is the incorrect assumption that postmodernism is a coherent belief-system or ideology which can be challenged, and from which one can liberate oneself. Further, this critique focuses on the postmodernist discourse and ignores or refuses to acknowledge the contemporary empirical reality of the process of postmodernisation. Given this, Finger states, critical theory's ideals of modernity may not be an adequate answer to the types of problems which are a result of modernity.

Finger believes then, that there is a need for a debate on the relationship of modernism to postmodernism which goes beyond the purely oppositional. If critical theorists are to defend the project of modernity, they must acknowledge these postmodernist trends.

From this perspective, the question is no longer: How can we promote the ideals of modernity against the post-modernists? Rather it is: How can we save some ideals of modernity (like freedom, justice and democracy) beyond the threatening global environmental crisis and without closing our eyes to the postmodern trends in our societies? (1991, p. 142)

Indeed, Finger states, Brookfield's (1987) account of critical thinking, despite the critique levelled at it by critical theorists, "may be the best one can do when
translating principles of critical theory into educative practice with highly individualized adults in post-industrial societies" (1991, p. 140).

Green (1994) opposes this pessimistic position on both empirical and theoretical grounds. In terms of the former, Green argues that while, in some countries, education is becoming more diversified, pluralist and market-based, there remain many countries, such as France, Germany and Japan, where the public tradition of education continues to be strong. Thus, it is not certain that the postmodernist belief in the continuing diversity and pluralism in society, and in education, is correct. Green argues further that the role of education increasingly involves meeting national economic needs as well as social and political requirements. There is no reason then to see why this "Durkheimian function" should not continue and thus "so long as this is the case it is hard to agree with the postmoderns that diversification and fragmentation are the order of the day" (1994, p. 81).

In terms of the latter, the theoretical level, Green states that postmodernists like Lyotard "revel in hyperbole, ignoring the more qualified and nuanced arguments of their precursors, and elevating their most casual and throw-away generalizations into the new dicta of their post-discourse" (1994, p. 72). Green argues that postmodern thought is deeply anti-historical, and indeed has borrowed many of its ideas and sentiments from oppositional movements and currents in modernity, from past, anti-rational traditions in philosophy, art and literature. Green criticises Giroux's border pedagogy on these grounds: while the language has changed, there is little here that could not be found in the liberal progressivism of the 1970s. Further, he states, the relativism and anti-rational nature of postmodernism should prevent it from making general statements about society altogether. Thus, he argues:

Postmodernism is really, as Habermas has contended, an extension of the ever-present anti-rationalism of the modern period (Habermas 1985). Its insights are the same and so are its dangers. Taken to extremes it can only lead to moral nihilism, political apathy and the abandonment of the intellect to the chaos of the contingent. (1994, p. 74)

Green echoes Habermas further in arguing that the postmodernist emphasis on individuality, choice and fragmentation indicates that education is likely to be more market-based. This, theoretically, indicates a view of education systems which are less democratic and more unequal than those which are regulated by public authorities. Green recognises that postmodernists do not necessarily rest their case on the same grounds as the free-marketeers, as the former's argument is not so much that choice and diversity will raise standards and efficiency as that it is an inevitable concomitant of changing cultures; the end result, however, is the same. Thus, Green states:

Postmodernism has little of value to offer educational theory but it has many dangers. The greatest of these is that the logic of the postmodern argument points towards individualistic educational consumerism in many respects similar to that advocated by the free-marketeers of the new Right. (1994, p 76)
Green recognises that certain postmodernist strands have a theoretical use: Foucauldian analysis may be of use in decoding power relations at the macro and micro-levels, and post-Fordist analysis in explanations of social and economic change. In general theoretical terms though, Green states: "postmodernism proper (ie., as propounded by Lyotard, Baudrillard et al.) has so far contributed little that is distinctive or theoretically fruitful and it seems unlikely that it will" (1994, p 75).

Barnett (1993) supports the view of Habermas and Green that postmodernism is neo-conservative, thus associated with New Right ideas. Barnett argues that the central problem of postmodernism is that it doesn't recognise that within the plurality of discourses there may still be a dominant trend influencing a number of those discourses in a similar direction. Barnett states that there are two readings of our modern age which are at odds with each other. These are that of postmodernism, Lyotard's notion of a multitude of forms of valid reason and experience, and that of critical theory's identification of the dominant instrumental or operational trend in society. But, Barnett posits, there is a third possible reading which sees the two as compatible; thus, the tendencies towards one-dimensionality and cognitive proliferation are complementary, and at work at the same time. Barnett believes then that we can argue that in this multitude of forms of life, the interests and ideologies informed by operationalism, will be dominant. Barnett refers to the increasing modularisation and accreditation of courses, and the influence of the NCVQ, with its emphasis on competency and outcomes-based approaches, as examples of this. He also cites the increasing disappearance of philosophy from the academic institution, whereas at one time the two were seen as virtually synonymous, as an indication of this growing instrumentalism. In sum then, he argues, despite increased differentiation of forms of life and knowledge, there is a recognisable general cognitive shift taking place. He argues further that "this shift is taking place under the direction, orchestration and active influence of the state" (p. 38).

Barnett asserts that the postmodernisation process is damaging to society; critical theory is the only coherent opposition to this process. However, Barnett also states, it does not matter which account of society, the postmodern or critical, is correct as both testify to the element of closure to critique in our age. Critical theory argues that reflexive critique is being squeezed out by the processes of increased instrumentalism, while the postmodernist proliferation of views denies prominence or validity to any particular position above others, including the critical theory. Thus: "On either view, critique of an over-arching kind has to be seen as a marginal form of intellectual activity" (1993, p. 39).

Barnett asserts that this is an extraordinary position for higher education to have got itself into, given that upholding critique was the defining condition of the university. Now, he argues, critique is not just neglected but positively discouraged; it is seen as anathema to the interests of both state and the academic community. This also has important implications for the nature of the student experience in higher education: the developments cited above, as well as others such as modularisation and accreditation, will generate a relatively shallow learning experience. Barnett believes that this is intended.

For, on this reading, students are rendered less able to be critical of their experience or to make larger connections with that experience
and wider forms of understanding. They will lack the conceptual tools. Such an easy familiarity on the part of the students with their epistemic encounters, lacking penetrative insight, and articulation may be the form of education experience which the modern society wishes to call forth. (1993, p. 43)

Barnett recognises that forms of potential resistance, discussed in the writings of Giroux and Freire, are open to educators. Barnett argues that these affirm that there are pools of autonomy still open to the teacher, and that oppositional and autonomous forms of education are still possible. But, he believes, the strategies put forward are strategies confined to a small group of intellectuals armed with an integrated theory of modern society, cognition and education. While not discounting the accounts of these educators, Barnett does not think they go far enough for higher education: here opposition must also challenge cognitive fragmentation, the fragmentation of the academic community, and the increasingly instrumental nature of the relationship between the academic community and society.

As in his earlier work (1990), Barnett turns to Habermas' communicative theory and its emphasis on rational discourse. Despite the criticisms that may be laid against it, Barnett states, Habermas' communicative rationality does provide a unifying idea which has several virtues: it binds together the efforts of all academics in every discipline in terms of the shared enterprise of promoting rational thought; it points to a mission which can inform all educational efforts in higher education across disciplines; and, it hints at a way in which communicative bridges can be built between the academic community and the wider society, either through the critical capacities of graduates emerging from higher education, or from the academic community realising a responsibility to interpret their work to the general community. Thus, Barnett concludes:

It may be that, buried in its own discourse, lie the seeds of a unifying educational idea, based on the academic community's sense of rationality. (1993, p. 45)

4. Postmodernism: Oppositional or Neo-Conservative?

Usher and Edwards (1991) accept that it is difficult to define the postmodern; it cannot be designated as a systematic theory or comprehensive philosophy. Indeed any attempt to do so confers upon it a status and identity which it must necessarily oppose...any attempt at definition must lead to paradox since it is to totalise, to provide a single unified explanation of that which sets its face against totalisation. (1994, p. 7)

The postmodern then is complex and multiform, a loose, umbrella term covering "a condition, a set of practices, a cultural discourse, an attitude and a mode of analysis" (1994, p. 7). This does not mean, however, that postmodernism is completely relativistic. Rather, the authors emphasise that one should see rationality as having
many forms which are validated in many different human practices; an ethical and normative position can still be justified within such practices and struggles.

What this implies is that it is possible to acknowledge many and different points of view whilst denying them equal value... We can still act ethically and still fight for some things rather than others but we have to do this within practices of everyday life and struggle rather than in terms of an appeal to a transcendent and invariant set of values... epistemic relativity is not the same as moral relativity... In the postmodern, the claim is not that there are no norms but that they are not to be found in foundations. They have to be struggled over, and in this struggle, everyone must have a personal responsibility. (1994, p. 27)

Thus, education can no longer be seen merely as reproducing the social order or as the vehicle for social change, and so cannot be based on foundational knowledge. This loosening of foundations should be characterised by a postmodern educational practice which would be more diverse in terms of goals and processes, in terms of organisational structures, differing levels and types of participants, curricula and methods.

Usher and Edwards (1994) accept that postmodernism can be seen as neo-conservative as its uncertainty and ambiguity may influence people to cease attempting social change and to withdraw into the relative security and control of the private realm. However, the authors argue, an acceptance of postmodernism is not necessarily an acceptance of relativism and nihilism. The postmodern moment questions the aspects of modernity and its oppressions, including neo-conservatism; indeed, they assert, postmodernism is also attacked by neo-conservatives who argue that the former undermines the stability of the social order and promotes an amorality harmful to culture and ethics. Therefore, the authors state, the postmodern cannot be inherently neo-conservative. Equally, in the postmodern recognition of the ludic aspects of society such as desire, there is the potential to undermine, and offer alternatives to, the modernist exercise of power which is based on the rational and the serious. Therefore, the authors assert, neo-conservatism is only one possibility in the postmodern; it also has oppositional possibilities.

the postmodern moment can give us greater critical purchase on the situations we confront and enable us to transgress the boundaries of modernity rather than be contained within them. In the postmodern moment, resistance and transgression, rather than emancipation, signify the possibilities for challenging dominant forms of power. (1994, p. 224)

Lawson (1995), in his response to Usher and Edwards, criticises the authors' postmodernist emphasis on the ludic and the experiential over the serious and the rational; its problematic nature, he argues, can be seen in that fascism also emphasises desire. Although then, postmodernists like Lyotard argue that the emancipatory mission of modernity based on reason revealed its bankruptcy in the fascist Holocaust, Lawson believes that the postmodernist emphasis on desire might lead to something similar.
Instead of the ethical 'I ought' we have the subjective 'I want'. Desire and irrationality are given priority...How can we talk of 'playfulness' in the fact of the starving, the tortured and the homeless?...Here are the beginnings of real oppression, not the imagined and relatively trivial oppressions mentioned elsewhere. (1995, p. 221)

Further, Lawson argues that the postmodernist stress on language and on difference, is problematic also. Reflecting Habermas' emphasis on the communicative nature of language, Lawson states that there is no language without communication and no communication without a community: "Community is therefore a universal precondition of language. It is the point at which 'difference' can have no place" (p. 221).

Finally, Lawson also opposes the emphasis on immediate personal experience and feeling. He states that as well as developing our identity through communication, we also need a sense of history.

An education based exclusively on personal experiences would seem to be an impoverished affair...We need each other, and we also need the past, not because it casts a baleful influence, but because it helps to find ourselves. (1995, p. 222)

These criticisms indicate a continuing need for modernity, and its underlying rationality, which postmodernism refuses to or cannot acknowledge. Usher (1992) implicitly acknowledges this when he refers to the liberal, humanist tradition 'saturating' everyday and educational discourse.

This argument is supported by a critical examination of the postmodernist educational practices of Ellsworth (1989) and Westwood (1993). Ellsworth attempts to establish a practice which is not informed by the superiority and paternalism of the critical pedagogue's position; it can be argued, however, that all that she does is replace the latter with practice informed by the superiority of the postmodernist's position, insofar as she is still setting the frameworks for, and facilitating, the learning process. A single hidden agenda, or postmodernist master discourse, may still inform the dialogue, despite its apparently more plural and open nature, that is the obverse of that for which she criticises the critical theorists. Indeed, even Ellsworth's apparently non-prescriptive strategy or refusal to bring normative standards to the classroom is itself establishing a normative standard. Further, this normative standard, although generating a different teaching practice based on student identity and concerns, must still involve the development of rationally-based norms and procedures if the practice, and ideas underlying it, are to be understood and participated in by all. In the context of Habermas' theory, discussed in Part Two, these points should not be surprising: in his criticism of Foucault's description of discourses of power in PDM Habermas argues that following a successful attempt to oppose a traditional or dominant discourse of power, the opposer or victor will establish a new discourse of power in its stead. Habermas also asserts that postmodernist arguments are guilty of the performative contradiction: they attempt to deny rationality through explanation and practice which rely on presuppositions of rationality.

Here we have the core problem for postmodernism: it is impossible for postmodernists to present a position, or argue their case, without referring to the
rational presuppositions and norms Habermas identifies as intrinsic to language. Indeed, this seems to emerge from the definition for postmodernism Usher and Edwards give above. If one can recognise differing points of view without according them equal value, if one can only arrive at norms through everyday practice, this still assumes that at some stage some final authority or arbiter must be referred to if one view or norm is going to be accorded more value or recognised as being more successful. If the aspect of force is excluded from this process, then that authority must be the Habermasian force of the better argument. This does not necessarily rely on detailed, formal principles enshrined in a discipline or field of knowledge, but must at least accept the underlying rational presuppositions of discourse and potential consensus.

Indeed, Usher and Edwards also implicitly recognise the problematic nature of the role of rationality in their postmodern account. They state:

We also recognise that while we have argued against conclusions in favour of resonances, this in itself is a form of conclusion, of closure, and the resonances we offer signify a certain set of meanings. (1994, p. 228)

This need for rationality, and the continuing "saturation" of modernist discourse, can also be seen in Westwood's (1992) research study. The individual narratives, although subjectively and identity-based, can only make sense to both narrator and listeners if the rational, communicative preconditions of language apply. Further, as Green (1995) argues above, there is little here that one would not find in a critical or liberal progressivist study. Thus, postmodernist jargon such as "narratives of sickness", "the knowledge-power complex", "surveillance by the state" and "exclusion and unbelonging" could easily be transposed into humanist or critical language and thought without losing their essential meaning. Further, despite Westwood's attempt to oppose the usual positivistic practices of psychiatrists in mental health, there is a surprising reliance on, and unconvincing justification for, the official statistics. Here, critical theorists would want to attack and excavate the ideological assumptions and distortions involved in these statistics rather than accord them credence by using them, apparently uncritically. Finally, there is a continuing assertion by Westwood of widespread racism and sexism in society which informs her research. This assumption would find little opposition from many liberal and critical educators. In sum, postmodernism here, as opposed to providing a distinctive and anti-modern approach to the social sciences and education, seems little more than a continuation of modernist trends.

