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SAFARI

A four year study of
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evaluation of
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"THE PORTRAYAL OF PERSONS AS EVALUATION DATA"

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New approaches to evaluation solve some old problems but create fresh ones. This is a "signalling" paper, seeking to draw attention to what could prove to be a critical issue in the application of non-numerical methods to educational evaluation. The treatment of identifiable persons in evaluation reports which are definitionally intended to have consequences for them, has already become acutely problematic for those of us in the United Kingdom who have begun, in evaluation, to explore case-study methods and portrayal-style reporting. In formulating the problem in this paper, I am aware of a debt to colleagues on the UNCAL and SAFARI Projects, particularly to David Jenkins, Stephen Kemmis, Helen Simons, David Tawney and Rob Walker. This claim to express a shared concern should not, however, be taken to imply an endorsement on their part of the particular construction_s or responses expressed in this paper.

THE PORTRAYAL OF PERSONS AS EVALUATION DATA

"If humanistic science may be said to have any goals beyond sheer fascination with the human mystery and enjoyment of it, these would be to release the person from external control and to make him less predictable to the observer ..." Abraham Mazlow, *The Psychology of Science*.

In view of the continuing proliferation of schools of educational evaluation, it may be advisable to begin by offering a few propositions as a badge of identity. Evaluation serves decisions about educational provision. It does so by observing and describing educational programmes. Evaluators make known, to those who have legitimate claims upon their services, something of the circumstances, values, processes and effects of educational programmes. They seek to perform this task, and to present their results, in ways which are calculated to enhance understanding of the relationships between the circumstances, values, processes and effects of programmes. Sound decisions about educational provision always require attention to the interdependence of circumstance, action and consequence. Sound evaluation designs reflect this requirement.

Rhetoric of this kind being notoriously non-divisive, I had better add that in practice I favour evaluations which work through case study methods towards integrated portrayals of programmes in action. "Portrayal is not a well-defined concept in evaluation, but it is a provocative and suggestive one, an intruder in the vocabulary of research, a bridging concept between the arts and the social sciences. Its appeal is, I believe, to those evaluators who want to render educational programmes more knowable to the non-research community, more accessible to the diverse patternings of meaning, significance and worth through which people ordinarily evaluate social life. More immediately, portrayal suggest that the audiences of evaluation need to know "what goes on" in education, and that an important task for the evaluator is to display the educational process in ways which enable people to engage it with their hearts and minds. The "heart" of judgement is rarely acknowledged in conventional definitions of evaluation purpose, which speak clinically of providing decision data for the continuation, revision or termination of programmes. Harry Walcott was moved earlier this week to remind us of this when he said to a group of educational ethnographers, "How would you feel if your data was used to continue, revise or terminate a culture?" Rather less dramatically, but in the same vein, I want in this paper to explore the social consequences for individual persons of a portrayal approach to educational evaluation.

Because I want to address a particular problem within a portrayal style of evaluation, I would prefer to avoid taking up a lot of time and space arguing the case for this style, as against others. Stake (1972) introduced the term 'portrayal' to this Association in a presentation four years ago, and has since written frequent elaborations of its operational implications, particularly under the rubric of 'responsive evaluation'. Portrayal is a key concept of the counter-culture in evaluation which in the last decade has mounted an increasingly articulate challenge to the prevailing engineering paradigm. Eisner (1975), Smith (1974); House (1973) Parlett and Hamilton (1972); and Kemmis (1976) are among those who have contributed to the theory and practice of an evaluation process which takes the experience of the programme participants as the central focus of investigation. Whether the intention is to provide "vicarious experience" as Stake suggests, or to "re-educate perception" as Eisner has it, or more simply (irony intended) to "tell it like it is" (Kemmis), there is a shared concern among members of this school to create and convey images of educational activity which both preserve and illuminate its complexity. Cronbach's (1975) recent conversion to short-run empiricism, ("A general statement can be highly accurate only if it specifies interactive effects: that it takes large amount of data to pin down") is at least consistent with this concern, and could lead to more widespread support for this, as yet, inexperienced tradition.

So the rationale is there, and the advocacy, and the theory is taking shape. But there is little experience so far and experience has a habit of chastening aspirations. The technology of portrayal is difficult, demanding new skills. Eisner, writing in the context of his notions of "connoisseurship" and "criticism", says:

"competent educational criticism requires far more than the writing skills possessed by a good novelist or journalist."

