FROM HUMANISTIC EDUCATION TO CRITICAL HUMANISM:

THE DIALECTICS OF THEORY AND PRAXIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis articulates the philosophy of The New School of Dawson College, an alternative pre-university Arts programme in a community college in Montreal. The roots of The New School's philosophy are examined and critiqued in the works of: Dewey, the existentialists, popular educational critics of the 1960s, Maslow, Rogers,the humanistic and "Values" educators, Kozol, Freire, Aronowitz, Giroux and feminist educational theorists.

The thesis focuses, however, on the dialectical relationship between theory and **praxis** in the development of educational philosophy. It describes the process by which various elements to be found in the works of these educational philosophers are tested by and integrated into the pedagogy of the school, contributing to its educational philosophy of Critical Humanism.

This thesis combines philosophical analysis with concrete examples of a **praxis** which is informed by and, in turn, informs educational theory.

DE L'EDUCATION HUMANISTE A L'HUMANISME CRITIQUE:

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Résumé

Cette thèse décrit la philosophie du "New School" du collège Dawson. C'est un programme pré-universitaire dans les arts, les lettres et les sciences humaines dans un collège d'enseignement générale et professionel [CEGEP] de Montréal. Les racines de la philosophie de New School sont examinées et critiquées à travers les oeuvres des: Dewey, les écrivains existentialists, les critiques popularies de l'éducation des années soixantes, Maslow, Rogers, les écrivains de l'éducation humaniste et de l'éducation aux "valeurs," Kozol, Freire, Aronowitz, Giroux et les théoriciennes féministes.

Cepandant la thése s'occupe des relations dialectiques entre les théories et la **praxis** dans le développement d'une philosophie de l'éducation. On décrit le processus par lequel de nombreuses théories des ces philosophes de l'éducation ont été integrées dans la pédagogie de l'école et comment elles contribuent à la philosophie d'éducation du New School, "l'humanisme critique."

La thèse offre une combinaison d'analyses philosophiques et d'exemples concréts d'une **praxis** qui est alimentée par, et qui en échange, alimente la théorie de l'éducation.

INTRODUCTION

Frequently works on the philosophy of education are exclusively theoretical in nature. That is, they discuss the theoretical bases on which various pedagogical decisions and strategies may be inductively formulated. There are also works in the field which extrapolate deductively from recollections of educational **praxis** and then formulate theoretical positions after the fact. This thesis will trace a fifteen year dialectical process in which the theories on which an "alternative" college programme was founded underwent a continual process of revision and change over time. This programme is The New School of Dawson College, a pre-university Arts programme within the CEGEP[1] [community college] system of Quebec. Both the educational philosophy and the **praxis** of The New School have developed in response to many influences: dialogue and discussion among teachers and students; changes in available resources within the CEGEP system; exposure to new ideas and philosophical works; the changing social ethos of the 1980s; and a new generation of students with very different concerns from the original class of 1973.

The process of change in The New School's evolving ideology has been a dynamic one of experimentation and evaluation. There are several conditions which were fundamental to this process of dialectical development:: 1) there has been a core of faculty

sharing basic educational values which has remained in the school since its inception or shortly thereafter; 2) built into the school's methodology is a system of process evaluation. Each term staff and often students evaluate the preceding term and make recommendations regarding possible changes for the coming term. This cyclical review ensures a delicately calibrated response mechanism to changes in values, needs, or resources within the school; 3) since the school has never deviated from its original commitment to learner-centered education, it can respond fairly immediately to the changing values and needs of its students and faculty.

The dialectical process in which theorization, **praxis**, evaluation, and recommended changes mutually sustain one another is probably not toally uncommon to higher education. However, changes in higher education are usually effected piecemeal (by curriculum committees and without direct participation of the students) and often in a mechanical and bureaucratic fashion. Often the people who make important decisions regarding **praxis** are not the ones who will be implementing them. At best they are simply their "representatives;" at worst, they are not actively involved in the classroom. Although curriculum revision may be under consideration, the focus is usually on content and the management of resources rather on a synthesis of epistemological considerations [the <u>why</u>], content [the <u>what</u>] and pedagogy [<u>the how</u>].

The New School's philosophy, which is currently called **Critical Humanism**, has developed as an epiphenomenon. That is, it has developed through the processes briefly described above, and it is a project never to be finished. As long as the programme continues, it will be in a state of flux, always open to innovation as well as to jealous conservation of its original commitment tc holistic student-centered education.

The development of The New School's philosophy and **praxis** has been influenced by numerous situations related to the centralization of education within the state, the vacillating fortunes of Dawson College in particular, labour disputes in Quebec, and the effect of a sensitive political situation in Quebec on young English-speaking people. The students' economic situation, which has been in a general state of deterioration over the past decade, has also informed the **praxis** of the school which in turn has informed our philosophical position.

This thesis, however, will concentrate on the actual philosophical works and the kinds of pedagogical innovation which have been most influential in informing the development of The New School's philosophy from Humanistic Education in 1973 to Critical Humanism in 1990.

In order to understand the nature of The New School as an institution, it is necessary to situate it in the context of Québec education. Chapter One serves this purpose by reviewing the objectives behind the creation of the CEGEP system as well as the

basis upon which Dawson College was founded in 1969. The chapter ends with an account of how The New School was founded, of its original ideology and of those structures developed to put its educational philosophy into operation.