This does not mean that the account of the process of postmodernity does not add usefully to our understanding of current historical and cultural developments. As Westwood (1992) states:

The term 'postmodern' is itself one attempt to name the disjuncture between the modern and the present conjuncture where the contemporary world is currently subject to profound changes in economic, social and political life but also in relation to ways of knowing and understanding. (1992, p. 192)
However, to then argue that these developments demonstrate that society has moved onto a new stage of history with differing, underlying principles is to stretch the message too far. Postmodernism remains "saturated", as Usher states, with modernist elements because it is still part of, or a trend in, the overall discourse of modernism. This explains why the more radical postmodernists, as Green argues, while opposing the 'general narratives' of the humanistic disciplines, still end up promoting practice which bears strong resemblances with the radical and humanistic educational practices of the 1970s. The discourse may be different, and more in fashion than the modernism of this period; the practice, however, remains much the same.

It is in the fact that the discourse is different though, and that this discourse emphasises a change in "ways of knowing and understanding", that postmodernism can be seen as essentially possessing neo-conservative or New Right tendencies. First though, it is important to recognise that the New Right position, especially in Britain and the United States, is made up of both neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideological strands (Belsey in Levitas, 1986). This is ignored by the theorists discussed above; indeed, it is also not acknowledged by Habermas in his writings. Thus, the term "neo-conservative" is used in an ambiguous, unclear manner at times. This distinction is important because each ideological strand has differing, although interrelated, consequences for a communicative adult education theory and practice. In terms of the neo-liberal strand, as Green (1994) argues above, the postmodernist emphasis on individuality, difference and choice corresponds to, and facilitates, the neo-liberal interest in market ideas and practices. Thus, although postmodernists might wish to oppose the instrumentalist policies of the New Right, the postmodernist vocabulary "celebrates", or acknowledges, these market trends. The radical postmodernist approach to the instrumentalisation of adult education then, accepts postmodernity's developmental "logic" including its attack on the lifeworld, yet at the same time must develop strategies for opposing it. The problematic nature of such an ambivalent view, and of developing oppositional strategies to these postmodern developments, are demonstrated clearly by the pessimistic arguments of Plumb (in Welton, 1995) and Finger (1991) above.

Further, these neo-liberal characteristics of postmodernist explanations of education, also generate the more conservative or reactionary aspects of the position. Postmodernism's overview is one of increasing social fragmentation and differentiation which educators can attempt to resist and transgress. However, in that such resistance and transgression is described primarily in terms of the individual, of self and identity, any attempt at opposition cannot successfully challenge the dominant forms of power in society or education: the refusal to subscribe to universal principles which might inform a common emancipatory practice makes it impossible to justify why the oppositional position is better than that of those who are being challenged. Further, in that the postmodernist position also opposes those who attempt to offer practices based on analyses underpinned by universal principles, whether of a critical or liberal kind, postmodernism prevents the possibility of radical, transformative challenge at both the theoretical and practical levels. Given this celebration of fragmentation and difference at the structural, institutional and individual levels in society, and the dismissal of the important emancipatory, communicative and utopian elements in adult education which are informed by the Enlightenment ideals of modernity, postmodernism and postmodernist adult
education ideas can be regarded as detrimental to democratic, communicative progress. It is this interpretation that Habermas primarily identifies with in his concern about the anti-modernist and instrumentalist tendencies of neo-conservatism, and the anti-communicative ethos of postmodernism, in his writings.

In sum then, as Usher (1992) argues, we can accept, to some extent, the descriptive empirical account that postmodernism provides of changes in society. However, the belief that we are also experiencing "an epistemic relativity" or profound changes in "our ways of knowing and understanding" as Usher and Edwards (1994) and Westwood (1992), respectively propose, is more problematic. Further, Usher and Edwards' argument that this epistemic relativity does not necessarily entail moral relativity, is challenged by both the critical theory of Habermas and the liberal theory of Lawson. Both argue that moral relativity is incurred, and with this comes potential dangers; these are outlined by Lawson (1995) above, and Habermas in NC.

However, this is only the case if one accepts that epistemic relativity exists: the examination of Ellsworth and Westwood's educational practice demonstrates that this epistemic relativity is a myth: oppositional postmodernist educational practice is informed by the same thinking of liberal, humanist or critical trends in modernism because postmodernism is a continuation, by another name, of advanced modernist trends, rather than a disjuncture from it. It is because postmodernism does not recognise this, but attempts to explain the current structural trends in terms of a discourse which is different from, and oppositional to, the traditional ideals of modernity, that postmodernism has consequences antithetical to communicative discourse and emancipatory action.
Chapter 13 - The Theorisation of Adult Education: An Assessment

The previous chapters identify and comment on the current interpretations of Habermas' theory by adult educators. This literature review demonstrates that adult educators, with the exception or partial exception of those who subscribe to the anti-foundationalist or postmodernist school, are increasingly acknowledging the importance of Habermas' work to adult education theory and practice. However, the review also demonstrates that few adult educators have a strong understanding of Habermas' theory; even in those few cases where this is not the case, there are important omissions in the accounts presented. It is questionable then, as to how far these interpretations of Habermas demonstrate sufficient understanding of the Habermasian communicative project to satisfy the conditions of theoretical adequacy which Habermas' theory satisfies. This, in turn, makes these adult educators' attempts to provide a Habermasian-informed theoretical base to adult education problematic.

The task undertaken here is to assess the level of understanding of Habermasian theory by theorists of adult education; this enables us to decide how far, and in what areas, this understanding reflects the explanatory power and reach of that theory.

This assessment is conducted through the application of a similar heuristic framework to that used in Chapter Eight. The explanatory power of the adult education interpretation is assessed through an examination of these theorists' awareness of the developmental, synchronic and diachronic themes of Habermas' oeuvre; this includes an evaluation of the extent to which the theorists show an understanding of the theoretical range, interdisciplinary form and dialogical nature of Habermas' communicative theory. The explanatory reach of the adult education interpretation is examined through adult educators' identification and application of the empirical and normative features of Habermas' theory.

Chapter Eleven argues that there are some areas of Habermas' theory which are recognised more strongly by commentators in the other educational sectors. To our account of the understanding of Habermas in adult education then, the thesis also incorporates the complementary contributions of commentators in initial and higher education. This provides us with a representative overview of the current understanding of Habermas in education in the West; on the basis of this a definitive judgement on the theoretical status of this understanding is made. This judgement asserts that educational theory does, to some extent, satisfy the conditions of explanatory reach. With respect to the conditions of explanatory power, however, the Habermasian-informed theory put forward by adult educators and educators demonstrates serious omissions and weaknesses; at the present time then, adult education theory does not demonstrate the required theoretical adequacy necessary to its theoretical status and institutional justification.
1. Adult Education and the Habermasian Oeuvre

The previous chapters demonstrate that most adult educators are not aware of, or are not concerned about, the developmental nature of Habermas' works. Chapter Four shows that those texts written before KHI, with the recent exception of STPS, are virtually ignored: adult educators demonstrate little awareness of their existence, or their importance. This can be explained partly by the late translation into English of some of these texts; nevertheless, given the increasing interest in Habermas, one might expect this interest to also turn to the possible relevance of the earlier texts. This, however, is not the case. There are two probable reasons for this. Many adult educators do not have a sufficient academic grounding in the social sciences and philosophy to understand these works easily. Also, the two seminal texts in Habermas' oeuvre, KHI and TCA, while, respectively, containing detailed philosophical and sociological accounts, also present theoretical arguments which are relatively accessible at certain levels, and which possess an obvious relevance to education. This relevance is considered below.

The focus of adult educators on these two main texts has, however, led them to fail to recognise the distinct or potential importance of all of Habermas' texts to educational concerns. Thus, Habermas' historical and sociological account of the development and deformation of the public sphere in STPS, and the debate this has engendered, is important to the historical, institutional and normative grounding of the communicative community or arenas of discursive practice. Chapter Four outlines how the institutional basis of the public sphere in STPS develops into a more abstract communicative basis in later works. It is this more abstract formulation which most theorists of adult education have focussed on, either in the form of communicative competence in the educational institution, or in the form of NSMs with which adult education must work. However, these accounts show no awareness of this early study of the public sphere. Jarvis (1993) is an important exception to this. This lack of interest in the concept of the public sphere has an increased significance with the recent publication of BFN where Habermas considers the communicative potential of the political institutions of both the systems and lifeworlds. This marks a return to a more institutional emphasis in Habermas' communicative theory which those educators who have not read STPS will find difficult to understand or explain; supporters of NSMs will also find that Habermas' account of the public sphere is rather wider than they have recognised. This possible wider role of the public sphere is discussed further in Part Four.

It is perhaps more understandable why adult educators have ignored TP and LSS: these presuppose, respectively, philosophical and political, and sociological understandings, which few adult educators possess. Nevertheless LSS is important to Habermas' recognition that social science is imbued with positivistic presuppositions and must be reconstructed in communicative-based terms. The significance of this is that this analysis can be extended to sociological interpretations of education and adult education which are similarly influenced by positivism. TP is important to the theory of adult education because it provides the historical explanation of the genesis and development of instrumentalist reason in political and philosophical terms. New Right policy in adult education, the most recent political manifestation of this instrumentalism, can thus be historically, politically and philosophically grounded.
This grounding provides the explanation for the increasing paradigmatic dominance of instrumentalism as a pathology of modernity. This analysis also demonstrates the merits of positivism in developing a more rigorous theory which can be used to justify the importance of a social scientific background for adult educators. At the same time TP also identifies the communicative, theoretical grounds on which a challenge to the instrumentalising tendency of positivism can be made. TP also outlines the changing relationship of theory to practice from Aristotelian praxis or practical reason to the current emphasis on positivist reason and instrumentally-informed practice. TP's early concern to signal the possibility of a critically and communicatively informed action, later elaborated in TCA and MCCA, which can challenge this increasing instrumentalisation, is important to adult educators in their attempt to justify and validate their practice on theoretical grounds. The basis of this critically-informed practice is further signalled by Habermas' discussion of TRS.

Adult educators also ignore, or are unaware of, the importance of TRS. This is understandable in that some essays in this work require a background in social science; however, others do not. Chapter Four shows that these other essays explicitly explore aspects of education through discussions of the adolescent, transitional stage to adulthood, the emancipatory role of the student movement, and the critical, democratic, communicative characteristics of the university and of academic discourse. These essays then, have a clear relevance to notions of adulthood and adult learning, and to the role of educational institutions. Given this, the lack of interest shown in this text by adult educators is particularly surprising; only Young, in initial education, recognises its educational significance.

KHI is the first of Habermas' main texts to interest theorists of adult education. The philosophical part of KHI, which charts the decline of epistemology, is ignored; it is the schema of knowledge-constitutive interests, and in particular the distinction between the empirical-strategic and emancipatory-critical spheres of existence and educational function, which resonates with the experience of adult educators, and their attempts to develop a more liberatory practice.

Chapter Five demonstrates Habermas later recognises the problematic nature of his methodologically-concerned, knowledge-based theory of KHI, and shifts to a more substantive communicative, theoretical base. Few adult educators recognise or acknowledge this important paradigmatic shift and its implications for their educational theory and practice. Collins (1991) and Jarvis (1992) acknowledge the change in emphasis, but only Young (1992) provides an extended paradigmatic and educational analysis. Chapter Eight explains how this shift exemplifies the methodological, dialogical and reconstructionist rationale underlying the development of Habermas' theory, and demonstrates the fundamentally synchronic and diachronic nature of that development. Adult educators' recognition of this might influence them to consider the extent of the critical, dialogical nature of their own appropriation of Habermas; this is discussed further below.

In sum then, the understanding of Habermas' early works, their place in the Habermasian oeuvre, and their formative, and continuing role in his later communicative theory, is important to the fuller understanding of Habermasian theory and methodology. The discussion above of the interpretations of Habermas by theorists of adult education shows that these theorists do not demonstrate this
understanding; only Young (1989), in initial education, shows some awareness of the relevance of Habermas' early works both to the latter's communicative theory, and to education.

Most adult educators show a similar lack of recognition, or awareness of, the importance of the works of Habermas' later period, discussed in Chapter Seven. To an extent, these texts reflect and extend the concerns of the earlier works. In MCCA Habermas presents the early theme of the transition to adulthood, first identified in TRS, now within a philosophically and psychologically-informed moral-cognitive, developmental ontogenetic theory. Habermas' account of the discourse ethics procedure provides criteria for developing and defining what may constitute the communicative community or public sphere, discussed in STPS. Equally, Habermas' moral-ethics distinction brings back to the forefront the question of the relationship of theory to practice, particularly identified in TP. Adult education theorists do not recognise these important themes, nor do they show any understanding of their significance for the question of the emancipatory potential of the adult education role in society. This is discussed further in Part Four.

Postmodernism is potentially the most serious threat to the "grand narrative" of Habermas, and thus to critical adult education theory and practice informed by this narrative; in PDM Habermas presents a detailed account and theoretical critique of this position. PDM then, is important to those supporters of Habermas who wish to foster the concepts of modernity in their educational practice. However, neither the modernist supporters of Habermas in adult education, nor his postmodernist critics, refer to PDM; nor do they refer to his theoretical opposition to postmodernism, and his analysis which ties neo-conservatism to the postmodernist position. Finger (1991) is an exception to this. Indeed, few adult educators or educators refer to the general postmodernist-modernist debate around these issues, nor do they recognise the implications or consequences this has for Habermas' theory, and thus also for the Habermasian-informed educational position. Barnett (1993), in higher education, and Plumb (in Welton, 1995), in adult education, are rare exceptions here.

In NC Habermas outlines in more detail than in TRS his view of the role of the university, and also looks at the role of the intellectual. This emphasis reflects the cultural place the intellectual and the university have in the Enlightenment tradition of Germany; nevertheless there are clear resonances with the liberal university tradition in Britain which Barnett (1990) recognises. It is particularly surprising, given the greater familiarity with Habermas which now exists in adult education circles, and the later publication of NC, that the educational significance of this text is not recognised by, and incorporated into, adult education theory.

It is to the middle stages of Habermas' work then, where he develops his macrotheoretical framework of the communicative paradigm, that we must mainly look when we assess the adult education input to the understanding of Habermas. Analytically, this is best achieved through three main interpretive frameworks: the liberal, radical and anti-foundationalists; the less discrete feminist interpretations can be found in each of these frameworks. All three frameworks, and the feminist perspective which cuts across them, focus on the emancipatory nature of the Habermasian communicative paradigm and procedure. The liberals emphasise the self-directive, individual-emancipatory aspects of the communicative process, the
radicals the structural, ideological, collective-emancipatory aspects, and the anti-
foundationalists focus on, and challenge, the privileging of modernity and the
communicative theory. The feminists attempt to inject more affective aspects into the
masculinist-rational emphasis of Habermas' theory. Habermas' description of the
pathology of modernity has a clear attraction to the adult education theorists who
support his wish to explain and challenge the increasing New Right marketisation and
instrumentalisation of society and adult education but, as Part One shows, have been
unable to do so in traditional liberal or radical terms. This attraction does not, of
course, apply to the anti-foundationalists. This challenge to New Right policy is
mounted on communicative grounds based on the inherent consensual nature of
language and the emancipatory potential of communicative practice; Habermas'
theory can be used to inform adult education theory or practice concerned with
empowerment whether in individual, class or gender terms.