Even allowing for the fact that Eisner is proposing a distinctive form of portrayal which makes heavy demands upon the observers' capacity for insight and its articulation, it is quite clear that portrayal in any form calls for linguistic skills and devices that lie outside the conventional repertoire of evaluation.

We could do worse than begin by studying the methods of the journalist, particularly the methods of the "new" journalism that has flourished since the 1960s. Tom Wolfe (1973) analysing the progress of this movement: writes:

"by trial and error, by 'instinct' rather than theory, journalists began to discover the devices that gave the realistic novel its unique power, variously known as its 'immediacy', its 'concrete reality', its 'emotional involvement', its 'gripping' or 'absorbing' quality."

There is a striking resemblance between these aspirations of the new journalists and the claims made by portrayal-oriented evaluators (for instance, Parlett and Hamilton claim a "recognisable reality"; Stake, "a surrogate experience"). It is not surprising, therefore to find that the devices identified by Wolfe also characterise the efforts of the new portrayal school of evaluation.

Wolfe names four key devices - scene by scene construction, the use of dialogue, the representation of events as seen by a third party, and the inclusion of descriptive details that give the reader access to what Wolfe calls the "status life" of the subject, "the entire pattern of behaviour and possessions through which people express their position in the world of what they think it is or what they hope it will be." Most of the outstanding examples of this journalistic genre take the form of the interview story cast in narrative form against a minutely observed portrayal of the social setting in which the subject lives. But this is also true of evaluators starting to explore a portrayal approach. My colleague, Rob Walker, from the SAFARI project at East Anglia, is presenting to this A.E.R.A. meeting a paper called "Stations" which closely approximates this journalistic form, albeit unintentionally. SAFARI is an evaluation of the centralised curriculum innovation system that was set up in Britain in the early 1960s. "Stations" is an attempt to represent what that system means in the lives of teachers.

"We stress," writes Walker, "the importance of portraying the perceptions, feelings and responses of identifiable individuals in relation to organisational change. Not just to give an account of what happened, but to collect an oral history of what it was like to be involved."

Seen as a portrayal, "Stations" uses the same devices as the new journalism. It is basically an interview story, cast in narrative form, with a strong emphasis on scene by scene construction:

"That evening Ron's girlfriend Pat wants him to go with her to a party, but he arranges for me to meet Jean, the deputy head's wife I meet Jean in the pub where she is talking to a group of teachers from the school."

Incidental dialogue is featured throughout the report:

"A girl came up behind and greeted the teacher very loudly with, "Hey Bummer, had any good ones lately?". To which he replied, "No, I can't get a look-in anywhere since you put the word round about me." She then turned to the visitor and said, "We call him Bummer, you know, because he's queer."

The reporting of "realistic" dialogue is, according to Wolfe, the most effective way of establishing character and of involving the reader. In evaluation terms, dialogue that has that quality of authenticity that Lou Smith claims for the field data of the educational anthropologist. (Smith's "Tales from the teletype" section of his "Education, technology and the rural highlands" report is a good example.)

The third journalistic device, the 'third-person' perspective, is much more than a technical convention in the context of evaluation. It is at the heart of the evaluation purpose. Stake has argued that the best understandings of educational phenomena are likely to be held by those closest to the educational process, and it is a major goal of portrayal to reveal what those understandings are. "Stations", for instance, takes one teacher, records his self-portrayal, and embeds that self-portrayal in a context that gives the reader evaluative access to it. It is an attempt to achieve what Eisner says is the aim of "thick description" - "to describe the meaning or significance of behaviour as it occurs in a cultural network saturated with meaning."

The attempt depends critically on the fourth device mentioned by Wolfe the symbolic detail of the subject's life. At one point in "Stations", Walker describes the teacher's room:

"His room is fairly chaotic. An enormous hi-fi system (much admired by his pupils who are often to be found using it). A collector's collection of rock records (no jazz) of which ten or eleven LP's seemed in more or less constant use. Magazines piled around the room, the most used of which was *Let it Rock* which contained several of Ron's articles. Books on local industrial history (Ron was joint author of one), on Russia and a scattering of sociology (Bernstein's *Class, Codes and Control*, Nell Keddie). Most of the floor space was taken up by an old mattress, the rest by socks, a tennis racquet, gym shoes (once white?), a big trunk, assorted letters, (one applying for the post of 'geography teacher'). On the fading wallpaper a Beatle poster and a school report made out in Ron's name and signed by a pupil ("Could do better if he tried harder")."