Chapter Two reviews the philosophical roots of The New School from its beginning to the present time. Some people may argue that some of the sources on which the New School was informally based at its inception were really the material of the popular media and thus rather trivial. After reviewing this literature, it is my opinion that a review of the "pop education" books of the late 1960s and early 1970s gives an excellent perspective on the Zeitgeist which comprises critiques of the academy as well as commonly held values and expectations regarding "alternative" education. The chapter will review and critique the following philosophical influences on The New School:the works of John Dewey, the "Humanistic Educators" George Brown and Clark Moustakas, the important influences of Maslow, Rogers and works on values clarification. The influences will be traced of critiques of "alternative" education and the many added insights offered by the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and some of his followers. Finally, the chapter will discuss how the educational philosophy of The New School has been informed by other innovative educational projects that were concurrently developed within higher education, especially by Women's Studies.

Chapter Three covers the implementation of the ideology through a description of the New School clientèle, its values and objectives, and how the state responds to the needs of this generation of students. The chapter also demonstrates how ideology is transformed into **praxis** within the structures of the school. While it is impossible to give a full account of this process within a work of this size and scope, the examples within this chapter should provide readers with an understanding of how the central guiding principles manifest themselves through actual "classroom" process.

The reader will notice that the experience of The New School is usually referred to in the first person plural. The author of this thesis has been a teacher at The New School since 1973 and its Director [and later Co-Director] since 1975. Aware of the uniqueness of our project, I have maintained extensive archives of our experiences. This includes: the correspondence between The New School and other programmes and services at Dawson College and in Québec; Annual Reports to which numerous students, staff and faculty have contributed; vast correspondence with current and past students and staff; student works and newsletters; faculty evaluations of students and of themselves, and various anecdotal materials composed by members of the community while they were within the school and after they had left. In addition, there are taped interviews with approximately sixty teachers and students from various periods of the New School's history as well as with

current and ex-Directors General of Dawson College. While it is essential to analyse those texts central to our development, it is also important to provide accounts of The New School's **praxis** by those people who know it best: the students, the staff, and the faculty.

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1. This is the shortened for the Collèges de l'enseignement collégial général et professionel in Québec. A rough translation is "Colleges of General and Career Education."

Chapter One

CONTEXTUALIZING THE NEW SCHOOL

This thesis will trace the dialectical development of theory and **praxis** at the New School of Dawson College, an alternative pre-university Arts programme in operation since 1973. The New School is distinctive as the only extant "alternative" programme within the CEGEP system, and its long life makes it exceptional among North American "alternative" programmes started in the early 1970s. Throughout its existence, The New School has articulated and dialectically developed its educational philosophy through the cyclical application of theory to **praxis** which is then evaluated and restructured and absorbed as theory to become applied to a **praxis** which is also informed by other theoretical and pedagogical considerations. The school's philosophy has been culled from many disparate sources and developed in variable ways by numerous faculty and students.

The New School opened during an era of expansion for educators everywhere. The Parent Commission, formed to investigate the educational needs of Québec, published the Parent Report [1] in 1963-66. This report was critical of the existent educational system, maintaining that it was not preparing people for the future. While many educators might have considered that the creation of the CEGEPs encouraged the opening of doors in a stultifying educational system, the necessity for change was somewhat ambiguously

articulated in the report, whose wording makes it difficult to ascertain if the "educational crisis" perceived was the difficulty of the educational system in providing for the needs of people in a changing society, or if the "crisis" may not have been that people were actually questioning the system itself:

> The crisis is world-wide. Everywhere administrative and pedagogical procedures are being questioned; everywhere more or less radical reforms are being prepared and applied.[2]

Whether or not the "problem" or "crisis" was clearly articulated at the outset, however, it was clear that the architects of the Parent Report did see the need for educational change in a changing society. In order to meet the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous population at a time of technological change and economic growth, this report recommended another echelon of education between high school and university through the creation of the CEGEPs, institutions unparalleled elsewhere in North America.[3] The Parent commission was concerned not only with democratizing education and meeting the challenge of a changing society, but also with preserving the positive aspects of Quèbec's heritage and culture while at the same time recognizing the needs of a new kind of youth. They articulated their preoccupations in this manner:

> ...the fundamental question facing educators, and all those concerned with education: in the present cultural crisis and in the social evolution of our civilization, what should be the goals of education, what direction should be given to pedagogical reform? In more concrete terms: what degree of diversity and of specialization should we seek in education? ...Behind these questions the

> point at issue is the concept of a human ideal in the context of modern society. The replies to these questions will determine the role of education in the future, and its cultural and social mission.[4]

While the Parent Report refers to humanism as a value worth maintaining, it does not elaborate on a "broader and more varied humanism." Clrearly there is to be an emphasis on the "human" values, but those must somehow be integrated into an increasingly automated society.