Overall then, the adult education contribution to the Habermasian interpretation of
adult education primarily comes from those works in which Habermas'
communicative paradigm is most fully constructed: TCA, discussed in Chapter Six,
and, to an extent, the preceding LC and CES, discussed in Chapter Five. It is these
texts that most fully constitute the macrotheoretical communicative theory of
Habermas; and, it is to these texts we must turn to assess how far adult educators fully
understand and apply this communicative theory to their interpretations of Habermas.

2. The Communicative Framework

The detailed examination of Habermas' communicative theory in Chapter Six
demonstrates that Habermas' three-level characterisation of the macrotheoretical,
methodological and empirical provides a useful analytical framework through which
we can understand and assess his communicative theory. This framework can also be
used to gauge the extent to which adult educators show an understanding, whether
critical or otherwise, of this theory. Through this we can assess the extent of
explanatory power and reach these educators demonstrate.

At the macrotheoretical level, few adult educators refer to the reconstructionist basis
to Habermas' work in TCA, nor do they recognise its theoretical and methodological
importance to the explanatory power of Habermas' theory. Habermas' sociology
reconstructs the communicative elements of both systems and action social theorists
in order to present a more integrated, practically-oriented theory. This is unified
through the heuristic, analytical frameworks of systems and lifeworld, as a structural
and relational description of society, and of phylogensis and ontogenesis, as a
rational-developmental description of society and the individual. Many adult
education theorists, from differing theoretical orientations, do show an awareness of
Habermas' systems-lifeworld interpretive framework. This awareness takes more of a
descriptive form for liberal adult educators such as Mezirow (1991b), and a more
structural, explanatory form by radical adult educators such as Collins (1991) and
Welton (1995). Nevertheless, even these demonstrate only a general understanding of
the essential differences between the systems and the lifeworld, and the respective
colonising and communicative characteristics of each. Only Welton (1995), in his
recent writings on Habermas, demonstrates a detailed understanding of the interactive
nature of the systems-lifeworld relationship, and the analytical components of this
relationship such as the role of the expert value spheres, and the processes of culture, personality and socialisation. The importance of this concept of the lifeworld to adult education theory, is discussed further in Part Four.

Despite this limited understanding of the system-lifeworld relationship, theorists of adult education are able to explain the recent instrumentalising policy changes in adult education through Habermas' theory of the colonisation of the lifeworld. Equally, Habermas' account of the communicative potential of the lifeworld, and its institutions and traditions, allows these adult educators both to provide a degree of theoretical explanation of the role of adult education, and to identify the emancipatory potential of adult education whether in the individual (Mezirow, 1991b; Brookfield, 1993b), institutional (Collins, 1991; Little, 1991), NSM (Collins, 1991; Welton, 1991) or feminist (Hart, 1990) context. In these aspects of the systems-lifeworld theme then, interpretations of adult education theorists demonstrate some significant understanding of Habermas' communicative theory.

However, adult educators do not seem to recognise the ontogenetic-phylogenetic theme in Habermas' work, although this also is very relevant to adult education theory. This theory of the rational development of society and the individual respectively emphasises the historical, structural elements of social change and progress which the radical educators are more concerned with, and the cognitive, autonomic elements of biographical change and progress in which liberal adult educators are primarily interested. This framework also demonstrates how the ontogenetic and phylogenetic relate to each other as parallel but dialectically engaged processes. The importance of this theme for education, both in terms of the development of rationality at both levels, and the interrelationship of the levels, is not recognised by any adult educator. Welton recognises the phylogenetic level of development, but his understanding, or acknowledgement, goes no further than this. It is only the theorists of initial education Young (1989), and Peukertruth (1993), in an article devoted to this particular aspect of Habermas' theory, who show an awareness of the significance of this theme for education. In contradistinction to this, Part Four argues that a full understanding of this theme is essential to the legitimation of the role of adult education in society. The omission of this important theme then, diminishes substantially the explanatory power of adult education theories which purport to be informed by Habermas' theory.

It is clear then that adult educators, in whole or partly, do not recognise important substantive aspects of Habermas' communicative theory. One main reason for this is that adult educators do not possess the necessary theoretical background and understanding; another important reason, however, is that they also wish to focus on those aspects which are more immediately relevant to the adult education practice. Here, we can move on to the methodological level of Habermas' theory, the discursive, communicative procedure of the consideration of validity claims which can inform the educational situation. Adult education theorists do not appear to recognise the sociological and philosophical theoretical context or content of this communicative procedure, nor its dialogical and theoretical reconstructionist basis.

This is exemplified in Jarvis' (1992) existentially influenced concept of communicative interaction which asserts that learning occurs through direct and secondary communicative experience. Jarvis recognises the similarity of his concept
to that of Habermas’ communicative action, but argues that the latter is too oriented to interpretation and consensus rather than emancipatory reflection and conflict. Thus, Jarvis argues “it is a lack of agreement that results in learning” (p. 83) when there is a disjuncture between the external, experienced world and the internal, biographical world of the learner. However, this criticism does not recognise that Habermas argues also that a disjuncture must take place at the ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels, respectively for individual and social rational development to progress. This evolutionary framework of course is based on Habermas’ philosophically and sociologically reconstructionist theory.

Nevertheless, if in a limited manner some adult educators (Collins, 1991; Hart, 1985, Mezirow, 1992b; Welton, 1991) do recognise and understand the linguistic aspects of communicative theory, and its application at the dialogical level of adult education practice. It is here then, in terms of Habermas' linguistic, communicative theory that, to some degree theoretically and methodologically, adult educators demonstrate their strongest understanding of Habermas' theory. It is at this level of explanation that Habermas' theory particularly resonates with the experience of adult educators in both empirical and normative terms. Here then we turn to the explanatory reach of adult educators’ interpretations.

In empirical terms, radical adult educators use Habermas' theme of the colonisation of the lifeworld to explain and describe the current instrumentalisation and vocationalisation of adult education by New Right governments. Equally, they can show how this has influenced not only a more instrumentalist policy towards adult education, but also a more instrumentalist practice within adult education. Griffin (1988) and Collins (1991) present particularly powerful critiques of this instrumentalism in society and in adult education practice. Radical adult educators such as Collins (1991; in Welton, 1995) are also concerned to identify and promote existing communicative practice in adult education institutions; they are joined in this by their liberal colleagues. Brookfield's (1993) and Mezirow's (1991b) respective accounts of self-directed learning and perspective transformation are examples of such communicatively-informed institutional practice. Here then, adult educators can demonstrate explanatory reach at both the descriptive and prescriptive, normative levels of theory. This exists at the level of the teaching and institutional situation for both radicals and liberals; it is, however, the latter who most strongly identify with communicative practice in this context. For the former, it is in the relationship of adult education to new social movements, in the wider society, that communicative values most strongly exist, and have the capacity to be enhanced.

The more radical adult education theorists (Hart, 1985; Welton, 1993; 1995) then, particularly locate the normative aspect of adult education outside the teaching situation, in the form of its interaction with NSMs. These radical adult educators assert that the communicative, emancipatory role of adult education is fulfilled primarily through this relationship. Here though, the interpretation of Habermas becomes more questionable. These adult educators present a more celebratory picture of NSMs than Habermas offers: the former do not acknowledge the ambivalent attitude of Habermas to NSMs, most explicitly voiced in AS, which represents his concern about their particularistic as well as universalistic characteristics. Holford (1995) however, recognises that NSMs can possess illiberal
as well as emancipatory qualities; this contribution to the debate on the role of NSMs is considered further in Part Four. This criticism does not mean of course that radical adult educators cannot extend Habermas' identification of NSMs in a more positive manner should they wish to do so; nevertheless Habermas' own uncertainty about the liberatory potential of these NSMs should be recognised, and responded to; not to do so demonstrates either superficial reading, or academic dishonesty, on this aspect of Habermas' thought.

Another problem with this celebration of NSMs is that these theorists exclude other possible communicative and emancipatory institutions or organisations. Indeed, there is a lack of detailed discussion of the role and nature of the public sphere by any educators, with the partial exceptions of Jarvis (1993) and Young (1989); adult educators do not recognise the centrality of the public sphere, whether in existing or counter-factual form, to the Habermasian project. Adult education theorists then, might profitably look further than NSMs to other potential, communicative institutions. Here, we can refer to Habermas' recognition (in Calhoun, 1992) of the oppositional groups and associations which contributed to the break-up of the Eastern Bloc. Although, Habermas recognises their different political provenance and makes no explicit proposals for alternatives in the West, the space for such alternatives exist in his concept of, and occasional account of, the public sphere.

Chapter Four demonstrates how Habermas' historical account in STPS identifies the communicative role of a literary public sphere, and the political public sphere of the coffee house and political journalism, in early industrial society. Also Habermas' more recent work, BFN, shows a more explicit recognition of the role of associations and organisations in the public sphere other than NSMs. This is discussed further in Part Four. Also relevant here is Habermas' recognition of the university as an existing social repository of communicative procedures and critical potential; here perhaps might lie a case for increased links between adult education and higher education which is as strong as those put forward for adult education's relationship with NSMs. Nevertheless, as Chapter Eight shows, Habermas does not provide much indication of where existing or communicative potential might be found in concrete terms in society, whether in terms of specific NSMs, the wider civil society or higher education. Thus, the limited, normative aspects of the explanatory reach of the adult education theorists here, reflect Habermas' limitations in this respect also.

3. The Status of Adult Education Theorisation

The discussion above demonstrates that the interpretations of Habermas put forward by adult educators do not satisfy the criteria for a successful theorisation of adult education identified in the Introduction: they do not meet the conditions of theoretical status embodied in the criteria of explanatory power and explanatory reach.

It is with the criteria of explanatory reach however, that adult educators have most success; this is perhaps indicative of the historical nature of adult education which has been more concerned with practice than theory. Many adult education theorists show sufficient general understanding of the Habermasian themes of the systems-lifeworld relationship and the colonisation of the lifeworld to explain, if in descriptive rather than analytical terms, the current instrumentalisation of adult education. Equally, in
their identification of potential communicative factors, both within and without the adult education institutions, these theorists recognise liberatory, normative capacities of adult education. As stated above, that this account of the normative capacities of adult education is relatively unambitious and narrow is as much a reflection of Habermas' deficiency in this respect as it is of adult education theory.

However, the explanatory power of Habermasian-informed adult education theory is much weaker. Adult education theorists do not reflect the existing explanatory power of Habermas' theory in several respects. They do not recognise the substantive sociological traditions which inform Habermas' communicative theory, and nor do they understand how Habermas reconstructs these theoretical traditions by drawing out their communicative elements, and integrating them into an interdisciplinary framework. Equally, they do not recognise Habermas' theoretical account of the role of philosophy which informs this methodological, dialogical, reconstructionist approach, and justifies the important distinction between morality and ethics which explains Habermas' attitude to practice. Here then the opportunity to ground adult education interpretations in the richness, depth and range of historically and academically important theoretical traditions, modified on communicative lines, is not recognised.

Most adult education theorists also do not recognise Habermas' ontogenetic-phylogenetic, evolutionary account of the development of modernity, which provides the historical and socio-economic framework for his analysis of the colonisation of the lifeworld, and the moral-cognitive framework to Habermas' developmental account of the moral and learning capacities of the individual. Finally, they do not recognise the central dynamic of the learning process which forms the dialectical and evolutionary dynamic in these inter-related systems-lifeworld processes.

We have also seen that the adult education interpreters have little understanding of the debates which Habermas' theory has generated in many academic disciplines, especially that of philosophy. This debate highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of Habermas theory, and indicates possible areas where, arguably, Habermas' communicative project could be strengthened. Habermas' dialogical role in this debate, as Chapter Eight argues, demonstrates the consistency of his methodological approach, and his confidence in the overall theoretical validity of his communicative project. The fact that adult educators have not commented on these debates demonstrates further the theoretical and methodological weakness of the explanatory power of their Habermasian-informed theory.

This is also reflected in the relatively uncritical adoption of Habermas' theory by many adult educators (Little, 1991; Mezirow, 1991b; Welton, 1991). Collins (1985; 1987; 1989; 1991) is a main exception to this, but only in terms of demonstrating how Habermas' theory can be supplemented by other theorists; Collins also does not subject Habermas to detailed critique. This lack of critique extends to adult education's own internal debate: Chapter Five shows that both liberal and radicals do engage in debate with each other, but this debate takes place primarily at the level of their general respective practical concerns and political orientations rather than at the level of a more substantive, analytical dialogue. Mezirow is an exception to this: paradoxically, Mezirow is one of the most uncritical and celebratory supporters of Habermas' theory, yet one of the most dialogical adult educators with his own
contemporaries. This becomes less paradoxical however, when we recognise that this dialogue consists mainly in Mezirow's responses to critiques of his work, rather than that of a detailed examination of the theories his critics present. Nevertheless, in justifying his position, Mezirow demonstrates a greater degree of analytical understanding of some of the communicative aspects of Habermas' theory than most of these critics.

Many theorists of adult education then, refer to Habermas' critical theory, but they do so in a way which removes the "critical" element from his work and their own. They do not recognise, nor incorporate into their theory, the dialogical, reflective, methodological stance which is central to the Habermasian oeuvre and its claim to explanatory power and theoretical validity - and equally is important to adult education's claim to a similar explanatory power and theoretical validity in its interpretation of Habermas. This undermines further the possibility of a valid Habermasian-informed theory in the existing literature of adult education.

In sum then, adult education theorists demonstrate a limited understanding of Habermasian theory, and of its central motifs. There is no strong theoretical and analytical depth to their interpretations, and there is no sense of the dialogical and reflexive nature of the Habermasian project, and thus its developmental and reconstructionist nature. Given this, existing adult education can not oppose challenges to its theoretical base very successfully: it neither has the critical, reflective practice and method nor the theoretical and analytical knowledge and understanding to do so. This may reflect the adult education tradition of emphasising practice over theory; however, as Part One asserts, adult education now needs this strong theoretical base more than ever if it is to assert and justify the importance of adult education in terms which challenge the existing New Right political climate, and its influence on that practice.