For the journalist the purpose of such a description is to heighten the reader's sense of involvement, his feeling of going there. Evaluators too talk of providing a vicarious experience for the reader, but they have another purpose to which the surrogate experience is secondary. It is to increase the generalisability of the data. It is a mistake

to assume that evaluators who choose to portray educational instances have abandoned the hope of generalisation. On the contrary. The portrayal evaluator has only shifted the locus of responsibility for generalisation and reduced the size of the sample upon which generalisations will be based. After all, it is an axiom of sample-based generalisation that the sample must be adequately described in terms of all its relevant characteristics. And it is a 'finding' from our experience of educational evaluation, witness Cronbach's statement quoted earlier, that educational cases are behaviourally unique. It is a small step from these premises to the conclusion that, if we hold to the axiom, we must first seek adequate descriptions of individual cases, their characteristics and interactive effects. This will not enable us to prescribe action to others. Cronbach writes:

"Though from successive work in many contexts, he may reach an actuarial generalisation of some power, this will rarely be a basis for direct control of any single operation."

But Cronbach is concerned with generalisation which functions as a basis for prescription and external control of educational activities whose particular contextual configurations are unknown. If, however, we shift the burden of responsibility for generalising from the outsider to the insider, from the evaluator to the practitioner, and if we restrict the task to that of generalising from one fully described case to another that is fully known (i.e. to the one in which he lives) then we can argue that portrayal of a single case may still fulfill the function of generalisation, though it calls for a redistribution of responsibilities with respect to the evaluation process. In this latter respect it means that the distribution of evaluation reports will tend to follow a horizontal rather than a vertical pattern. The main audience for a portrayal of a school will be other schools, the main audience for the portrayal of an administrator other administrators. Each member of the audience has what Lou Smith has called an "implicit control group" in his head, a knowledge of his own locale that he employs to evaluate the portrayal in terms of what does or does not apply to his situation. He is in fact, generalising from one case to another, making educated judgements about the degree to which known differences in the relevant variables might lead to or call for differences of implementation and effects. He is likely to pay particular attention to the experience and judgements of people in the portrayed situation whose roles and role-sets are similar to his own. The accurate portrayal of persons is therefore crucial to the reader's capacity to use the study to inform his own actions. Stake tells us that portrayal should focus upon personalities, and that the evaluator should be expert at putting into words the "goals, perceptions and values that they hold."

So far, it would seem that the portrayal evaluator and the new journalist have a great deal in common. They share a specificity of focus, an interest in persons, as opposed to people, a concern for contextual detail, an aspiration to create vivid images of complex human events. Both are drawn, as we have shown, to the devices of the realist school of fiction. One might ask why, in that case, we have not drawn the comparison between portrayal evaluation and the novel itself. The answer is that a comparison with journalism compels the confrontation of issues which the novelist does not face, issues to which the journalist and the evaluator respond in ways which distinguish their professions quite sharply. The fact that we acquire an intimate knowledge of the characters of a piece of fiction has no consequence for them. They are immune. Not so the subjects of the journalist or the evaluator. They are real people, usually known to the public in the case of journalism, always traceable in the case of evaluation. Information about their actions, values and perceptions, made known to others, can be used to praise or censure them, and to manipulate them. There are always social consequences for those who are the subjects of journalistic or evaluation portrayals. The consequences may be welcome or unwelcome, anticipated or unanticipated, but they are always there.

In evaluation, which is knowingly consequence-related, such portrayals may be utilised quite directly in the determination of consequences for those portrayed, and it is at this point that the portrayal of persons as evaluation data becomes acutely problematic. The quotation from Mazlow with which I introduced this article draws attention to the nature of the problem. Elsewhere in the book from which that quotation is drawn, Mazlow says:

"... how could it be said that our efforts to know human beings are for the sake of prediction and control?.... we would be horrified by this possibility....."