> ...This search for a broader and more varied humanism, in harmony with the contemporary world, should be the major preoccupation of both teachrs and programmes of studies.[5]

Perhaps a redefined Humanism in the context of the report is best exemplified in the affirmation that educators must be aware of the world view of the student population, a Weltanschauung far from the experience of many educators:

> Education cannot neglect this world and thoughts and feelings [popular culture] in which youth moves and takes delight. If it does, the rift between the school and life will be tragically deepened. By accepting the plurality of humanism and by blazing new trails- and without denying the contribution of specialization -education may find a common denominator for those various cultural worlds which nourish contemporary intelligence.
>
> ...This double concern...for the unity of civilization and the universal needs of the human person... must be the guiding principle for that general education henceforth required by everyone.[6]

However, while the Parent Report appears supportive of plurality, it also tacitly implies that there is a single truth by defining as school's "primary task" the need to "instill a passion for the truth and a respect for intelligence."[7] Clearly this implies a limited notion of "one" truth and of what comprises

evidence of intelligence. Teachers are acknowledged as key to the process of instilling a passion for "these two all-important virtues [my emphasis]," and "it is impossible to ask too much of them in their efforts to encourage intellectual curiosity and honesty." In fact, "Everything which stands in the way of these virtues sins against the intelligence and deflects education from its primary objective."[8]

The Parent Report vacillates on the one hand between an understanding that the needs of the students must be met by addressing motivation (or else how will their intellectual curiosity be triggered?), and on the other it wishes to ensure that this vaunted "intellectual curiosity" is not only stimulated by the search for "the truth" and "honesty," but that character and civic responsibility are "moulded" to realize a positive human interaction and, in each person, a sense of communality which transcends individual interest:

> The school must indeed mould character, but it betrays its mission if it fails to open the mind. For it is, above all, in training the intelligence that the school makes up for parental inadequacy...
>
> ...Finally, even though the school's primary function concerns the intellect, the whole child is involved in education...thus the school should afford him the richest possible experience of social and community life. The scholastic environment must not promote individualsim; it must develop in the child respect and regard for others, team feeling, communal solidarity. This is particularly essential in modern society. For one thing, democracy requires of everyone an active participation in civic and professional associations, an interest in public affairs. For another, modern man is more and more called upon to work in teams and in groups. Thus in industry, smooth human relations have become almost as important as technical knowledge. Intellectual culture, moral and even religious

> training have too often been regarded from the individual point of view; they must be given social dimensions.[9]

The Parent Report is a long and complex document, and it certainly was influential in its time in Quèbec. However, it does not appear to be a guiding light to current educational policy in the CEGEPs where decisions are often guided by the availability of resources and the exigencies of complex collective agreements. Recently the basic values and objectives behind CEGEP education have been brought into question through the examination of the surprisingly elevated level of failures and drop-outs in the CEGEP system.[10]

Dawson College, the first anglophone CEGEP, opened in 1969. Its founders had to establish a new kind of institution for their community, and they were determined to establish an unique institution rather than to replicate university structures and objectives:

> The college came into being in the late 1960's when student and faculty unrest prompted a willingness to look for alternate ways of coping with the challenges of universal education. The timing was right for the creation of a college which promised to be innovative.[11]

The founders of Dawson College took democracy very seriously, and they strongly emphasized an unusual form of community development:

> It was not only a community of teachers and students making a strong effort to introduce student parity in decision-making,for example, but all support and service people were to take an active part in college life, and decision-making regarding it, also.[12]

All administrative procedures would be undertaken to support democratic education, and although the situation was "rife with ambiguity," at the outset "...everyone...adopted the vision with enthusiasm and was prepared to work out the day-to-day-to-day problems which were sure to arise."[13] This participatory style of operation became the unique characteristic of Dawson's first year of operation:

> The consequences of this uniqueness, although often unexpected, were rather jolting illustrations of what change in education really means. Many of us said we believed in learning by experience but concluded that, until we participated in Dawson's evolution, we had not known what it could men.[14]

Between 1969-73, Dawson's registration almost tripled. It became clear that the college would have to expand its physical plant to other campuses in 1973-74. The number of faculty members had also more than tripled; consequently, plans were made for three main campus buildings as well as satellite facilities. This decentralization of facilities led to a "muted" sense of community and significant intra-programme competition for resources. With the change in scale, Dawson experienced difficulty in maintaining its slogan,"Dawson is Students." There was increasing theft and student vandalism and:

> ...despite the best of intentions in some cases, some Dawson teachers were not able to perform at their best in the Dawson setting. Some wished to have more student-centered classes, but simply did not know or learn how...and the college did very little in the first years to help them. A few simply refused to accept the institutional commitment and stubbornly refused to adjust their practices to the Dawson approach...And there were many teachers who periodically faced the dilemma of trying on the one hand to respond to student individuality and

> expressed need and, on the other, to the demands of their disicplines and courses or their own perceptions of student needs.[15]

The original vision of a highly participatory community at Dawson College was concurrently dissipating for various reasons:

> Participatory democracy seems to require a higher level of sophistication and selfless responsibility than most people can muster all the time. Some seem to meet these requirements for one episode and then subside to 'average frailty.' Others sustain this level of behaviour for even years but may finally collapse physically.
>
> and
>
> Participation with its connotations of learning 'for life' and its sense of primary group involvement may satisfy the need for sense of individual worth for those who need it. If such persons do not receive this reassurance they may feel that the system is tyrannical, not democratic.[16]

It was at this juncture of expansion and disillusionment that a Humanities teacher, Guy Millisor, and one of his classes decided to posit an "ideal" CEGEP programme. They had concluded that it was virtually impossible to ensure a strong level of participation and commitment in a large, diffuse, and seemingly arbitrarily constructed community. They claimed that a strong feeling of individual self-worth was a necessary condition for a willingness to contribute to a group, and they judged the structures emerging at Dawson to be unconducive to strengthening people's self esteen or helping them to build community. As a result of these deliberations,

> ...a forceful and ccmpelling demand from a small group of students and teachers was tabled to open a "new school." ...its proponents were aggressive, persuasive, and insistent and Dawson simply said "we've got to give them a fair hearing, despite all the other problems."