This has important implications for the claim of adult education to an important and distinctive role in society. Adult educators assert that adult education possesses communicative and liberatory qualities that are important to individual and society, and which can challenge the instrumentalisation which is increasingly dominating most institutions of the lifeworld. These qualities are embedded in the communicative and discursive methods and procedures which have traditionally been seen as most successful in, and appropriate to, adult learning and teaching practice. Herein lies the importance of adult education to a communicative society and to the autonomous and empowered individual. With the exception of Mezirow (1992), most adult educators do not claim the unique role of adult learning in developing communicative competence, but they do argue for a relative importance and distinctiveness. Thus, although the communicative learning capacity may be found in other age groups and learning stages, it is more likely to reside in adulthood, and be fostered through andragogical adult education practice. However, this claim to the importance of adult education as the main educational embodiment of communicative skills is assertive rather than legitimatory: only justifications or validations of this communicative process which are rooted in theoretical analysis and methodological practice can claim such legitimation in Habermasian terms. In short, theorists of adult education do not sufficiently demonstrate the distinctive importance of adult education in a form which will stand up to theoretical and methodological scrutiny.
The discussion above demonstrates that the major problem for adult educators in achieving a Habermasian-informed theoretical base is the weak explanatory power of their interpretations. There are several probable reasons for this. The most probable reason, which has already been identified in this thesis, is the lack of theoretical background in the adult educators themselves. This affects the ability of adult educators to understand and engage with Habermas' ideas, and even more so to understand and engage with the kinds of critiques of Habermas outlined in Part Two. Others, like Brookfield (1993a) may be concerned not to cloud the importance of the practical aspects of communicative adult education learning with intimidatory or alienating abstract theorisation. For the more theoretically committed and informed adult educators like Collins and Welton, there is probably the consideration that Habermas' theory needs to be presented more accessibly for those practitioners without a strong, theoretical background; they may therefore temper their presentation of Habermas' theory to the North American audience's level of understanding. This interpretation is supported by the level of understanding of Habermas that Collins (1985; 1991), and especially Welton (1991; 1995), show in some areas of Habermas' philosophical and sociological theory, and in their understanding of the critical tradition and its theoretical sources generally. While probable however, this interpretation can exist only at the level of conjecture: there is no detailed theoretical or methodological account of Habermas' communicative project in their writings. The conclusion must remain that the important, substantive sociological and methodological basis to Habermas' communicative theory is not recognised by most adult education theorists, and is only partly understood or acknowledged by a few. The further point can be made that the understanding of Habermas' theory which does exist in adult education, and the debate around Habermas, exists primarily in the English-speaking world outside Britain, and particularly in North America; the adult education literature in Britain demonstrates little awareness of, or interest in, the relevance of Habermas to adult education theory at present.

If adult education is to use Habermas' work to influence and inform its theory successfully, it must demonstrate a fuller grasp of the Habermasian oeuvre and the major critiques of it. This will promote a greater understanding of the merits, but also the criticisms and problems of Habermas' theory. Chapter Eight shows that this may also suggest ways in which these criticisms might be challenged and the problems resolved. This fuller, critical understanding is essential to a valid Habermasian-informed theorisation of adult education. It is to the task of outlining what form such a theorisation might take that this thesis now turns.
PART FOUR

HABERMAS AND ADULT EDUCATION: THE WAY FORWARD
Chapter 14 - The Reconstruction of Adult Education Theory

Part Two of the thesis assesses the theoretical adequacy of Habermas' communicative project. This assessment demonstrates that Habermas' communicative paradigm possesses thematic and disciplinary-based weaknesses and omissions; these problem areas, within the disciplinary remit of this thesis, are identified and suggestions are put forward for resolving them. Nevertheless, it is asserted, Habermas' theory, as it stands, possesses sufficient theoretical quality and practical and normative relevance to satisfy the criteria of explanatory power and reach at acceptable levels.

Here, Habermas' theory passes the first test, proposed in the Introduction to the thesis, of providing a general, theoretically coherent social and historical analysis, an account of the development and dynamics of advanced industrial society, and the role and nature of its institutions. At this general theoretical level then, adult educators should be able to locate and explain the role of adult education in institutional and social terms. However, Part Three demonstrates that this is not the case. Most theorists of adult education have only a weak understanding of Habermas' theoretical analysis: the general theme of the pathologisation of instrumentalisation and the linguistically-based challenge of the communicative is recognised, but the more substantive anthropological, historical, psychological, sociological, political and philosophical analyses which inform these central motifs are understood less well, or not at all. Adult education theory then, does not pass this first test of being able to provide, at a sufficiently analytical level, a Habermasian-informed general theory which can account for the historical, social and institutional role of adult education.

The second test, identified in the Introduction, refers to the potential of Habermas' theory for interpreting and informing, and providing normative guidelines for, adult education theory, policy and practice. Here again, Habermas' theory possesses a relevance which has been recognised to some extent by adult educators. Part Three argues, however, that this recognition exists primarily at the level of the communicative teaching method and learning practice: there is a conflation of a generalised, low-level interpretation of Habermas' communicative theory with a normative, communicative adult education practice which demonstrates little recognition of the reconstructionist, interdisciplinary, macrotheoretical, and methodological features of the communicative theory, and their pertinence to adult education. Thus, in the normative context, adult educators' justification for the importance of their practice is made only on the relatively weak, mainly empirical grounds that this practice possesses communicative elements; this is not sufficient to claim theoretical, legitimatory status. Here then, theorists of adult education do not pass this second test: they do not demonstrate a sufficient analytical understanding of how, in explanatory or normative terms, Habermasian theory can be applied to adult education theory, policy and practice.

In sum, Part Two distinguishes and explains the important elements of Habermas' theory; it also identifies those areas where this theory must be strengthened. This examination is necessary to the demonstration that Habermas' theory has the explanatory, empirical and normative force to provide a basis for adult education, at the two analytical levels discussed above, and that this basis can be further
strengthened by improving aspects of Habermas' existing theory. Part Three demonstrates the limited extent to which the elements of Habermas' theory, which provide it with this explanatory, empirical and normative force, are recognised by adult educators, and applied to their theory and practice. The task of Part Four then, is to assess the extent to which these existing understandings of adult education can be 'reconstructed' into a more theoretically elaborated and coherent interpretation and application of Habermas' communicative theory.

We have seen that Habermas' three-level characterisation of the macrotheoretical, methodological and empirical provides a useful analytical framework through which we can understand and assess his communicative theory, and assess the extent to which theorists of adult education understand this theory. This analytical framework is also applied here; through this framework, this section of the thesis examines the extent to which adult education theory can be grounded in the Habermasian communicative project; through this, we can also determine the extent to which adult education may have a distinctive, communicative role in society.

1. Adult Education at the Empirical Level

Part Three asserts that adult education theory mainly draws from those aspects of Habermas' theory which can be related to practice. This partly reflects the lack of a theoretical background among many adult educators; more importantly, however, it reflects adult education's more traditional, practical emphasis. It is important to adult educators that a Habermasian-informed adult education theory does not just extol the abstract principles and discursive practice of communicative action but also demonstrates how communicative principles can be embedded, and communicative competence developed, in the teaching situation. Initially, this seems problematic. Habermas' distinction between universalistic, communicative principles and contextual, evaluative concerns, and thus his consistent refusal to prescribe concrete action, seems to exclude a theoretically-informed practice. This problem though, is partly resolved by the recognition that teaching can be informed by communicative values, principles and procedures; the actual practice, however, may take different forms. Thus, Collins states:

    Technique, though, is subordinated to practical emancipatory interests derived from rational discourse...What the theory of communicative action provides is access to a realm of discourse, nourished by aspirations to genuine participatory democratic action in which adult education practice and research can meaningfully participate. (1991, p. 30)

This "realm of discourse" may, arguably, take a range of forms: in the liberal school this includes Mezirow's (1981) perspective transformation, Brookfield's ((1993b) self-directed learning, and the interdisciplinary curriculum of Barnett (1990), which is informed by sociological and philosophical perspectives. The more radical interpreters of Habermas (Collins, 1991; Hart, 1986, Welton, 1991) argue that this discourse should be partly, or primarily, conducted through association with emancipatory social movements. This more radical concern is discussed further below.
Chapter Ten argues that both liberal and radical theoretical stances and teaching practices have their respective merits and problems, and that a position which combines both stances may be more representative of Habermas' position. This more accurately represents Habermas' concern to synthesise the traditional sociological interpretive frameworks of structure and action in TCA2, in his development of a communicatively informed practice. In adult education terms then, the more concretely grounded teaching practice, and realistic emancipatory understandings and strategies of the liberal adult educators, should be informed by the greater theoretical understanding and more structural approach of the radical adult educators.

Nevertheless, whether informed primarily by liberal or radical interests, this "realm of discourse" cannot take place in a curricular, institutional or social vacuum: in Habermasian terms, discourse is counterfactual - it should take place in unconstrained situations of equality and reciprocity. The objection levelled at Habermas, that these counter-factual conditions do not and cannot exist in advanced societies, also raises the question of how far adult education, particularly in its increasingly institutionalised form, can meet these conditions. The increasing pressure on adult educators to accredit and modularise their courses for curriculum and funding purposes, as Jarvis shows (1993), is an example of the constraints educators currently experience.

Most adult educators recognise, but do not consider this problem in any detailed manner. Collins (1991; in Welton, 1995) and Little (1991) are rare exceptions, providing examples of how these communicative values can be encouraged within educational institutions. In particular, Collins argues that the culture of education and educational institutions always ensures that there are places where communicative practice can be encouraged at the institutional level. Even under authoritarian managements, Collins asserts, lip service is paid to democratic values and practices; this provides the space for communicative dialogue. He states:

Thus there is a role for adult educators to create contexts within institutions where talking about values - what is educationally worthwhile - and continuing critical reflection on practice become acceptable. (1991, p. 79)

In initial education, Dale (1989) and Young (1989), respectively from radical and liberal viewpoints, also argue that education is characterised by a professional ethos and practice which provides academics and teachers with a degree of institutionalised insulation and autonomy, or what Dale refers to as "spaces and interstices" (p. 43), from both state and institutional direction. Duke (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995), from a non-Habermasian radical stance, argues that organisation theory has helped us understand more clearly how formal organisations function and change. This understanding can be applied to the university context, thus enabling adult educators to use their knowledge to encourage desirable change from within the institution; thus, organisations can be enabling as well as constraining. Duke states:

As our understanding of organisation development and the 'learning organisation' matures, there is every reason to hope that, with purpose, persistence and mutuality of effort, we can win back lost ground in our educational institutions and make some new gains too. (p. 260)
This institutional emphasis is supported by other radical adult educators. Indeed, it is ironic that, given their Marxist position, in apologetic tone, Allman and Wallis (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995) admit to attempting to develop radical practice within the formal institution of the university, and see only a limited role for adult educators outside the institutional context at present.

However, even if we discount the constraints and pressures of working within an institution, it is still questionable as to how far discourse can take place within the teaching situation. Blake (1995), from a liberal initial education viewpoint, makes the important distinction between communicative action and communicative discourse: the former is more concerned with developing mutual understanding on the basis of the acceptance of underlying validity claims; the latter involves the consideration and contestation of those claims. Communicative action does not exclude a critical, questioning attitude on the part of the learner; however, this questioning attitude does not necessitate discourse. Thus, for example, there is "a difference between asking for the justification of a claim and questioning whether the justification rests on valid background assumptions" (p. 361).

Blake criticises Young (1989) for confusing these two kinds of critical enquiry. However, the discussion of Young in Chapter Eleven shows that Young is aware of this difference, and sees initial education as preparing students, at a lower level of critical enquiry, for later adult discourse. Young's fault then is more of an imprecise use of the term "discourse". The same can also be said of many adult educators in their interpretations of Habermas; Mezirow (1989; 1991a) is an exception to this.

As Chapter Nine shows, Mezirow (1991a) recognises the counterfactual nature of discourse, that it is an ideal to strive for, in order to develop a more discursive practice, rather than one which can be achieved. This ideal is institutionalised in organisations and practices whose underlying validity claims are under conditions of constant questioning and justification. Blake (1995) also argues this. The major reason, he states, why discourse can rarely be achieved in the teaching context is that "a discursive exchange or a discourse is not coeval with a conversation" (p. 362). Thus, he argues, discourse can only take place in dialogues which are spatially and temporally extended; such dialogues are to be found in institutionalised form, in cultural and educational organisations, professions and practices, in academic disciplines and knowledge bases, where expert communities reside. Blake states:

Institutionalised discourse stands at the epistemic centre of modern society, and is constituted by the approximation of its conditions over time to an ideal speech situation...Certain value-laden practices, those of securing the ideal conditions of speech, are central to modern forms of knowledge, and thus have a central importance for us. To fail to understand this is to fail to understand the normative core of the modern world. (p. 363)

Here, we can refer to Habermas' important theme of the separation of the cultural value spheres of science, law and morality, and art, where the expert communities reside, from the lifeworld. Although these value spheres or communities have been instrumentalised, or colonised, to an extent, they still draw to some degree on the communicative basis of the lifeworld. Indeed, as Habermas argues, in PPP and in
MCCA, an important function of philosophy qua Habermasian theory is to mediate between these expert communities and the lifeworld; this is achieved by maintaining the communicative roots of these communities and demonstrating the continuing relevance of their discourses to the lifeworld. Giddens (in Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994) also identifies the importance of these expert communities to the advance of modernity, summing up their critical, reflective capacity as an 'institutional reflexivity' (p. 91).

Blake (1995) argues that it is this important recognition of the existence and role of institutionalised discourse which separates the Habermasian interpreter of education from other educational schools of thought such as neo-Marxists, traditionalists and progressive interpreters of education. Blake argues that these three schools of thought make the same mistake.

None draws a distinction between those social and material institutions which do foster rationality and those which do not....But for Habermas and for those who believe that an idea of ideal speech conditions is genuinely operative, there are institutions which, through their social organisation and its material embodiment, constitute and promote rationality rather than impede it. (p. 364)

Blake also argues that the institutions of higher education are particularly representative of this discourse because they are probably least tied to sectional interests. Initial education only participates in discourse in terms of its relation to higher education through the disciplinary nature of, and dialogical practices within, the curriculum (although, like Young, Blake accepts that schools can also play a preparatory role in developing more critical, rudimentary, discursive attitudes). Blake however, recognises that not all can undertake a university education. Thus, we must commit ourselves "not only to maintaining the independence of discourse institutions, but to maximising access to them and perhaps also to a proliferation of their forms" (1995, p. 365).

Blake argues further that the problem of expanding access to discourse institutions "suggests a much expanded role for continuing and other forms of adult education in securing a space for discourse" (p. 365). In other words, the wide range of forms adult education takes, its commitment to lifelong education, and the wide range of educational sites it offers, demonstrates the capacity to foster the advancement of communicative rationality or discourse in adults in a way that other institutions cannot offer.

Blake argues for this discourse role of adult education primarily on the grounds of its institutional flexibility and convenience. This role can be given more weight however, by turning to the second important aspect of Blake's argument, the discursive role of higher education, and Barnett's (1990) elaboration of this position. Chapter Eleven shows that Barnett echoes Habermas' NC account of the discursive university: the university is a repository of communicative values which are embodied in the curriculum, the critical, reflective nature of the academic dialogue, and the academic professional relationship. However, Barnett also argues that, while higher education is primarily institutionally embedded, it can also take place in other contexts. He states "As an idea, therefore, 'higher education' has an independence of
any institutional form it may take" (p. 202). This idea consists in essence of a critical, dialogical approach to the development and dissemination of forms of knowledge and understanding.

This possible institutional independence of the 'idea' of higher education, and its possible location in the adult education context, is manifested in the increasing institutional interdependence of adult, further and higher education institutions in Britain. A further manifestation of this blurring or integration of institutional roles, also recognised by Barnett, is the increasing number of adult students in universities. Indeed Barnett comments that "the students' maturity may affect the justifiable control that they might enjoy over the direction, pacing, evaluation and assessment of their own learning" (1990, p. 7). This recognises that the teaching of adults necessitates an emphasis on the more discursive, communicative practices that Barnett believes are currently being undermined.