In talking about portrayal evaluation up to this point, we have emphasised its utility for people who are distant from the scene portrayed, people who inhabit other locales, whose only connection to the personalities and events portrayed is via the evaluator's report. But there is another context of evaluation, one in which the portrayal is a resource for decision makers who have power over those portrayed. Cronbach argues in his paper that evaluators should concentrate on improving "short-run control in particular settings. Does the portrayal of persons increase the possibility of the control of persons? A fine irony indeed if those evaluators who stepped out with Carl Rogers should end up in Walden II.

On this issue we part company, I hope, with the new journalists. Wolfe dismisses with contempt any concern with the consequences of personal disclosure.

"People who become overly sensitive on this score should never take up the new style of journalism. They inevitably turn out second-rate work, biased in such banal ways that they embarrass even the subjects they think they are 'protecting'. A writer needs at least enough ego to believe that what he is doing as a writer is as important as what anyone he is writing about is doing and that therefore he should not compromise his own work."

That may suffice for journalism. It certainly goes a long way to explain the merciless exposure of vulnerable personalities that marks its most celebrated products, the substitution of accuracy for truth, the processing of persons for emotional consumption, the denial of privacy, the apparently total disregard for consequences. Such journalism rarely has a purpose beyond the immediate experience it offers. It follows the dictat of the biographer who, when asked how he modified his portrayals of living personalities, replied, "I write as if they were dead." But journalists and biographers can at least claim that they have no intention of bringing about consequences for their subjects, whereas evaluators are explicitly in the business of feeding decisions about the situation, events, and people they portray.

Rob Walker and I have written elsewhere about the ethical problems involved in educational case study, and have articulated a code of conduct which gives the subjects of study control over the form and content of the portrayal. His "Stations" paper was subjected to extensive negotiations and modifications before making its present public debut, negotiations largely concerned with the possible consequences of publication for those portrayed. But SAFARI is only one of many possible evaluation contexts in which the portrayal of persons may be problematic and contentious and I would like to turn now to a different context, one perhaps more typical of evaluation generally.

THE PORTRAYAL OF PERSONS - A CASE IN POINT.

The British National Development Programme in Computer Assisted Learning (NDPCAL) was set up in 1973 for a period of five years with a budget of two million pounds. Its primary aim is to secure the assimilation of computer based learning on a regular ^{institutional} basis at reasonable cost, and it provides financial support to curriculum development projects all over the United Kingdom. The Programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and by six other government departments.

The Programme Director, Richard Hooper, reports to an executive Programme Committee on which sit the seven sponsoring departments. Projects are supported on a stepped-funding basis, Programme Committee having the option of termination or extension of funding at the end of each step.

UNCAL (Understanding Computer Assisted Learning) is an independent evaluation study commissioned by the NDPCAL in 1974 for a period of three years. UNCAL is a team of four people - David Jenkins, Stephen Kemmis, David Tawney and myself

The National Programme has a strong commitment to evaluation procedures within a tightly knit management structure. Evaluation is a contractual requirement for every project. Through the Directorate and the mechanism of stepped-funding review, internal project evaluations are linked to Programme Committee appraisals. Alongside this system UNCAL acts as an additional resource, providing independent accounts of Programme activities for all three parties at prespecified points of policy review, and trying generally to identify and clarify issues and alternatives facing programme decision-makers. One of UNCAL's roles is to provide Programme Committee with reports on the work of individual projects, and it is in this context that the issue of personal portrayal has proved to be highly problematic. Let me set the scene.

Most UNCAL reports to Programme Committee about the work of individual projects have featured, to varying degrees, attempts to portray the influence of key members of project teams on the conduct and course of the work. These portrayals are negotiated with their subjects and it can reasonably be claimed that they represent, if not always endorsed accounts, at least "fair comment" on the persons concerned. In the area of personalisation, UNCAL is particularly sensitive to the need for full non-coercive consultation.

There are four UNCAL observers, and their reports differ in the degree to which they offer personalised data of this kind. David Tawney shares, with most of the university scientists whose work he has studied, a distaste for this area of evaluation, and considers that his excellent relationships with project personnel would be seriously prejudiced if he attempted a direct assessment of individual contributions. His reports are basically depersonalised accounts. On the other hand, David Jenkins' reports display a taste for and capacity to describe the work of projects in a way which illuminates (or fails to) the influence of personal characteristics (competencies, values and dispositions) on what is achieved.