> The fair hearing revealed several features which would have to be respected if the New School of Dawson College were to have a legitimate chance of success...it would have to have its own separate facilities , almost certainly non-institutional in character, and its own operating budget to ensure its freedom to pursue its own priorities; its programs would meet college diploma requirements but would be organized distinctively with clusters of courses and an emphasis on workshops rather than formal classes and institutional timetables; it would place great emphasis on "community" participation and mutual help and trust among its members; most significantly, it would give concurrent emphasis to affective and cognitive learning. Staff members would be selected with extreme care, their experiences would be carefully recorded and evaluated and, as the crowning achievement, the New School of Dawson College would model a whole variety of learning experiences and settings which could then be applied to the rest of the college and to other colleges.
>
> Because New School advocates addressed themselves to some of the most critical educational issues of that time, the college's Board decided to support the establishment of the New School and to meet its needs to an extent equivalent to the support planned for the new campus. Staff was hired, building searches were undertaken, students were recruited...and the New School got underway.[17]

The founders of The New School included several "assumptions" in their proposal to the Board of Governors: 1) There must a be new relationship between students and teachers where the teachers "...must <u>trust</u> that students want to learn and tell their students that they do so trust." They must help students "...develop feelings of self-worth...and encourage this newly expanded self confidence to further fuller growth rather than self-complacency." They must "...approach learning situations as a learner, jointly pursuing goals and pedagogy with the students" in a manner which precluded the teachers "taking over;" 2) The New School must

"...meet the individual needs of the learners ,...provide relevance to their purposes and development so that what they learn is real and important to themselves." The responsibility for making learning choices rested with the students who then had to live with the consequences of their choices; 3) The method of group discussion was to be used to examine the beliefs of community members and to help them strengthen their abilities at assent and dissent. Through this "new methodology," they would achieve self-actualization by a more "...open exploration of the inner self through exposing and nurturing unrevealed talents and values" originating within each student; 4) the curriculum would comprise the inner self and would explore new ways of learning. Students were to develop a social conscience and make social contributions to work in some "field of general social betterment." They were also to be encouraged towards self expression in aesthetic and creative ways. This holistic curriculum would help students develop "a philosophy of life and to learn to live an examined life;" 5) There was to be a dissolution of distinctions between school and other learning. The home, community, school, and other organizations would all be recognized as sites of learning where students could pursue the objective of intellectual, emotional and ethical personal growth .[18]

In order to address the cognitive, affective and social needs of the students, the school developed a central unit of organization called "the Band." Each Band was to be a primary

affiliative group comprising 30 students, one full-time and two half-time teachers. Time would be set aside to deal with the students' personal growth, and all their academic work would take place in the Bands which would each be organized around the concentration of Social Sciences, Language and Literature or the Creative Arts. The Bands would participate in the community by electing members to a governing body, a Community Council, which was to develop and maintain policies and procedures for the school. The Director, an ex officio member of the Community Council, was responsible to Dawson College for the proper functioning of The New School. In practice this model of governance was never exactly followed and a more informal model of decision-making at community meetings evolved and has functioned erratically ever since. The success of these meetings depends largely on the commitment of the students and the staff. In 1973, there were 180 students; by 1988,the number was reduced to 75.

The Bands have also changed. During the summer of 1974, some students and staff met to recommend changes to the school. Their major critique was that the Bands were too large to encourage much self-disclosure and that their curriculum was too circumscribed for students to pursue their most strongly motivated interests, even though students changed Bands every semester. As a result of these deliberations, the Bands were each to comprise only 14-16 students and one facilitator and to focus entirely on personal growth and group skills. The main curriculum of the Bands was to be self-

referred and to address the students' emotional lives.

Students would formulate learning groups and learning projects freely with faculty on the basis of their common needs and talents. The Learning Groups were to be initiated through discussion between students and faculty, and they were to be formulated on the basis of "self to subject." What this means is that the Learning Groups have to satisfy students' and faculty's affective and cognitive needs at one and the same time. The curriculum of the Learning Groups is organized through group and personal contracts which specify the personal needs each individual has for the group as well as the group's anticipated behavioural norms,expectations regarding work and assignments, and methods of evaluation. All members of the group participate in the evaluation process in which the teacher as well as the students are evaluated. While the result of this process is that a mark is produced and sent on to the registrariat, the purpose of the evaluations is primarily educational. All participants in groups learn enormously from the feedback they receive from one another. This process has more or less remained constant over the school's history.

Finally, the New School has always been committed to community formation. There are many community events and meetings throughout the year. Often disciplinary matters are brought to the community for decision-making, and it is in the community where various endemic problems in the functioning of the school are discussed. While there is great emphasis on community in the school, students

seem to identify most basically with their Bands. It is often difficult for them to transfer their newly acquired group skills to the larger arena of the community, although this is a skill many of them manage to develop after a few terms.