This discussion of the positions of Blake and Barnett demonstrates that adult education can play an important role in promoting discourse in three ways. Adult education has access to a wider range of institutions, organisations and social spaces than that of higher education at both the levels of the systems and the lifeworld. Further, its practitioners are more familiar with, and experienced in, the dialogical methods and communicative relationships which underpin discourse. Finally, this institutional flexibility, and familiarity with the dialogical and communicative, enables adult education to foster the 'idea' of higher education within and without the university context. Indeed, if this role for adult education is accepted, one of its major empirical and theoretical ambiguities is resolved: it has been difficult to find a unifying common principle or theory which explains and informs the wide range and disparate nature of adult education institutions and practice in society. Now though, we can argue that it is the heterogeneous nature of adult education which enables it to become such a successful carrier and promoter of the discourse principle.

However, if adult education is to play this role, the question arises as to how far 'adult education' remains a meaningful term: the discussion above argues that adult and higher education are becoming, or should become in discourse terms, increasingly less distinguishable institutionally and conceptually. This debate has already been raised with reference to the distinction between initial and adult education. Young (1989) in initial education, and Brookfield (in Bright, 1989) in adult education, both argue that discursive potential and practice can reside at all educational levels, whereas Mezirow (1992) asserts that discourse is primarily an adult capacity. Griffin (in Bright, 1989) expresses his more radical, critical position in his argument that adult education is a descriptive, ideological and cultural concept rather than one which refers to a group or institution defined by distinctive and cross-cultural qualities. He states:

the efforts to distinguish adult education from schooling are a prime example of the attempt to elevate the 'commonsense' categories of 'classificatory' thinking to some kind of theoretical status...The attempt to construct universal categories of adulthood...is, from a critical theory perspective, an ideological rather than an authentically theoretical exercise. (p. 136)
This assertion can be challenged however. Certainly, in the context of institutional developments in education in Britain, referred to in Chapter Eleven, there is some justification for arguing that the distinction between the education of adults and higher education is diminishing. The discursive role for adult education suggested above indicates a similar diminution in conceptual terms also. However, this post-initial or post-compulsory educational sector of adult/higher education must be distinguished from the initial or compulsory sector. This difference exists at the communicative level, in Habermasian terms, as the post-initial sector can play a discursive role which initial education can not replicate. This does not mean that those who argue that children are capable of some kind of discourse are incorrect: Habermas’ extended theory of discourse, outlined in Chapter Seven, can be seen to satisfy this position, while not challenging those, like Mezirow, who argue for a distinctive adult discourse. Thus, pragmatic and ethical discourses might be appropriate respectively for younger and older students in initial education; nevertheless moral discourse requires more adult, post-conventional capacities. The difference between initial and adult education exists also at the empirical level because adult education has a much wider and more flexible institutional access across society.

The discussion above starts to demonstrate how we can locate adult education theoretically within Habermas’ project; this is as a possible important promoter of communicative values in society. However, this does not, yet, demonstrate the singular importance of adult education: other discourse institutions and organisations exist which perform a similar role. The importance of adult education here is justified mainly through its empirical role: it demonstrates the primarily contingent relation of adult education to society, based on a combination of institutional change, traditional practice, and flexibility and convenience. Griffin’s criticism of the lack of a theoretical justification for adult education then, is not fully answered here; the "authentically theoretical" grounds Griffin seeks have yet to be demonstrated.

2. Adult Education at the Methodological Level

At the methodological level a Habermasian-informed adult education theory involves two elements: a teaching practice which is informed by communicative theory, and the critical, reflective stance of the adult educators themselves to the interpretation, development and application of that theory. Part Three of the thesis argues that adult educators who base their teaching methods on Habermas’ communicative theory do demonstrate some level of understanding of Habermas’ methodology at the level of communicative practice. Thus, they attempt to develop a critical, reflective attitude in students which generates, or attempts to generate, some kind of liberation, whether in liberal-individual or radical-collective terms. However, adult educators do not recognise, to the same extent, the similar importance for such a critical, reflective attitude on their part. This would enable adult practitioners to recognise more clearly problems in their interpretation and application of Habermas’ theory. One important problem, which Griffin (1988) and Collins (1991) identify, is that this lack of critical reflection results in some adult educators using communicative theory to inform a more instrumentally-based teaching practice. This indicates a confused understanding of the paradigmatic basis of Habermas’ communicative theory. Adult
educators then, must critically examine their own paradigmatic assumptions, and the
theory and method this informs; if they do not do this, it is difficult to see how they
can encourage or develop successfully the critical, reflective attitude in those with
whom they work. Allman and Wallis (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995) sum this up
well.

Whether acknowledged or not, all forms of education rest on some
theory, or at least assumptions, of what it means to be a human being,
an ontology. They also rest on a theory of the origin and nature of
knowledge, an epistemology, which produces in its adherents the
acceptance of a particular relation to knowledge. (p. 20)

Part Three demonstrates that most adult educators who refer to Habermas' theory do
not recognise his epistemological and ontological stance, nor how this has developed
from a primarily cognitive interest-based to a communicative-based paradigmatic
emphasis. Collins (1991), and Welton, (1991; 1995) are partial exceptions here, but it
is only Young (1992) who demonstrates, in a detailed manner, the importance of this
paradigmatic understanding of Habermas' theory. Adult educators who do not possess
this understanding are not only less critically aware of their own communicative or
other presuppositions, but also are less likely to be able to understand and meet those
criticisms or challenges of their practice and theory which are informed by different
paradigms.

The correct Habermasian methodological approach then, involves a constant
engagement with other theories as well as a constant questioning of the Habermasian
theory and one's interpretation of it. This ensures that a Habermasian-informed adult
education theory can be constructed, consolidated, or, where necessary, modified.
British theorists of adult education, unlike at least some of their North American
counterparts, do not show this methodological awareness. Part One demonstrates
that, while the critical, Marxist-informed positions of Allman and Wallis, and similar
Marxist and radical adult educators, recognise the need to critically engage with
alternative theories of education, they singularly fail to do this with respect to
Habermas' theory or the interpretations of that theory by their North American and
other colleagues. Here then, the British theorists fail to conform to their own critical
prescriptions.

In sum, if adult educators are to reflect Habermas' methodological approach more
closely, they must adopt a more critical and reflexive attitude to Habermas' theory,
and their interpretation and application of that theory. They must also engage with
opposing theories in order to strengthen further their own theory and practice. As
Collins writes:

The contribution of social theories of action to an on-going
conversation about adult education as vocation is enhanced by
subjecting their assumptions and findings to critical assessment.
Ultimately, however, the nature and quality of practice emerging from
a vocation of adult education depend upon our own capacity to reflect
critically upon what we are and what we do as adult educators. (1991,
p. 56)
The above discussion demonstrates that an important factor in a more communicatively-advanced adult education must be that of the practitioner's critical, reflexive stance. But, this methodological element, while important to a Habermasian-informed approach, adds nothing in terms of the theoretical justification sought by Griffin (in Bright, 1989). Indeed, this methodological approach is an intrinsic and necessary part of the discursive principle, and the 'idea' of higher education, discussed above. This methodological awareness then, is necessary to, but not sufficient for, the demonstration of the singular, communicative role of adult education. This requires the demonstration of a theoretical or conceptual relationship between adult education and the communicative role; for this, we must turn to Habermas' macrotheory.

3. Adult Education at the Theoretical Level: the Possibility for Communicative Rationality in the Systems World

At the macrotheoretical level, education is central to Habermas' communicative project in a number of important respects; to demonstrate this it is useful first to summarise Habermas' macrotheoretical account again. The two core motifs of Habermas' project are the instrumentalisation of society, and the challenge to this instrumentalisation. Habermas identifies an increasing dominance of instrumentalisation in society, its institutions and disciplines such as the social sciences. Habermas describes this instrumentalisation sociologically through a social structure characterised by the two levels of the systems and lifeworld. There is an unequal interrelationship between the systems and lifeworld, in which the former is increasingly colonising the latter. The challenge to this instrumentalisation must come from the lifeworld: it must both combat this colonising by the systems, and foster communicative elements in the political-administrative and economic institutions of the systems world.

Habermas describes the development of the communicative aspects of society in historical-anthropological and psychological terms; these respectively explain the rational development of society and of the individual. The central dynamic behind the development of the communicative process at both levels is the learning process. Habermas argues that the highest communicative or rational level at both these social and biographical levels is the post-conventional, moral-cognitive attitude which is transcultural and discourse-oriented. The importance of this post-conventional level is explained through linguistic, philosophical and political theory.

At this general theoretical level then, the importance of the learning process is identified clearly. This learning dynamic occurs both at the level of the systems and lifeworld, respectively, primarily in strategic and communicative terms. In the strategic context, education, as an important institutional facilitator of learning, has a functional role which contributes to the development of efficiency and effectiveness in the economic and political institutions of the systems world. However, it is the communicative potential of learning in the systems world that we should be most interested in.

Few of Habermas' commentators from the social sciences or adult education discuss the important communicative role of the lifeworld, and of education, in the systems
world; indeed, Part Two shows that Habermas has been most strongly criticised by his academic colleagues for his apparent discrete representation of systems and lifeworld. It is accepted that this is partly the fault of Habermas in that he emphasises the systems intervention in the lifeworld in his theory; however, he does recognise that an interactive relationship between systems and lifeworld exists. It is important then to identify how, or in what arenas, communicative elements can be encouraged in the systems world, and what role education can play in this.

It is theorists of organisation, in particular, who are considering the role of communicative aspects of the systems world. Mouzelis (1992) argues that studies of economic and political organisations demonstrate that there are areas of organisational uncertainty where formal rules and the steering media are not sufficient; at these times communicative action or other non-systemic forms of coordination become necessary. Thus, he argues, the formal, systemic aspects form only one dimension in a complex, interactional field; they "can never eliminate the dispositional and situational dimensions of organisational action" (p. 275). The growing recognition of the relevance of Habermas' theory to the systems world is also demonstrated by Burrell's (1994) overview of how Habermas' theory is now being used by organisation theorists, and Chriss' (1995) more specific exploration of how Habermas' account of communicative competence and systematically-distorted communication is valuable to improving professional or business practice. These studies show that the usefulness and relevance of Habermas' communicative theory is being increasingly recognised by academics and practitioners in the economic and political institutions of the systems world; of course, the question must remain as to the extent to which this recognition is communicatively as opposed to instrumentally grounded.

This is a problem that also exists for adult education: Chapter Ten refers to Griffin's (1988) critique that critical thinkers such as Mezirow apply their "critical" practice to the needs of businesses as well as learners, in an instrumental rather than communicative fashion. Welton (1995) also identifies this problem, asserting that critical adult educators must be "brutally realistic" (pp. 151-52) in their recognition of the limited opportunities in the economic arena; nevertheless, the fostering of communicative values by adult education in the workplace should be encouraged where possible. Welton argues that adult education can play a larger and more successful role in the professions, which are less instrumentalised than commercial organisations, in developing communicative relationships between professionals and their clients. In general however, as a radical, critical theorist, he argues for a more fundamental rethink about the role of work, and how to bring it closer to the lifeworld. Hart (1992; in Welton, 1995a) takes this even further in her argument that society must recognise the importance of the productive and reproductive role of women, and the lifeworld values and practices they involve; thus "caring and mothering would have to be placed into a larger social, political and economic context" (1995a, p. 123). The role of adult education here is to encourage this recognition of "motherwork" through the identification of the interconnections between work, education and family that this concept informs.

These are abstract and utopian proposals. In Welton's case, this at least partly reflects Habermas' own undertheorisation of the communicative elements in, or possibilities
of the systems world. Of course, given the instrumentalist, capitalist nature of the economic institutions, and the instrumental role the government accords adult education in the economy, the extent to which adult education can foster communicative, democratic practices is questionable at present. However, this does not mean the possibility does not exist. In Britain some firms are offering educational opportunities to their workers in the recognition that education, whether oriented vocationally or in terms of leisure interests, improves the quality of life of their workers; this may also enhance the workers' value, or their commitment, to their employer. Thus, strategic, but also communicative, values are involved here. The Ford Educational Development and Assistance scheme (Kelly, 1992) is an example of this. It is also important to recognise the role of adult education in the trade union movement here. For the last fifteen years the unions have sustained strong attacks by the British New Right governments, which have enhanced the instrumental characteristics, and weakened the communicative opportunities, of the union movement (McIroy in Mayo and Thompson, 1995). Nevertheless, both historically (Kelly, 1992) and to an extent still currently (Forrester in Mayo and Thompson, 1995), the relationship of adult education and the unions demonstrates a communicative, liberatory capacity in the economic subsystem.

Furthermore, in Habermasian theoretical terms, we must recognise Habermas' belief in the overall advancement of communicative rationality in societal terms; thus, the current government concern with the instrumental ends of efficiency and effectiveness may be seen as an aberration which will resolve itself over time, to some extent, as communicative elements attempt to assert, or reassert, themselves. Indeed Hutton (1995) argues that this New Right instrumentalism and "short-termism" is at its most aberrant in Britain; other economies, such as those of Germany and Japan, are still able to pursue capitalist ends while fostering communicative elements such as degrees of equality, reciprocity and cooperation. This can be seen in Germany's industrial relations framework and Japan's commercial and financial network structure. Perhaps an early indication of this process of reassertion of communicative values in Britain is the political and academic acclaim for Hutton's powerful and seminal critique of the British New Right's ideology and the instrumental policies it has engendered, and his proposals for a "stakeholder" capitalist society, which asserts the need for more democracy, cooperation and accountability in the systems world.

Habermas' recognition of the lifeworld elements in the systems world can be seen more clearly in his account of the development and role of the political institutions. Most adult educators do not acknowledge or discuss this account. Collins (1991) and Welton (1993) are exceptions to this; however, they present the state in the primarily negative context of its colonising role, asserting that the main activity of radical adult education, working with new social movements, is to challenge and oppose this colonisation.

Griffin (1987) and Jarvis (1993) present a more sophisticated interpretation of the relationship of adult education and the state; indeed the former argues that a social policy perspective may provide an analytical framework for the theorisation of adult education. These interpretations recognise that the state can have a positive role at times, such as in promoting economic and political rights. This more positive face of
the state can be demonstrated through historical examples which show how the state has played a role in encouraging or establishing more democratic, liberatory, types of adult education. Jarvis (1993) points to Denmark's establishment of the folk high school movement in the nineteenth century to preserve Danish culture. He states: "Here then, adult education functioned in close relationship with the state to protect civil society" (1993, p. 14). Jarvis also identifies the state's willingness to fund Study Circles in other Scandinavian countries.

In the British context, Jarvis notes that the state obliged local authorities to provide liberal adult education after the Second World War; Charnley and Stock (in Molyneux et al., 1988) argue, however, that the 1944 Act's ambiguity on the nature of this obligation meant that what adult education provision emerged was "in spite of this legislation rather than because of it" (p. 26). Perhaps more important in British history this century then, is the state's recognition of the importance of adult education which was demonstrated in the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction and the 1973 Russell Reports outlined in Chapter One. It is perhaps now ironic that British radical adult educators such as Jackson (in Mayo and Thompson, 1995), although critical of the liberal emphasis of the latter Report, refers to its concern to promote a range of educational opportunities for adults on a lifelong, non-vocational basis, with nostalgia.