He considers these characteristics to be significant determinants of effects, and he had been able to operationalise this perspective without alienating project personnel. The reports of myself and Stephen Kemmis could be said to variously stand at intermediate points on a scale polarised by Tawney and Jenkins. There is, in other words, no standard UNCAL practice, a situation which reflects the novelty of this practice, the degree to which the obligation to negotiate constrains uniformity, and the uneven distribution of skills and confidence in this area among the UNCAL team.

It is probably true to say that there was from the start some unease within Programme Committee about the personalisation element in some UNCAL reports, but that this particular concern was "contained" within more generalised criticisms of these reports, and of UNCAL's work as a whole. At a meeting in Autumn 1975, however, a strong reservation was finally expressed about UNCAL's portrayal of persons. The issue was precipitated by an UNCAL report prepared by David Jenkins, in which Committee was provided with an unusually extensive analysis of individual members of the study team and of their inter-relationships as an *ad hoc* working group. The following extract from the report indicates something of the content and much of the style of portrayal to which exception was taken.

"Jim Smith:

There is a consensus view of Smith, relatively unchallenged, that points to his openness, his dedication, his ability to 'think big', and a track record that suggests high levels of competence and reliability. If the National Programme had an Alf Ramsey as evaluator he would doubtless declare Smith's 'work rate' to be highest of them all. But some are perplexed by his talkativeness, his over-watchfulness in situations, a calculating quality that does not escape an element of self-regard, and the fact that he can be a little overwhelming (if not manipulative). But Smith is also valued differently by different people and the accounts picked up by UNCAL have varied from near-adulation to indifference. Colleagues trying to bring order to these differences have been tempted to see Jim as 'upward-orientated', more concerned to win approval of those above him than the respect of those below. At one extreme he has been suspected of male chauvinism, but there was insufficient evidence to make the charge stick. It could amount to as little as a tendency for Jim, finding himself surrounded by female aides, to exaggerate his disposition to delegate responsibility rather than authority and to appear 'hovering' around everybody else's work situation ("short term contract people need support", explains Smith). What is ungrudgingly agreed by Jim's admirers and detractors alike is his talent for organisation, his meticulous concern for details and capacity for sheer hard work. His colleagues judge him as 'unrivalled' in committeemanship, although inclined to play the system a little unashamedly. He is also patently ambitious ("You can almost smell the ambition"). His success in Committee is not always fully acknowledged, particularly by those who attribute more success to the organ grinder than the monkey, and dismiss Smith easily as 'Jones'

man'. Some remember the time when Smith with Jones' approval went around asking people if their undergraduate courses were really necessary."

Although Jenkins, in the introduction to this report, made a specific case for the need to understand the personalities involved in the project if one was to evaluate its experience and effects, the reaction of a large number of Committee members was extremely critical. Both the need for, and to a lesser extent the manner of, such personalised accounts of projects were challenged. At the end of a lengthy and heated debate, UNCAL agreed to produce for the next meeting a position paper on the treatment of persons in its reports. That paper was by no means an exhaustive analysis of the issues involved, being deliberately confined to issues of stated disagreement between UNCAL and its sponsors. Nevertheless, it may be worth partial reproduction, as an example of an evaluation stance articulated in a particular context. What follows is an abbreviated section of the UNCAL paper.

Some Base-line Statements

1. *The National Programme is a programme of planned action, Its success or failure depend upon a combination of design and performance.*
2. *The capacity to distinguish between design effects and performance effects is crucial to (a) the construction of generalisations about the potential of CAL in education, (b) the end-of-step decisions about the competence and trustworthiness of particular project teams in relation to proposals for further support.*
3. *The need to evaluate personnel is not in dispute. Nor is in principle the practice. With new proposals the Committee often has to rely on design alone, although it can reasonably assume that the Directorate has some, necessarily impressionistic, confidence in the project leadership. Nevertheless, it is a fact that in those cases where individual members of Committee happen to have knowledge of people who will carry out work, they have not hesitated to offer, nor Committee to take into account, judgements of the capabilities and other relevant personality attributes of the candidates. Committee has been particularly glad to have these personnel evaluations in areas where its own inevitable limitations of subject-matter expertise make it difficult to mount confident evaluation of the merits of design, and in areas which are likely to call for sensitive management.*