The site of The New School was to be non-institutional, but because of our inability to conform to building codes and zoning laws, from 1973-1975 we were forced to move seven times in and out of lovely decaying mansions on what used to be called "Embassy Row" in Montréal. From 1975-1988 we occupied two spacious floors designed for our use in a rented partially renovated commercial building near the harbour in Old Montréal. In Fall 1988, with the rest of Dawson College's pre-university sector, we moved into the renovated Mother Houses of the Congregation Notre-Dame in Westmoun. Here, in what is now called Dawson College's Atwater Campus, we occupy a pleasant attic in one of the wings. While our fortunes have changed from oak paneling and brocaded walls to large unshared spaces and now to greatly reduced and shared spaces, we have always been able to maintain our distinctive character and space.

In its first year, The New School had 180 students; the plan was for it to expand to accomodate 1000 students [33 Bands] in Science and Technology as well as Pre-University Arts. However, due to various problems, the school was cut to 140 students, a number which remained fairly stable from 1974-80. Since that time its registration fell to 100 and from 1987-90 to about 75 students.

There have been numerous hypotheses for our decline in enrollment. Certainly our ideology is not overwhelmingly attractive to the materialism fostered in the 1980s, although we continued to attract students who, disgusted with the current ethos, are searching for deeper human values. The central reason for our decline seems to have been that with declining resources we could no longer do the kind of job we had done in the past and especially with increasingly troubled young people. One of the most important original organizing principles of The New School was teacher availability for informal learning. However, since 1983 when there was an 11% increase in teachers workloads, we have access to a significantly smaller percentage of each teacher's time. Our faculty had to teach courses throughout the college as well as in The New School. With faculty "slotted" into hours throughout the college and only very peripherally available to The New School, it has become no longer possible to provide for students, who have no real model of constancy and little maturity resulting from increasingly troubled lives, the attention and access to teachers that they need. In a time of increased workload and decreasing pay and public support, it is difficult to elicit the faculty commitment necessary for the maintenance of our programme. In times of decreasing resources, we have been forced to develop strategies for counter-acting our lack of adequate human resources and staying true to our educational philosophy.

Cutbacks always come when the college's resources are strained, and they are usually imposed without any real evaluation of what we need in order to fulfill our mandate. The principles upon which The New School was founded were consistent with both the spirit of the Parent Report and the founding principles of Dawson College. Indeed, we are probably more in line with original CEGEP and Dawson ideology than most other settings within the system.

When the New School opened its doors to 180 students in August,1973, there was an impressive array of resources, a strongly articulated sense of purpose and innovation, and excitement at being in a position to revive some of Dawson's original mission and fervor and to correct some of its mistakes. We were sure that we could create a new and enhancing educational setting where individual self-actualization would happen concomittantly with the development of strong community participation.

With twenty years of hindsight of the numerous problems plaguing the CEGEPs, it is tempting to resort to cynicism at our original hopes for a "Brave new world" in education. It is more useful to remember th good news: the New School is still flourishing and still trying out innovative ways of addressing change and loss. This thesis will present an overview of how the school's philosophy and **praxis** developed in realistic response to external pressures. We have also responded consistently to a changing ethos and a deepening understanding of our own mission. At the same time as we have modified our practices and addressed

increasing complexities within our ideological discourse, we have always kept faithful to our original beliefs and defended them strongly even in the face of a radically shifting public position on the values of personal growth and social responsibilty through the 1980's. It must be said, however, that while many of the students' preoccupations change, the basic concerns of young people of college age have remained constant over time. Our students have always been concerned with their autonomy, their authenticity, their sexuality and their relationships with their peers. They are now increasingly concerned with their future and the future of the environment. As our ideology becomes elaborated, it is always with these constants in mind that we apply it to our general praxis.

1. Alphonse-Marie Parent, Chairman. Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education. Quebec, QC: The Government of the Province of Quebec, 1965. Part I, Volume 1, Chapter 1. Hereafter cited as Parent Report.

2. Parent Report, p.3.

3. While there is a burgeoning community college movement in North America, it is only in Quebec that the college diploma is required for generally required for university admission.

4. Parent Report, p. 11.

5. Parent Report, p.11.

6. Parent Report, p.14.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. See: Conseil des collêges. La rèussite ,les èchecs et les abandons au collègial: l'ètat et les besoins de l'enseignement collègial Rapport 1987-1988. Quèbec, QC: Gouvernement du Quèbec,1988.

11. Paul Gallagher and Gertrude MacFarlane, A Case Stuy in Democratic Education Dawson College. Montreal, Quèbec: Dawson College, 1976, p.23. Hereafter cited as Gallagher/MacFarlane.

12. Ibid, p. 21.

13. Ibid, p.125.

14. Ibid, p.14.

15. Ibid, p. 250-251.

16. Ibid, p.288.

17. Ibid, pp. 165-167.

18. Guy Millisor, An Abstract of the Original Proposal for the Foundation and Development of The New School of Dawson Colege. Unpublished document. Montrèal,QC: Dawson College, August,1973, pp.i-vii.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NEW SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

A. The Ethos of the Times: Critiques of Education

> Every age but ours had its model, its ideal. All of those have been given up by our culture: the hero, the gentleman, the knight, the mystic. About all we have left is the well-adjusted man without problems, a very pale and doubtful substitute. Perhaps we shall soon be able to use as our guide and model the fully growing and self-fulfilling human being, the one in whom his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, repressed, or denied.[1]

> We must be very,very critical every time we speak about emancipatory education, liberatory or liberating education. We must repeat always that we are not meaning with these expressions that in the intimacy of a seminar we are transforming the structures of the society. That is, liberating education is one of the things which we must do with other things in order to transform reality. We must avoid being interpreted as if we were thinking that first we should educate the people for being free, and after we could transform reality. No. We have to do the two simultaneously, as much as possible. Because of that, we must be engaged in political action against the dehumanizing structures of production.[2]

While the Parent Report certainly reflected some of the preoccupations of contemporary North American educational critics, it was also informed by the tradition of Christian Humanism which was struggling for survival in a society which was becoming increasingly secular. During the mid-60's to mid-70's, anglophone institutions in Québec, however, were enormously influenced by

British and American radical educational critics. Schools were considered to be very influential institutions which determined not only the level of skills attained by students in prescribed curricula, but also what students would value and how they would live their future lives.