Nevertheless, for both Griffin and Jarvis, the balance in the state-adult education relationship remains a negative one. Thus, while Griffin (1987) recognises the benefits that welfare provision, including adult education, has brought to the working class, he argues that these improvements have been primarily conceded in order to have a de-radicalising effect on the class struggle. Equally, Jarvis (1993) argues that in liberal, pluralist societies the state may at times act in the interests of the people, but doubts the state's willingness to let adult education play a more critical role. Thus, Jarvis states:

> it is to be questioned whether adult education would continue to be provided by the state if it produced critically aware people who sought to oppose the governing elite to any extent. (1993, p. 80)

This negative view of the state though, is not an accurate reflection of Habermas' representation of the communicative role and possibilities of the advanced welfare state; it is also not, it is argued below, an accurate reflection of adult education's possible relationship with the state. Habermas' view of the welfare state is a more ambivalent one than adult education theorists recognise. Habermas argues in TCA2 and NC that the social welfare state represents the highest level of juridification so far: despite its capitalist-legitimating and lifeworld-colonising role, the welfare state also represents a legal, moral and democratic advance in terms of the universalistic principles underlying the legal rights and entitlements of its citizens. In sum then, the welfare state possesses both communicative and instrumental features.

Further, this earlier ambivalent view of the state has become more positive in more recent works. Thus, Habermas demonstrates a clear approval of the communicative values underlying Western constitutions in NC; in PF Habermas extends this to approval of the communicative procedures underlying modern formal political institutions such as parliament and the judiciary.
As the institutionalization of legal proceedings, a piece of 'existing reason' can be found in the established rules and practices of opinion-and will formation, from the parliamentarian rules of procedure to the organizational sections of the Basic Law. (1994a, p. 110)

However, Habermas' most positive affirmation of the role of the state is found in BFN. Here Habermas is concerned to demonstrate how modern law, and the state, can gain compliance through sanctions or power, yet also justify itself through the acceptance of the validity of the norms underlying the law, and thus its authority; in short he wants to explain how valid law, and a legitimate state, is possible. Thus, Habermas states in his "Postscript" to BFN:

The argument developed in "Between Facts and Norms" essentially aims to demonstrate that there is a conceptual or internal relation, and not simply an historically contingent association, between the rule of law and democracy. (1996, p. 449)

Habermas explains this by developing his discourse principle further by distinguishing between the moral and the democratic. Habermas argues now that moral discourse, characterised by universalistic reasoning, is not the only source of democratic legitimacy or validity. In the legal context, a democratic discourse characterised by a popular sovereignty which is guaranteed by basic rights is more relevant: "In assuming a legal shape, the discourse principle is transformed into a principle of democracy" (1996, p. 455). The law only draws its legitimacy from the self-determination of its citizens: citizens should always be able to understand themselves as authors of laws to which they are subject as addressee, they have taken part in a discursive procedure which recognises their right to be part of that procedure and to influence the making of law. Thus, the principle of democracy lies at another level of discourse than the moral principle. Habermas states in BFN:

Whereas the moral principle operates at the level at which a specific form of argumentation is internally constituted, the democratic principle refers to the level at which interpenetrating forms of argumentation are externally institutionalized. (1996, p. 110)

This external institutionalization consists of the formal political institutions of the state, and the public spheres in civil society through which citizens exercise their rights and influence the formal political institutions. What is important here is that Habermas now presents an explicitly positive view of the state as the major guarantor of the citizen's rights. Thus Habermas now accords the state, rather than the NSMs or other institutions of the public sphere, the greater role in fostering and protecting the communicative process. He argues that the institutions of the constitutional state have two main functions.

Specifically such institutions must accomplish two things. On the one hand, they must enable the communicative power of a rationally formed will to emerge and find binding expression in political and legal programs. On the other hand, they must allow this communicative power to circulate through society via the reasonable application and administrative implementation of legal programs so
that it can foster social integration through the stabilization of expectations and the realization of collective goals. (1996, p. 176)

In sum, Habermas asserts: "The institutions of the constitutional state are supposed to secure an effective exercise of the political autonomy of socially autonomous citizens" (p. 176).

This argument for the increased communicative role of the state also involves a shift in emphasis in political themes in Habermas' earlier works. Thus, Habermas' legitimation crisis thesis in LC argues that that the legitimacy of the state relies on its ability to maintain capitalism through the fostering of civil and familial-vocational privatistic motivations in the lifeworld. This has changed in BFN to a legitimacy of the state which relies primarily on the existence of citizenship rights in the public sphere. Also, while Habermas returns in BFN to the institutional emphasis of STPS in his concept of a democratic public sphere, this institutional emphasis now sees the role of the public sphere less in a challenging, oppositional role, but more in terms of encouraging, and providing the legitimate basis for, the democratic, communicative elements of the political institutions and modern law.

Habermas' discussion of the increased role of the state in BFN exists at the national level. However, elsewhere, Habermas also argues that this communicative potential of the state exists at more global systemic levels. Thus, he argues in PF for increased alliances between states at a range of levels including that of Europe:

Only if the forces of democratic constitutional states can be bound together into larger political unities such as a European Union...only then does the chance still exist that citizens can...assume influence upon the development of worldwide systemic operations through their own public spheres and their own democratic conduct. (1994a, p. 165)

Although, as we have seen, most theorists of adult education do not explore the relationship between adult education and the national state, there is an increasing discussion of the impact of the European Union on adult education. Field (1996) provides a useful overview of this debate. Field criticises the inability of the European Union to match its grand ideals of a learning society informed by lifelong principles to its policies which are more instrumentally and vocationally-oriented; this reflects the ambivalence Habermas identifies in the national welfare-state, in his earlier works. Thus Field states:

In so far as there is an increasing congruence between the adult continuing education systems of the member states, this has arisen less because of any coordinated policy effort than because the public education services of all advanced nations face similar and powerful forces. (1996, p. 24)

Nevertheless Field also recognises that the European Union has helped bring adult education and training into the mainstream of social policy in Europe; it has also forced the British and other governments to widen the social, economic and educational rights of European citizens. Here then we see the European political administration's capacity to extend rights in the nation states. Meehan (1993), in her detailed, critical examination of the nature of European citizenship, documents the
extension of these rights. She also argues that the extension of democratic rights in Europe can be achieved further through a change of emphasis in the European Union's principle of subsidiarity. This would emphasise the role of sub-national civil society associations at local and regional levels, either within a nation or across nations, rather than the sovereign rights of nation-states. The arguments of these commentators on the European political and educational influence support Habermas' extension of his analysis of the state to the European level. There are democratic, communicative principles at the level of the European political system which are embodied in its legal and political institutions and procedures; the further extension of these principles, however, requires an extension of communicative practice in the civil society, or the public spheres of the lifeworld, at national, supra-national and sub-national levels.

The discussion above demonstrates that, in Habermasian terms, the political sector of the systems world possesses communicative, liberatory elements both in theory and empirically. These elements may take the general form of citizenship rights; more specifically, in educational terms, they may encourage or foster adult educational provision, and democratic, educational practice. However, Habermas argues in BFN that this political sector can only be legitimated by communicative, discursive procedures in the public sphere. This may provide a role for adult education to influence the state from below, in contrast to the existing situation where the state influences adult education from above. To investigate this further, we now turn to the role of adult education in the lifeworld.

4. Adult Education at the Theoretical Level: the Development of Rationality in the Lifeworld

In TCA2 Habermas identifies the structural components of the lifeworld as those of culture, society and personality which respectively perform the functions of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. These functions occur at two levels. The first level, outlined in CES, is the phenomenological world of background assumptions embedded in language and culture which we are born into and take for granted most of the time. At this more phenomenological level the cultural-linguistic background is reproduced: members of a society participate in a cultural tradition, internalise norms and develop individual and social identities. These are generally unquestioned; however, Habermas argues that disturbances of these functions will generate a challenge to the linguistic value claims underlying them; these are respectively truth, rightness and truthfulness, which relate to the external world, the normative world and the social world.

In TCA2 Habermas focuses on a second level of the lifeworld; this is a more sociological account which recognises the structural differentiation of the three functions of the lifeworld, as modernity progresses, in the form of the cultural value spheres of science, morality and law, and art, and the institutions of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialisation. TCA2 details the increasing colonisation of the family and initial education, which are primarily institutions of socialisation, through the penetration of the lifeworld by the welfare state; Habermas also describes the increasing rationalisation, and separation from the lifeworld, of the cultural value spheres. Nevertheless, he argues, these institutions and spheres still...
possess communicative functions or possibilities. Institutions like the family embody communicative action, the continuation of the lifeworld processes, and the unquestioning acceptance of the value claims which underlie them. However, other institutions, like education in its post-initial form, and the expert communities of the value spheres, also embody communicative discourse. Here, we return to the arguments of Blake (1995) and Giddens (in Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994) who assert that, in that these discursive institutions generate and develop their expertise and knowledge on the basis of dialogue and critique, they are also carriers and promoters of discourse, in spite of whatever instrumental, systems-based interests and values may constrain them. This discursive capacity refers to the capacity to question and examine value claims, particularly those which assert the supremacy of the value of the systems world, or attempt to challenge the lifeworld's own communicative, validity basis. Barnett's (1990) account of the communicative potential of the university, despite the sociological and epistemological undermining of the latter, is a good example of this colonising-challenging capacity.

Through Habermas' account of the rationalisation of the lifeworld, our primarily empirically-justified role of adult education can now take on more theoretical substance. Thus, the proposed communicative or discursive role of adult education is not one which exists primarily as a fortunate empirical combination of flexibility of practice and setting, and institutional changes in the post-initial sector. The development and role of, and current problems of, adult education can be explained theoretically, respectively through Habermas' account of the structural differentiation of the lifeworld, and the increasing colonisation of the lifeworld by the economic and political sub-systems. Further, adult education can also be grounded or justified theoretically, to an extent, by the need to oppose this colonisation or instrumentalisation of communicative values. As Welton (1995) states of Habermas' theory:

His model of system and lifeworld and manner of theorizing roles provides critical adult educators with a normative and theoretical frame for their practice in a complex and differentiated society...the fundamental role of adult educators is to preserve the communicative infrastructure of the lifeworld and extend communicative action into state or economic institutions. (pp. 155-156)

The communicative, discursive role of adult education then, particularly in the more post-initial context discussed above, can now be grounded in both theoretical and normative terms. However, although this explanation demonstrates, in more theoretical terms, the communicative desirability and usefulness of adult education qua post-initial education, it still does not demonstrate its necessity or intrinsic importance - except to the already committed. As Part One argues, this theoretical legitimation of the communicative character of adult education is particularly important at a time when adult education is becoming increasingly instrumentalised in a New Right political climate. For this theoretical legitimation, and for a further theoretical grounding generally to adult education, we must turn to the second major theoretical motif of Habermas' theory, that of the ontogenetic-phylogenetic schema and its dialectical relationship in the development of rationality.
The history of adult education shows that it has had a role in the development of rationality at the phylogenetic, social level. Kelly (1992) and Johnson (in Lovett, 1988) provide historical accounts, respectively of adult education institutions and organisations from their earliest days, and of radical, working class educational practice in the last two centuries, which show how adult education has contributed to, and has been influenced by, this rational development at the level of society. Indeed, radical adult educators continue to argue that the main role of adult education, primarily through its work with NSMs, should be to identify and help influence the emancipatory, rational trends in society. At the same time, at the ontogenetic level, the traditional practice of much adult education generally has been to help develop the moral, autonomic, rationality of the individual, whether in liberal-individual (Brookfield, 1987; Lawson, 1979) or collective-social (Collins, 1991; Welton, 1991) terms.

Historically then, adult education is perceived to have a liberatory role both in social and individual terms. Here, by interpreting adult education's role from within Habermas' rational, developmental framework, we can add further theoretical support for the communicative role of adult education. But contingency remains: this framework demonstrates the desirability of this rational-development role of adult education, and can locate this function at both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels; it does not, however, demonstrate that this rational development would not be able to take place, or would be limited, without adult education. For the missing, theoretical-legitimatatory dimension that this requires, we must look at the ontogenetic aspect of Habermas' rational-developmental theory in more detail.

Habermas' theory of rational development at the ontogenetic level is informed primarily by the sociological reconstructionism of Mead, the psychological theory of Kohlberg, and the linguistic and philosophical interpretation of Habermas. Essentially this argues that individuals develop through a progression of moral and cognitive stages until they reach the post-conventional, discursive stage. The significance of this is that this stage can only be reached when individuals have progressed cognitively and reflectively through the earlier developmental stages to the extent where they are able to adopt a moral stance informed by trans-cultural, universalistic principles. This post-conventional capacity, because it is the culmination of a psychological, emotional, experiential and cognitive development, is primarily an adult one. In Habermasian macrotheoretical terms then, we can argue that only or primarily adults are able to understand and foster discursive values. Here again then, we can challenge Griffin's argument (in Bright, 1989) that adulthood, and thus adult education, is a social and cultural construct: Habermas' theory proposes moral-communicative and cognitive-psychological grounds on which we can argue that adulthood is ontologically and epistemologically distinct from childhood; thus a discursively and andragogically-informed adult education has a distinct role at the post-conventional stage.

This role does not, however, exist only in terms of the development of individual rationality. Habermas does not see the ontogenetic development in linear, but in dialectical terms: the communicative-rational development of society and individual are mutually dependent on each other. This also makes sense in practical, social terms: adults are more likely to attain the post-conventional stage in a more advanced
and democratic form of modernity; equally, society is more likely to develop on communicative lines if at least some of its members have attained the post-conventional stage. Here, we have a simple, but logically necessary, interactive relationship. Habermas and Kohlberg recognise that this post-conventional stage is partly counter-factual, in that many adults have not reached, and may not reach, this stage. Nevertheless, given the fact that advanced societies are underpinned by constitutional law, and characterised by social welfarism, we can argue that those individuals and institutions responsible for formulating and instituting the universalistic principles informing these developments must possess the post-conventional capacity.

This has clear implications for a role for adult education which extends beyond the rational advancement of the individual; this role is to contribute also to the communicative, democratic advancement of society at the wider institutional and social levels. Like the ontogenetic role, given the dialectical relationship outlined above, this wider, social and political role can also be justified on Habermasian, theoretical grounds. In this dual role for adult education we again see the importance, in Habermasian terms, of integrating the liberal and radical schools of adult education. However, whereas the former, more liberal-based, ontogenetic role can be fulfilled primarily within the formal, institutional context, the latter concern with the social and political role cannot. To explore this wider role of adult education, we must return to Habermas' interest in the public sphere in the lifeworld.

Part Three of the thesis demonstrates that most liberal educators do not consider this wider role of adult education, except in general terms. However, radical adult educators like Collins (1991) argue that adult educators can "extend their role beyond the institution by supporting community-based emancipatory initiatives" and thus "establish connections with social change movements in the wider community" (p. 111). Welton (1993), in particular, identifies the primary role of adult education in terms of working with, and supporting, new social movements. NSMs are seen as part of the lifeworld: they are based on communicative values, organised on communicative principles, struggle against the colonising tendencies of the state, and may try to promote communicative values in the systems world. Given this, these radical theorists argue that NSMs possess the strongest emancipatory potential. This view of the communicative possibilities of the NSMs, while reflecting Habermas' account of the role of NSMs in TCA2 and elsewhere, presents an over-celebratory interpretation that is problematic.