4. Project management is a declared focus of evaluation for the Programme Directorate. Such evaluation is concerned with the performance as well as the structure of management.
5. One of UNCAL's functions is to enable Programme Committee to evaluate both completed work and proposals for future work. Although it has been suggested that UNCAL confine itself to an account of aims-achievement, there is broad support for the view that such accounts would neither advance understanding of the problems of CAL development nor represent in a fair way the merits and efforts of National Programme projects. It would certainly be quite impossible to negotiate such restricted accounts with more than a few project teams. Aims-achievement is widely disputed as a sufficient formula for the evaluation of educational programmes. UNCAL takes the view that its imposition in educational settings leads to cautious rather than ambitious goal-setting, to the neglect of unforeseen opportunities, and to the manipulation of data to meet a blind criterion. It is our assumption that Committee wishes to know not only what has been accomplished, but "Did these people act intelligently, effectively, and with integrity in the execution of the proposal work?"

Issues and Alternatives

Traditionally, the evaluation of persons has been a very private affair conducted in conditions of extreme confidentiality, rarely committed to paper, and restricted to those who have to make the judgement. UNCAL reports depart from this tradition in three important senses.

1. They serve the judgement but do not make it.
2. They are written, and have therefore a formality and solidity that differentiates them markedly from transient oral exchanges.
3. They are negotiated with the "judged", who therefore have knowledge of the data base of the evaluation.

These departures have quite properly evoked concern and apprehensiveness, within UNCAL as well as within Programme Committee. Among the dangers and pitfalls of the procedure may be counted the following:

- (i) Interpretative accounts of people's actions depend on frameworks of analysis and theories of human motivation which are not always clear to the observed, UNCAL observers are more likely to command these frameworks than those who are portrayed, who may be thus disadvantaged in negotiation.
- (ii) Many people find it difficult or unpleasant to negotiate a self-image, and may defer to UNCAL out of diffidence or embarrassment.
- (iii) UNCAL may be impelled by negotiation away from clear statements towards innuendo.
- (iv) UNCAL reporters could be seduced by the "journalism of exposure" into sensational accounts which are not disciplined by a strict criterion of relevance to decisions. Seduction may be at the level of style or content.
- (v) The procedure of negotiation is not a guarantee of fair play. The skills of bargaining are neither evenly distributed nor equally employed.

It must at once be said that more formidable arguments could be mounted against evaluations of personnel and performance which are not subject to such procedures. These are too self-evident to require articulation. Nevertheless, the dangers are real ones, and members of Committee have expressed a need for caution which is not disputed by UNCAL.

Alternative Courses of Action

Some members of Programme Committee proposed at the last meeting, alternative procedures which might be adopted with the evaluation of performance.

1. The information could be omitted from written reports, but provided orally on request.
2. The evaluation of performance, individual and collective, could be undertaken by the Directorate and the independent evaluators, jointly, and reach Committee as a joint recommendation.

3. Such information could be presented in a generalised form, omitting the particularities upon which the generalisations are based.

None of these alternatives strike UNCAL as either feasible or desirable. UNCAL has adopted as a firm principle that it will not engage in "secret" evaluations of projects. This must apply to the evaluation of competence and personal influence. The principle excludes the adoption of the first alternative. Another firm principle is that UNCAL will not recommend courses of action. To abandon either of these principles would be to fundamentally alter the basis of our relationship to the National Programme, a relationship to which we are firmly committed. This principle excludes the adoption of the second alternative, although it does not exclude the possibility of addressing UNCAL reports to the Directorate rather than to Programme Committee. UNCAL has assumed that one of the functions of its report is to enable Committee to evaluate the recommendations of the Directorate.

The third alternative course of action, that information for the evaluation of personnel effects and personnel competence be presented in a summarised form, conflicts with the nature of the relevant data in relation to UNCAL tasks. In the first place, persons are embedded in the contexts of CAL work, and effects are impregnated by contexts. To abstain from accounts of the ways in which effects, contexts, and persons interact would deny Committee a major resource for understanding the programme in action and for assessing its potential. In the second place, the employment of a portrayal approach is particularly appropriate to the difficult and sensitive area of individual and collective performance. Individuals and their work, are usually subject to multiple interpretations and constructions and unless this multiplicity is embodied in accounts, they will not, nor would UNCAL consider, such accounts to be fair representations. Portrayal seems to us to be the most effective way, both in terms of truth and justice, to convey the work of project personnel.