Many of these educational critiques were fueled by the various movements of empowerment...most specifically the Black movement, the Women's Movement, the Peace Movement and movements of various identifiable national or cultural groups for autonomy and recognition. The most visible environments for educational critiques were the universities. They provided locales for the organization of political action and the articulation of a critique of education under capitalism.

At the time a very popular book among students and some educators was Jerry Farber's The Student as Nigger. Farber's central contention was that the student in the American classroom was like the "nigger" under slavery:

> For one thing damn little education takes place in the schools. How could it? You can't educate slaves; you can only train them...For students, as for black people, the hardest battle isn't with Mr. Charlie. It's with what Mr.Charlie has done to your mind.[3]

To Farber, school. .."mould [s the students] in its image, stunting and deadening [them] in the process,"[4] thus ensuring the continuation of the capitalist hegemony.

Other writers agreed with Farber's general critique, some in a less charged language. The Little Red Schoolbook, widely read in the

early '70's, had a more "liberal" and genteel reading of society than Farber's, acknowledging that:

> You can't separate school from society. You have to change one to be able to improve the other. But don't let this put you off...Every little thing you change in school may have results in society.[5]

The Little Red Schoolbook was concerned with arriving at a level of student motivation based on real feelings of interest, not on a system of academic bribery. It dismissed the newly fashionable audio-visual "aids" as devices used to "persuade students to work on things that don't interest them at all or that will be completely useless to them after they've left school...This is called 'motivation.' A better word for it might be 'bait'." [6] Liberal school reform towards more student participation was considered hypocritical:

> Nearly all the changes in which you're allowed to participate are in things which aren't very important. The real and difficult changes are those which give more and more people power to decide more and more for themselves.[7]

Other books, including "academic" readers and text books on "radical" or "alternative" education, were produced during that period. Their critique of the educational system was not very different from that in the more "popular" press: "We define schools as institutions that require students at specific ages to spend most of their time attending teacher-supervised classrooms for the study of graded curricula."[8] Contemporary schools, then, were characterised as locales for the systematic processing of students

with rigid curricula and rigid criteria for judging the students' success. In fact, this critique is not significantly different from the implicit critique in the last paragraphs quoted above from the Parent Report.

As in any revolutionary movement, there were numerous popular texts read not only by the most revolutionary members of the society, but also by many educators who judged that the educational system was unsatisfactory and wanted to find solutions. Often "revolutionary" texts were included in education courses where they were very popular among students who enjoyed the vindication of seeing their own often painful school experiences being attacked by writers who were sufficiently respected to be put on course lists in faculties of education. Most of these texts primarily addressed elementary and secondary education although there was some work on university level education. However, since community colleges had not really developed as a major force in post-secondary education by the early sixties, they were hardly examined in the light of educational revolution. Ironically, many of the radical analyses and blue-prints for change were partially adopted in schools and universities in a spirit of reform which frequently resulted in simply undermining the purpose of the changes. Many of the works of the time not only villifed the school systems for oppressing, boring, under-utilizing and misguiding the young, but they also expounded a romantic Blakean vision of the essential goodness of the child and ultimately the human adult who

had to be freed from the shackles of knowledge...or perhaps education:

> If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.
> For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.[9]

It is not possible or germane to cover all the popular educational writers of the time here.[10] However, in order to give a flavour of some of the expectations generally attendant upon "alternative education" during the period of the New School's founding, it will be instructive to examine two very popular works of the time: A.S.Neill's Summerhill:A Radical Approach to Child Rearing [11] and George B.Leonard's Education and Ecstasy.[12]

A.S.Neill begins his book with a quotation from William Blake:

> Children of the future Age
> Reading this indignant page,
> Know that in a former time
> Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime.[13]

This was an excellent apostrophe for Neill, because he really did believe that honest and disinterested love of children was the only thing that would rescue them from leading truncated lives at the least, and very destructive ones at the most. The book is an account of his boarding school for children from ages five to sixteen, Summerhill, which he founded in England in 1921. Neill claims that he and his wife created a school which would fit the child, as opposed to the usual institution into which children are

contorted to fit. His view of the "natural" child is a positive one:

> My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing. Logically, Summerhill is a place in which people who have the innate ability and wish to be scholars will be scholars; while those who are only fit to sweep the street will sweep the streets.[14]

It is important to Neill not only to assert that Summerhill is a happy place [where teachers rarely lose their tempers], but also to emphasize that the creation of happiness is in fact its pedagogical position:

> I hold that the aim of life is to find happiness, which means to find interest. Education should be a preparation for life. Our culture has not been very successful. Our education, politics, and economics lead to war...the advances of the age are advances in mechanism-in radio and television, in electronics, in jet planes. New world wars threaten, for the world's social conscience is still primitive.[15]