These problems have been identified in the previous chapter, but their significance is enlarged on here. Holford (1995) argues that the positive affirmation of NSMs ignores the fact that both in terms of their aims, and internal ethos and organisation, NSMs do not always demonstrate the universalistic, liberatory values the radicals claim. Thus, NSMs are usually associated with the political left, but this ignores the fact "that many of the most significant social movements of our times are, on the contrary, movements of reaction and intolerance - as the recent rise of ethnic and fundamentalist movements in Europe and Asia demonstrates" (p. 97). This, of course, is the reason for Habermas' cautious approval of NSMs: although some NSMs may also contain universalistic features, he asserts that many contain primarily particularistic characteristics. It may be, of course, that Collins and Welton do
recognise the problematic or ambiguous nature of many NSMs. However, this again can only be conjecture: the fact is that they do not acknowledge Habermas' concern about NSMs; this demonstrates their lack of a critical, reflexive stance to their own position in this respect.

Two other consequences for adult education arise from this celebratory position of NSMs, as it is presented especially by Welton (1993). Adult education as an institution is under-emphasised here; the liberatory, communicative role lies primarily with the NSMs. Thus, paradoxically, while an argument for extending the role of adult education can be made in the wider society, an argument for reducing the role of adult education at the more institutional level could also be put forward. Further, other institutions of the public sphere, which may have communicative potential, and may be capable of relationships with adult education, are ignored. These assumptions are understandable given that Habermas, despite his ambivalence towards NSMs, assigns them the major emancipatory role in his communicative theory. However, his most recent work BFN demonstrates a clear shift in this position which both widens his account of the public sphere, and has important implications for the wider, social and political role of adult education. It is in this developed analytical account of the political features of the systems world and the lifeworld that the theoretical and singular justification for adult education, in the modified form discussed above, may be found.
Part Three demonstrates that theorists of adult education who refer to Habermas' work have shown little interest in Habermas' descriptions of the political structure of society. Thus, his account of the public sphere, and of the welfare state, and the communicative values and systems of rights underlying it, have been ignored. The only aspect of Habermas' political account to be acknowledged, and 'celebrated' is the new social movement - and this is only recognised by the radical interpreters of Habermas. The major reason for this lies in the fact that these theorists have not familiarised themselves with the Habermasian oeuvre, and so have not recognised the potential importance of Habermas' political account to their theory. Another probable reason, however, is the abstract, general or ambivalent presentation of these political aspects of society by Habermas. This, however, is no longer the case: BFN brings Habermas' account of the political structure of modernity to the centre stage, and in a more affirmative and detailed manner than in previous works. Thus, White states: "Habermas's detailed elaboration of his discursive, deliberative model constitutes a major contribution to the debates in contemporary democratic theory" (1995, p. 13). This model also makes an important contribution to the theorisation of adult education which this thesis is developing.

1. **Adult Education and Rights**

In TCA2 Habermas cites the role of NSMs in the "new conflicts arising on the seams of the systems and lifeworld" (1987c; p. 395). In BFN, however, Habermas argues that modern law also occupies this place: modern law is situated between lifeworld and system because, while informed by positivist or purposive-rational rules, and while not free from possible interference by the formally organised systems of politics and economy, it is still morally grounded through the discourse-based procedures which inform it. In sum, Habermas argues, law mediates between the philosophical claims for justification, of the lifeworld, and the sociological accounts of institutionalisation, primarily in the systems world.

Habermas argues then, that discursive democracy is characterised by the tension between the facticity of state power and the justificatory norms which legitimate this power; this tension is sustained through a continual interplay between a multiplicity of public spheres in civil society, and a range of formal political institutions. Thus, Habermas writes:

> Strictly speaking, this communicative power springs from the interactions between legally institutionalized will-formation and culturally mobilised publics. The latter for their part find a basis in the associations of a civil society quite distinct from both state and economy alike. (1994b, p.10)

BFN then, marks Habermas' return to his earlier concern with the institutional role of the public sphere in STPS; however, this is a return to a more expanded and institutionalised notion of the public sphere and a more flexible understanding of its
relation to the state. This reformulation of the nature and influence of the public sphere offers a role to adult education which does not consist solely of its relationship with NSMs. To understand this role we have to look at Habermas' increased emphasis on rights in his recent work.

Part Two describes how Habermas' refusal to prescribe the "good life", or ethical practice, has generated much debate and criticism. This thesis supports this criticism in its assertion that there are necessary, stronger "good life" implications in Habermas' communicative theory, despite his later modifications to his discourse theory, than he has been willing to recognise. Fundamental among these is the notion of rights. Although Habermas refers to public and private rights as being essential to advanced social welfare states from STPS on, he does not elaborate on these or give them any strong emphasis. Critical supporters of Habermas (Benhabib 1994; Cohen and Arato, 1994) have argued, however, that a stronger conception of rights is necessary to a Habermasian communicative society, and the legitimation of post-conventional law. In recent writings on politics (1994b; 1996) Habermas now seems to accept this argument.

Habermas argues that previous political theories of democracy and rights have not been able to solve the conflict between private and public rights. Liberal, Kantian-influenced theories have given priority to individual, private rights over collective rights, while the more communitarian and republican theories, influenced by Rousseau, have emphasised public rights. Habermas criticises these two kinds of theory from his communicative position by arguing that they are both subjectivist, respectively in individual and collective-social terms. Instead, Habermas proposes an intersubjective, political theory of deliberative or discursive democracy, a proceduralist paradigm, which asserts the "equi-primordiality" of private and public rights. Essentially, this argues that the conditions for discourse in the public arena cannot be established if individual rights which allow citizens to establish, and participate, in discourse situations, or choose not to do so, do not exist. Thus, Habermas states in the "Postscript" to BFN:

> without the classical rights of liberty that secure the private autonomy of legal persons, there is also no medium for legally institutionalizing those conditions under which citizens can first make use of their civic autonomy. (1996, p. 455)

In BFN Habermas identifies five categories of basic rights which are essential to modern constitutions. The most fundamental rights are individual, legal, political and civil rights; to these Habermas adds social rights in the recognition that these provide the necessary social and material conditions to the exercise of these other rights. These rights guarantee public autonomy, the right to participate in the political process. They also guarantee private autonomy, the right not to participate; this is necessary to the unconstrained and voluntary nature of the discourse process. Habermas argues that these rights are essential to the moral legitimation of law, and the democratic principle.

The principle of discourse can assume the shape of a principle of democracy through the medium of law only insofar as the discourse principle and the legal medium interpenetrate and develop into a
system of rights that brings private and public autonomy into a relation of mutual presupposition. (1996, p. 128)

However, Habermas, although he describes the general characteristics of these rights, does not dictate their contents: these are not fixed or determinate but must be developed in a politically autonomous manner by citizens in the context of their own particular traditions and history. Here then, Habermas continues, if in less rigid form, the distinction between questions of justice and the good life established in MCCA.

It is in the centrality of the notion of rights to Habermas' communicative society that the importance of adult education can again be seen. A core feature of adulthood in modern democratic societies is that adults are citizens with certain rights and responsibilities. This distinguishes them from school students in particular. As Thompson (1980) asserts adult education is not so subordinate to the dominant system of values as initial education because it is concerned with mature individuals with political rights and life experiences which make them more likely to challenge and question the existing values of society. Thus, Thompson asserts: "it is in this difference that the challenge to education and cultural hegemony can be mounted" (1980, p. 27). It is also in this essential difference, the characteristic of adult learner as citizen, that further theoretical justification for the role of adult education can be found. This consists in a relationship between adult education and the public sphere which contributes to the dialectical ontogenetic-phylogenetic advancement of rationality and democracy.

Adult education, in both an educational and political context, can help adult learners qua citizens in their attempts both to attain the post-conventional stage, and thus advance their own rationality, and to contribute to the advancement of society's level of democracy and rationality. Chambers (in White, 1995), asserts that the discursive procedure necessary to Habermas' deliberative democracy is intrinsically educational.

A discursively formed public opinion can represent a process of Bildung or education in which citizens build better foundations to their opinions through discursive interaction. (p. 238)

However, she also recognises that this opinion-forming may need some help. Adult education can contribute to this process, particularly for those who may have to develop their skills and understanding if they are to play an effective part in the discursive process. This role is one that Habermas does not seem to have considered; it is, however, important if discourse is to be open to all on relatively equal terms, and people can exercise their rights equally. In this sense adult education could be asserted as a civil right, or important to the promotion of civil rights: it can facilitate access to discourse on more equal terms through its educational function, thus enhancing the individual or the organisation's capacity to influence the political process. All who wish to, then, should be allowed access to adult education in this educational qua political role; this access can only be guaranteed by legal recognition of the political contribution adult education can make to the democratic process.

However, this notion of adult education as a right, or important to rights, can be extended further. The discussion above primarily refers to civil and political rights, the right to be recognised as a citizen and to have the opportunity and capacity to voice political views and influence political decision-making. However, as
Habermas recognises, these rights can only be exercised fully if they are supported by social rights. Social rights primarily refer to the right to the opportunities and support the welfare state offers to ensure the conditions necessary to the exercise of the other rights. This provision should include adult education. Jarvis (1993) notes that the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education is seen as a human right; however, he continues, it is not a social or citizenship right until granted by the state. Although this right has been granted to adult education in other countries, in particular in Scandinavia, it has not been granted in Britain; the discussion on the state in the previous chapter shows that the right to adult education is not constitutionally guaranteed nor is its provision or form explicitly defined. Two attempts to provide a legally-guaranteed adult education informed to some extent by communicative, democratic principles, in the form of the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction and the 1973 Russell Reports, have failed.

State recognition of adult education as a social right is necessary to the thesis of the interrelationship of adult education and its educational qua political role which is advanced here. In other words adult education as a civil right, or as a facilitator of civil rights, cannot be offered to all, regardless of income or background, unless it is also a social right. This does not mean, of course, that adult education cannot play a political role without this constitutional recognition. The historical studies of Kelly (1993) and Johnson (in Lovett, 1983), referred to in the previous chapter, indicate this is not the case. Equally, Jarvis (1993) cites many examples, perhaps most notably the Highlander Folk School in the USA, where adult education has played a political role which challenges the state. Indeed, Cohen and Arato (1994) argue that civil disobedience is the "litmus test of democracy" because it "presupposes that, ultimately, the principles of rights and of democratic legitimacy have their locus first and last in the public and private spaces of a vital civil society" (p. 694).

Nevertheless, the granting of the status of social right to adult education would give legal recognition to, and provide the material resources for, the important role adult education can play in the advancement of a democratic society.

Of course, it can be argued that once the state does give adult education formal status, this increases the former's control over the latter through the states' control over funding, and over the form and direction adult education takes. This might lead to the further instrumentalisation of adult education, particularly in the bureaucratic form described by Jarvis (1993). As we have seen in the previous chapter, Jarvis, although recognising examples where the state has fostered, or at least not opposed, the development of democratic practices, remains sceptical about how far the state would continue to provide adult education if it helped generate critically aware people who opposed the state. However, Habermas' theory of the legitimatory basis of the state, which he has revised from his earlier account in LC, and which is described in the preceding chapter, answers these criticisms. Essentially, the legitimacy of the state in Habermas' revised theory relies primarily on the existence of citizenship rights in the public sphere. Habermas now states:

legitimation problems cannot be reduced to the inefficiency of administrative steering. Legitimation deficits result from disturbances in the democratic genesis of law, regardless of how such problems
might be bound up with the effects of unsolved steering problems.
(1996, p. 429)

The democratic state then, is only legitimated by discourse in the public sphere which
gives the state both its legal, sanctioning powers and its moral, legitimatory authority.
This discourse can only take place if basic rights are guaranteed. Once formally
guaranteed, the attempt to remove or constrain rights, such as the proposed social
right of adult education, could lead to "disturbances in the democratic genesis of law",
or the public sphere, which would diminish the legitimacy of the state, and thus be
potentially threatening to the state. Such "disturbances", and threats to the legitimacy
of the state, are taking place currently in France and Germany where long-standing
social and economic rights are under attack by governments concerned to meet the
economic conditions necessary to the plans for a European single currency.

In sum, the discussion above proposes that adult education possesses an intrinsic
educational, and social and political role, in Habermas' communicative society; this
demonstrates that adult education could be very important, if not essential, to the
advancement of a communicative, democratic society. Of course, this proposed
connection between education and democracy is not new: this thesis shows that most
adult educators, of whatever school, are concerned to demonstrate the contribution of
education and adult education to a more democratic, emancipated society. However,
these educationalists have advanced this connection in primarily pragmatic terms.
This thesis, however, demonstrates that there is a conceptual connection between
adult education and democracy which is internal to, and can be justified by,
Habermasian theory; this is not recognised by adult educators. Habermas' extended
theory of rights, and its relationship to democracy and the democratic principle,
demonstrates a clear role for adult education that adult educators can argue for on
theoretically-justified grounds.

2. Adult Education and the Public Sphere

A final task is to identify those arenas in the public sphere in which adult education
can play the roles suggested above. There are two reasons for this. First, as discussed
in Chapter Thirteen, adult educators are traditionally concerned that any theory of
adult education should have clear indications for practice. Secondly, this prevents the
criticism of formalism and abstraction that has been levelled at Habermas' work,
albeit not always correctly, from also being levelled at the adult education
theorisation of that work which is proposed here. In other words, the relationship
between theory and practice in a Habermasian-informed adult education theory must
be clear and institutionally defined. Habermas states in his preface to BFN that he
hopes the text will "refute the objection that the theory of communicative action is
blind to institutional reality" (1996, p.xl). Similarly, the relatively abstract role of
adult education so far described is demonstrated here to have concrete, institutional,
educational and political applications.

Welton (1995) provides an effective overview of the possible roles of adult education
in the political sphere. Welton (1995) proposes a "developmental citizenship" which
involves:
The emergence of the well-informed or activated citizen, whose education through participation spirals outward, reaching to new levels of political knowledge and competency (p. 154)

Welton draws strongly on Cohen and Arato (1994) in his argument that critical adult education should encourage this developmental citizenship through three types of intervention in the political arena of state and public sphere. These are: the politics of inclusion, the bringing in of new actors into political activity; the politics of influence, the encouragement of communicative values and norms in political discourse; and, the politics of reform, the attempt to democratise political society and create communicative receptors within political society. Although, Welton recognises that this would involve "a plethora of voluntary associations" (p. 155), he continues to assert that "The new social movements...are privileged sites for the rebellious speech of citizens" (p. 154).

Radical adult educators such as Welton then (1993; 1995) argue that the adult educational role, outside the educational institution, still resides primarily in the new social movements of the public sphere of the lifeworld. However, the preceding chapter argues that, although these educators recognise that these NSMs possess communicative features which make them the protector of the lifeworld, and challengers to the systems world, they do not make a case for the emancipatory role of these NSMs in Habermasian, universalistic and analytical terms. Holford (1995), accepts that there has been an insufficient theorisation of NSMs, and offers a different interpretation of NSMs. Holford goes beyond the "diehard band of popular educators who persist in believing adult education should further radical political perspectives" (p., 95) to place NSMs at the heart of an epistemologically-based account of the nature and role of these movements. Thus, he states:

Critical pedagogy, therefore, contains little resembling a theory - or even a critical pedagogy - of social movements. By conceptualizing movements in terms of cognitive praxis, we begin to remedy this deficiency. (p. 102)

This cognitive praxis argues that we should move from seeing NSMs as important to the learning process to viewing them as central to the production of human knowledge itself: "The forms of knowledge which exist in any society are, it is held, the products in part of the social movements which have emerged in, or had an impact on, that society" (p. 101). Holford argues that the critical analysis of the production and dissemination of this knowledge requires an examination of the internal and external organisational processes of these movements, and of the role of influential movement intellectuals. This analytical framework, Holford asserts, is significant to adult education in two ways: it identifies the contribution of adult education to the process of knowledge construction, and thus social reality, by the movements; and, can also be applied heuristically to the history and structure of early adult education movements. Holford believes that this analysis would demonstrate the importance of adult education again constituting itself as a movement.