Conclusion

UNCAL is not, at this point in time, convinced that a change of procedure or role would reduce the problems of personnel evaluation while maintaining an effective evaluation service. We have no hard and fast rules in this area, however. Our practice is exploratory,

guided pragmatically by what proves to be "reasonable and acceptable".

Reflecting upon that statement now, and upon the nature of the disagreement with Committee, a disagreement which still persists, I am puzzled by a paradox. In developing the kind of portrayal reports which we have evolved, we were consciously seeking to match the decision-maker's "vocabulary of action", to borrow Ernest House's phrase. Classical evaluation has failed to provide the range of information which the decision-maker takes account of in selecting a course of action. The focus on personalities and their influence on events was a realistic recognition that the personal dimension is never ignored by the decision-maker, if information about it is available. It was an attempt to close one particular gap in the evaluation data. Yet that effort was heavily criticised. Could it be that the portrayal of persons, far from rendering those persons vulnerable to greater external control, in fact erodes that control by introducing into personnel evaluation an element of public answerability? I should like to think it were so, but I am not at all sure.

Most of the growing literature on case study and portrayal in evaluation stresses its potential for yielding better understandings of education. The SAFARI portrayals are certainly undertaken with this hope in mind and in this spirit. But as evaluators we need to bear in mind that portrayals created in this spirit may not always be received in it. In portraying persons we will often be portraying employees to employers; indeed, in education this is inevitable if portrayals are to serve audiences other than those portrayed. SAFARI takes the view that the subjects of portrayal are its primary audience, and that dissemination of portrayals beyond the subject audience must be based on their active consent. In this the goal is self-knowledge which, in Mazlow's words, "decreases control from outside the person and increases control from within the person", and reduces his predictability to others. But the UNCAL illustration provides us with another, but recognisably evaluative context of portrayal, one where the evaluator has the task of portraying persons for the explicit purpose of enabling determinations of their competence and worth to be made. In UNCAL we have put forward two lines of justification in support of our practice. The first is that no adequate portrayal of a programme

is possible which does not portray the key personalities involved. To suppress the portrayal of persons would be to deny the decision-maker the possibility of understanding what has happened. The second is that in the circumstances of the National Programme the evaluation of personnel is an inescapable factor in the determination of courses of action. It should be based on a negotiated portrayal of those persons in the relevant context of action.

But I remain uneasy. I still remember a documentary film study of a school, made by Roger Graef and broadcast on national television in 1972. The film concentrated, remorselessly, but objectively, on portraying the experience of one teacher as she tried to communicate with a class of "difficult" adolescents. By the end of it, I felt that I knew that teacher both as a person and as a professional; I shared her commitment and had a sympathetic insight into her professional problems. Above all, I admired her for agreeing to expose her experience to a wider audience, that they might develop better understandings of schooling. Some months after the broadcast I heard that she had been subjected to a barrage of criticism alleging pedagogical incompetence, had received a number of poison-pen letters, and was on the verge of a breakdown. These consequences were neither intended nor anticipated by those who created the portrayal. Should they be held to have willed the consequences of their acts? Perhaps not, but surely the principles and procedures which govern the creation and utilisation of portrayals call for closer scrutiny than they have yet received. I leave the final word in this article to Dai Vaughan, who edited the Graef film referred to. He wrote this two years later:

"Among the people who were not consulted in the shaping of the films were the participants. This conforms with time-hallowed practice, which is usually defended on the grounds that those who appear in a film, would be vitiated by pride, vanity, modesty or embarrassment. Perhaps it would..... perhaps the attempt, through open discussion with the crew, to reach agreements between conflicting parties on what constituted a truthful account of a given event would bear more resemblance to a psychiatric encounter session than to a civilised chat between colleagues, and the film would end in ribbons. But perhaps that is a better use for some films than transmission, and perhaps our budgets should allow for it. There is something to be said for an art which is grounded, as therapy,

in a real situation; and since television is a collaborative art, it may as well be collaborative therapy. The results might in fact be impressive

What price collaborative evaluation?