He goes on to show that this necessary condition for the preparation for life is provided at Summerhill through ensuring the maximum freedom for all children there:

> Summerhill is possibly the happiest school in the world. We have no truants and seldom a case of homesickness. We very rarely have fights-quarrels, of course, but seldom have I seen a stand-up fight like the ones we used to have as boys. I seldom hear a child cry, because children when free have much less hate to express than children who are downtrodden. Hate breeds hate, and love breeds love. Love means approving of children, and that is essential in any school. You can't be on the side of children if you punish them and storm at them. Summerhill is a school in which the child knows that he is approved of.[16]

While the child is steeped in approval and love at Summerhill,

Neill is emphatic that the school is not overly-permissive because the children are treated as responsible beings only insofar as they are ready for particular responsibilities. The child is only permitted to do as he pleases "...in things that affect **him**-and only him."[17] The objective of his school is to bring out the best inclination in each of the students, and he believes fervently that, left to their own devices, children will choose what is most meaningful for them to know.[18] The criteria of what is worth knowing to an individual should be set by that person, even if that person is a child:

> The function of the child is to live his own life-not the life that his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best. All this interference and guidance on the part of adults only produces a generation of robots.
>
> You cannot **make** children learn music or anything else without to some degree converting them into will-less adults. You fashion them into accepters of the status quo.[19]

Summerhill was an immensely popular book, selling over 200,000 copies a year between 1960 and 1970. Neill had published numerous books on education before, but it was Summerhill which brought him recognition. Perhaps this was because of the time in which it was published.[20] Be that as it may, in the early days of The New School, when people were very well acquainted with the Neill notion of a "free school," people would insist that The New School was a "free school" where "anything goes." With our detractors, this statement hid the usual prurient expectation of "sex, drugs and rock and

roll;" with prospective students it often indicated that they were anxious for an escape from the thralls of the regular school system as well as from their parents' control. Frequently we would begin presentations to parents and/or students with the words: "This is not a free school..." It seemed to us then and it seems even more in the light of further educational analysis that Neill's [and Blake's] hopes for the "New Jerusalem" coming forth from an environment of love was a bit naive, especially given the complexities of the contemporary world. On the other hand, whether through coincidence or through emulation, we did arrive more or less at a model of governance within the school similar to Neill's:

> Summerhill is a self-governing school, democratic in form. Everything connected with social, or group, life, including punishment for social offenses, is settled by vote at the Saturday night General School Meeting.
>
> Each member of the teaching staff and each child, regardless of his age, has one vote. My vote carries the same weight as that of a seven-year old.
>
> ...The function of Summerhill self-government is not only to make laws but to discuss social features of the community as well.[21]

Neill not only sees self-government as a necessary educational aspect of progressive education, but he claims that "...you cannot have freedom unless children feel completely free to govern their own social life." To him, one such meeting can have more curriculum value than a whole week's "curriculum of school subjects." He also describes a problem similar to one we have had perennially with self-governance at The New School: the conlict

between the needs of the individual and those of the community at large, and the various ways in which these sometimes conflicting needs may be mediated.[22]

Summerhill is an anecdotal book, describing an interesting school from the point of view of its founder. Being in more or less the same position [I am one of the founding teachers of The New School], I can well understand the desire to "sell" the institution, perhaps even to convince the reader of its rightness. Certainly Neill makes his solutions sound common- sensical and workable. I do not think there are any schools modeled absolutely on Neill's Summerhill in existence on this continent 30 years after the publication of his immensely popular book. Perhaps the fact is that Summerhill is very dependent on the particular vision of Neill. Nonetheless, this does not mean that positive aspects of the school can not be integrated into other places. It might have been more helpful to other educators, however, if Neill had presented a tighter and more reasoned philosophical rationale for his practices.

Reading Education and Ecstacy is somewhat like listening to an enthusastic conversation where all explanation is self-referred. It is a rambling conversational book where numerous people and publications are quoted without benefit of foot-notes or bibliography. The main argument of the book is that schools dam "up the floor of human potentialities," children sit about waiting for "something to happen!" and "It is as cruel to bore a child as to

beat him."[23] The author believes the situation to be remediable. Ways "can be worked out" to help average students learn what is needed in less time and more pleasurably, to provide a "new apprenticeship for living", to make the task of teaching better for teachers and to ensure that education will become a "lifelong pursuit for everyone." In fact, he claims, "Education, at best, is ecstatic."[24]

Leonard defines good learning as change and education as the process which changes the learner. By monitoring the change within learners, the teacher can assess further direction for specific courses and human interactions. What can save education from passivity and boredom is the fact that learning "...involves interaction between the learner and his environment, and its effectiveness relates to the frequency, variety and intensity of the interaction." While he does not really demonstrate in what way learning can become ecstatic, he tends to see true learning as the "pursuit of the ecstatic moment. At its best, its most effective, its most unfettered, the moment of learning is a moment of delight...the varieties of ecstacy are limitless...the skillful pursuit of ecstacy will make the pursuit of excellence not for the few, but for the many, what it never has been-successful."[25]