Adult educational knowledge...may be contingent upon the creation of an adult education identity, of a self-image of a "movement" as
embodying ideals and ethics. To this extent analyzing adult education in social movement terms can be revealing. (1995, p. 10)

Holford's suggestion that adult education adopt a cognitive praxis is significant, in Habermasian terms, in two ways. Holford's identification of the epistemological role of social movements can be theoretically located within Habermas' developmental-rational framework, in both its ontogenetic and phylogenetic aspects. This provides a stronger theoretical base to the argument that NSMs are one of the main agencies of communicative advance, and thus justification for adult education practice in this area. Further, if adult educators were to organise around the struggle to get adult education accepted as a social and citizenship right by state and civil society, and then around the task of utilising that right, adult education could constitute itself as a social movement. Such a movement would develop, or unify, an identity based on ideals and an ethic informed by the educational and political roles advanced above.

This movement would provide the flexibility for adult education to take other forms in the public sphere also. One important form is that of a pressure or interest group which attempts to influence political institutions more directly. In this form, adult educators could attempt to influence the state to recognise its status as a social right, or attempt to influence the development of communicative elements of the state and law. Of course, pressure groups like NIACE (the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education) already exist in Britain, but their influence on the state is not strong. However, the recognition of adult education as a social right might accord such representative organisations the status of an insider pressure group (Grant, 1990), which would give them more direct influence. Evans (1987) provides a detailed study of the institutional relations between adult education and the British state in the post-war period which concludes that adult education has retained its marginalised status because of its sectarian and overly-pluralist nature; only a united, pressure group in Britain, he argues, can influence policy-making more effectively, albeit in an incremental manner. Of course, in suggesting that adult education might take the form of pressure groups, or a more unified, single pressure group, particularly if this involves insider status, it is important that adult education remains communicatively-informed, and rooted in the public sphere.

Habermas' wider view of the public sphere extends further than social movements and interest groups. In BFN Habermas provides a detailed account of the nature and range of these less formal institutions and organisations of the public sphere. Outside the core formal political institutions and quangos, which possess political power, he refers to these other associations and organisations as the "periphery", which has political influence. This periphery consists of:

associations, and organizations that, before parliaments and through the courts, give voice to social problems, make broad demands, articulate public interests or needs, and thus attempt to influence the political process more from normative points of view than from the standpoint of particular interests. (1996, p. 355)

This "periphery" is essential to the legitimacy of the political institutions and the law; the latter, if they wish to retain their legitimacy "must be steered by communication
flows which start at the periphery and pass through the sluices of democratic and constitutional procedures" (p. 356)

This wider view of the public sphere can be extended to the adult education context. Chambers (in White, 1995) describes the state-led Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future in the early 1990s which encouraged widespread formal discussion from all interested groups and individuals; Jarvis (1993) refers to a similar Forum in post-war Canada. On a smaller scale, Citizen's Juries, which allow people to examine and comment on local policies in an informed way, are widely used in the United States and Germany, and are now being tried in Britain. Jarvis (1993) and Collins (1991), also refer respectively to the more educationally-focussed Study Circle movement in Scandinavian countries and Freirean cultural circles in the United States as examples of existing discursive forms. At this associational level of the public sphere then, adult education can play a role in existing "opinion-forming" associations, either in the capacity of participant, or as educator, helping these associations to clarify their values and identity, and to develop their discursive, procedural, political skills. Equally, adult education can establish its own associations or groups which, through the discussion of relevant, important issues, can make a communicative input into these existing associations, or into "the sluices of democratic and constitutional procedures" themselves.

However, while it is not difficult to find examples of social movements and interest groups which have had influence on social thought and political policy, this influence is more questionable with reference to the smaller associations and organisations of the periphery. Habermas recognises this, and argues that political agenda-setting and determination primarily comes from the core political institutions of the state, either directly, or through the mobilisation of the public sphere by the state. However, he asserts, it is the periphery that has generated public sphere and political awareness of the important, more universalistic issues, such as those of the environment, nuclear weapons, the third world and feminism.

Hardly any of these topics were initially brought up by exponents of the state apparatus, large organizations, or functional systems. (1996, p. 381)

Habermas details how such issues start with concerned individuals and groups, and work their way in from the outer edges of the periphery until they have gained enough popular attention for the media to take an interest, thus bringing the issues to the attention of the larger public which in turn, perhaps through collective action, party interest, court decisions or political expediency, forces these issues on the agenda of the formal political institutions. Although then, it is the state which primarily makes political decisions, Habermas states:

even in more or less power-ridden public spheres, the power relations shift as soon as the perception of relevant social problems evokes a crisis consciousness at the periphery. (1996, p. 382)

Adult education's role, in this context, would be to contribute to the generation of such a "crisis consciousness" in the public sphere where important issues were involved. One way in which this could be achieved is through a communicatively-informed, critical policy analysis of controversial political decisions and issues.
Dryzek (in White, 1995) shows that this is already taking place in such areas as public inquiries in the United States.

Finally, adult education can also play a political role in the formal institutional context. If adult education is seen as a social right which has the intrinsic political role of advancing rationality and democracy at individual, institutional and social levels, then this role can also take the form of a more politically and dialogically-informed curriculum and practice within the formal educational institution. Such a role should not be given institutional "lip-service" in the form Collins (1991) observes, but should be recognised by both institution and state as contributing to individual and collective empowerment, democratic government, and communicative advance.

In Habermasian theoretical terms then, adult education possesses a potentially important, communicative, democratic role which may take many forms in the systems and lifeworld, but is particularly important in the latter. This role is more likely to be recognised in society, and by the state, if adult education is awarded the status of a social right for all citizens. Of course, exactly what this 'social right' would entail would need to be discussed. At a minimum, this thesis proposes that, like initial education, it would need to be accessible to all, free, in at least its lifeworld roles, and be available during the adult's life, thus lifelong. The recognition of adult education's 'right', or legitimate claim, to the status of social right, would also be a recognition of the important educational and democratic role adult education can play in developing a communicative society. As Peukertruth (1993) states: "How serious we are about democracy is revealed in how serious we are about education" (p. 167).
Conclusion

Part Four presents a theory of the educational and political role of adult education which draws strongly on Habermas' recent work, BFN. However, it must be recognised that this reference to BFN is based on what has been inevitably, given its late publication in English translation, a relatively superficial and uncritical reading of the text. The importance of BFN to the Habermasian oeuvre is not in doubt: Rasmussen (1994) refers to it as "an extraordinary book" and states "In some ways it may be Habermas' best book" (p. 42), while Outhwaite (1994) asserts that it presents "a more developed social and political theory of enormous scope and power" (p.154). Further research then on the educational and political role proposed by this thesis requires a more detailed reading and understanding of the relevant themes of BFN. However this research must extend further than just that of Habermas' recent writings. Rehg, in his introduction to BFN, states that the text reflects an increasing interest by political and legal theorists in the model of deliberative democracy. One important example is Cohen and Arato's (1994) detailed examination and critique of theories of civil society, including that of Habermas. Habermas draws strongly on the arguments presented by the authors, in effect accepting some of their criticisms, in his extended depiction of the public sphere. Habermas' extended account of the nature and role of rights also reflects strongly the model presented by Cohen and Arato. In other areas of his theory, Habermas draws widely on other political and legal theorists less familiar to this writer. Further research then requires an examination of the positions of other proponents of the model of deliberative democracy.

Of course, such research, if it is to be methodologically consistent with this thesis and Habermas' work, must also study the criticisms made of the deliberative model, and of Habermas' depiction of it. As with Habermas' TCA, BFN is so wide-ranging, and engages with so many theorists, that it would be surprising if there were not problems with, and criticisms of, this work. A major criticism, for instance (Baynes in White, 1995; Outhwaite, 1994) is that Habermas' theory remains relatively abstract. Although Habermas promises a more concrete, institutional application of his communicative theory in BFN, and Rehg, in his introduction to the work, states that one can read BFN "as drawing out the legal, political, and institutional implications" (p. x) of TCA, those who are looking for specific recommendations for practice are disappointed. In BFN, Habermas develops his notion of discourse theory further by distinguishing between the moral and democratic principles, and provides a theoretical account for the justification of, and necessary conditions to, the latter principle; however, in his refusal to identify particular democratic organisations or practices, or propose the specific contents of the rights he identifies, he retains his primary moral, philosophical stance. For some of Habermas' commentators then, the connection between theory and practice, while more evident than in his previous works, remains a relatively attenuated one.

Although the discussion above indicates that the presentation of BFN in this thesis must be treated with caution, this does not significantly affect the validity of the general thesis of the adult education role which is proposed here. There are two
reasons for this. First, most of the major themes informing this theorisation of adult education are drawn from Habermas' theory, and interpretations of it, in his earlier works. Two examples are the interdependent relationship of democracy and rationality in Habermas' developmental-rational thesis, and the significance of the discursive nature of adult qua post-initial education. The second reason follows from the first: the identification of these and other relevant themes, and the problems associated with them, leads the student of Habermas, as it appears to have done with Cohen and Arato (1994) and, to an extent Welton (1995), almost inevitably to a more substantive political theory. One theme, and the critique around it, particularly demonstrates this heuristic aspect. Habermas' distinction in MCCA between morality and ethics, or justice and the good life, despite its amelioration in that text, and modifications in later texts, raises the important, continuing problematic of the theory-practice relationship. This problem has to be met at two levels: at the level of Habermas' own theory so that it meets the criticism of abstraction while not overly affecting the important, philosophical, moral, procedural stance that characterises the theory; and, at the level of adult education, so that it gives sufficient indicators to as how adult education can derive a theoretically-legitimated practice from a Habermasian-informed theory. This, and other themes then, leads to an extended theory of rights and the public sphere. It is perhaps an indication of the effectiveness of the methodological approach adopted by this thesis, that it was considering this extended theory before meeting BFN or commentaries on it.

On the basis of this extended theory then, of the educational and political role of adult education, this thesis argues that Habermas' theory provides the theoretical base and legitimation adult education seeks. This theoretical base locates and legitimates adult education: it explains and challenges the neo-liberal instrumentalism of society and adult education which is taking place; it also demonstrates the importance of adult education to the protection and advancement of modernity. This provides adult education with the justification it needs for its communicative practice, despite the instrumentalist influence and demands on it. It also demonstrates the important role adult education has in fostering a more communicative society on educational, and social and political grounds.

This theoretical base has strong explanatory power in theoretical, critical and methodological terms. It also has strong explanatory reach in its empirical and normative aspects. The normative aspects of this Habermasian interpretation demonstrate the singular importance that can be ascribed to adult education: as an institution and practice, it can promote communicative values and rationality across society, both in the systems and the lifeworld. Its potential role in the lifeworld, in the public sphere, is of particular importance here. Adult education, reinterpreted in these terms, can be shown to be not just desirable but perhaps vital to the democratic, rational and communicative advancement of individual, institutions, society and the state.

This thesis demonstrates that few theorists of adult education recognise, or recognise sufficiently, these theoretical and normative possibilities of Habermas' communicative project for adult education; this is particularly the case in Britain. Where adult educators do recognise the potential of Habermas' theory, they undermine its critical potential by presenting it in an over-celebratory, uncritical, and
under-theorised manner. An explanation for this might be the relief, the being "surprised by joy" (Welton, 1991, p. 22) with which these educators have discovered Habermas' critical theory, and its emancipatory potential for adult education, in the current neo-liberal political climate. However, the "joy" of this recognition should be tempered by an equal recognition of the problems and lacunae in Habermas' theory. This realism can only be achieved by an increased critical and theoretical understanding of Habermas' work; in other words, these interpreters should apply the criteria of their own critical thinking or critical theory positions to Habermas' theory. Through this, they might also see that this "joy" can be enhanced: they would recognise important themes, which they currently ignore or under-emphasise, which might contribute to a fuller interpretation or celebration of the valid aspects of Habermas' communicative theory.

It is recognised of course that this thesis may be subject to the same criticism. This thesis may also have omitted or under-emphasised themes important to the interpretation of Habermas proposed here. It is more likely however, given the "joy" of recognising the value of Habermas' work to adult education theory, that this thesis may not have sufficiently recognised themes or critiques detrimental to this theorisation. Indeed, it would be surprising if this was not the case given the range of theories and disciplines Habermas draws from. This is also possible because this thesis has not attempted to pursue particular themes in depth, but, rather, has attempted to identify those themes most important and relevant to Habermas' work, and to the adult education theorisation of it, in order to assess their theoretical adequacy within the totality of the Habermasian project. Habermas states in a discussion on theoretical analysis and synthesis: "I certainly belong on the synthetic side. As a result, my satisfactions lie more in a synthesis of argumentation" (1992a, p. 129). The same is true of this thesis: its satisfaction lies in presenting a theory of adult education, informed by a dialogical, methodological approach, which draws from, and synthesises, Habermas' theory, critiques and modifications of this, and adult education interpretations of Habermas. This synthetic approach goes further in attempting to develop a representative and critical understanding of Habermas than any other adult educator, and most other commentators on Habermas. This provides a strong, theoretical framework on the basis of which other researchers in adult education or the social sciences, perhaps through the identification of errors and omissions in the framework presented here, can proceed.

This synthesis necessarily emphasises the potential role of adult education in its more communicative, liberative forms. This does not mean, of course, that adult education's more instrumental role of developing skills and understanding in vocational, intellectual or leisure forms is also not important. Indeed, we can make a case here, in Habermasian terms, that there is a communicative basis to many of these more strategic forms of adult education. Thus, through the reconstruction of the intuitions of those involved, adult educators and students, we can argue that, as well as performing the more functional role of meeting economic and social needs, these skills and understandings are seen to empower people: they enhance their life chances, help them develop a stronger sense of identity, dignity and social role, and generally improve their intellectual and practical capacities. These qualities and capacities are important, of course, to an effective understanding and fulfilment of the citizen role. It is primarily through the quality of life, and the problems or anxieties
that individuals experience in their private role, whether at first or second hand, that they are stimulated to act in their public capacity. As Habermas states in BFN: "As bearers of the political public sphere and as members of society, citizens occupy two positions at once" (1996, p. 365).

Nevertheless, if adult education is to be recognised as a vital or necessary institution in a democratic society, then it is its more explicit communicative role which must be emphasised. This thesis demonstrates through Habermasian theory that adult education has a potentially significant communicative role which is arguably as great or greater than that of any other institution in society; herein lies its importance to a democratic society. As Welton states: "the only disciplinary framework worthy of adult education is as wide as society and as deep as history". (1994, p. 289)
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