The main arguments for the possibility of achieving numerous moments of ecstacy are developed in a rambling section of the book devoted to human potential, where numerous luminaries from fields as diverse as religion and neurology are quoted without any sources

cited. There is an amorphous section of anecdotes about children in various situations as well as some autobiographical recounting. It focuses exclusively on the American experience of the time. The author admits that "ecstacy is one of the trickier conditions to write about" and it is especially difficult for him to show how "moments of ecstacy" in learning can become sufficiently compelling, for example, to obviate the difficulties of memorization, which comprise an important part of studying languages or sciences. Even when Leonard lists the possibility of learning various "skills" towards creating a better world,there is a hype to his thoughts which leave this reader with a doubtful "yes...but..." on her lips:

> To learn the commonly-agreed-upon skills and knowledge of the ongoing culture...to learn it joyfully and to learn that all of it, even the most sacred "fact," is strictly tentative.
>
> To learn how to bring creative changes on all that is currently agreed upon;
>
> To learn delight, not aggression; sharing, not eager acquisition; uniqueness, not narrow competition.
>
> To learn heightened awareness and control of emotional, sensory and bodily states and, through this, increased empathy for other people (a new kind of citizenship education.)
>
> To learn how to enter and enjoy varying states of consciousness, in preparation for a life of change.
>
> To learn how to explore and enjoy the infinite possibilities in relations between people, perhaps the most common form of ecstacy.
>
> To learn, for learning-one word that includes singing, dancing, interacting and much more- is already becoming the main purpose of life.[26]

The biographical note on Mr.Leonard does not indicate if he humself has ever taught, although he has written and "consulted" on education.

At the beginning of the CEGEPs, many teachers, counselliors and even administrators in the English colleges were impressed by this book. I was introduced to it by a college administrator at a Montréal English CEGEP, and I considered it vacuous even in 1970. However,I think that its heightened language, even more than the laissez-faire position of Neill, became reflected back to us at the New School in people's expectations of our objectives as an educational project. Were we after ecstacy and in what way? How did the students get to cope with the hard stuff like writing term papers? We often found ourselves responding to expectations of our critics, which were not based on our own articulation of our philosophy, but on that of the movement of educational hype in the heady sixties and seventies when people hoped and thought that education could save the world; meanwhile back at the ranch, scientists and industry were putting together ever deadlier and more accurate weaponry.

Some radical analyses of education were especially optimistic about alternative education becoming a "quiet" revolutionary social force, moving towards a more "open society," in which social class distinctions, racism, religious bigotry,the unjust distribution of resources, and the boundaries of nation-states would all disappear.

Rational and flexible decision-making would prevail throughout society.[27] One writer even alluded to the songs of Bob Dylan: "Education has a new role to play. The times they are a changing."[28] The founders of an organization called "New Nation Seed Fund," whose purpose was to help alternative libertarian schools survive, described the most desirable methodology:

> The schools are kept small so that persons can have access to one another. Relationships replace arbitrary discipline. The absence of coercion makes room for morality and ethics, and these in turn foster the humane relations which alone are the proper setting for the growth of the young.[29]

The ideas expressed by these writers popular in the late 60s and early 70s surfaced in many institutions in many countries. In response to these critiques, numerous official commissions were formed to evaluate various educational systems. Their conclusions were often dissimilar and did not always result in systemic reforms, in changes in educational institutions, or in the creation of new institutions. However, it is clear that most educational critics were concerned with: articulating a philosophy of education in which "growth" was an important factor...not just the acquisition of facts; acknowledging that growth was a holistic phenomenon in which there were personal, intellectual, spiritual and social factors; differentiating legitimate curriculum inquiry from indoctrination; pruning away from standard curriculum methods those subjects and works which were no longer relevant to students' lives; making school an integral and relevant part of society;

breaking down the social barriers between students and between students and teachers; empowering students, giving them greater freedom with a view to making them responsible citizens in a freer society; and education as a facilitative force in improving the society through helping students to become more authentic as individuals and in relation to the society at large.

Perhaps it was due to the slowness of systemic change within established educational institutions that during 1960's, numerous "alternative schools" emerged in North America. Some of these were "Free Schools," some were community-supported schools with strong parental participation and accountability structures, and some eventually became part of public school systems' desperate efforts to keep young people in school.

> In the 1960s the federal government, private foundations, corporations, and community groups poured massive amounts of money and energy into efforts to change the public school system. The gloomy statistics documenting the shortcomings of public schools in the education of minority students highlighted the poor fit between school offerings and the needs and goals of many students...beginning in the late 1960s, the Ford Foundation assisted efforts at a new kind of reform involving smaller, more experimental, more tentative efforts to improve education.[30]

While most of these alternatives in both Canada and the United States were at the elementary and secondary levels, there were some "alternative programmes" within post-secondary institutions. Although these "alternatives" were organized on variously or rarely articulated educational philosophies, their guiding force was that they were "alternative" to the existing mainstream education

provided (at the elementary and secondary levels) by the state, and (at post-secondary levels) by the state and private institutions.

The founders of The New School shared many of these views. They believed schools to be over-controlling, disconfirming of the individual, and generally a pernicious force in society. They found in Humanistic Education a solution which would provide a better and more interesting school environment as well as the tools for basic social change. Their notion of social change was based on individual changes of attitude which resulted from personal growth, rather than radical social change resulting in the global redistribution of power and resources.

B. Philosophical Roots

While the original plans for The New School may have sprung from a critique of the current educational system, the proposal for its founding was not based solely on negative criticism. Rather, it was founded on the notion that all education should be "people-centered" and "process-centered" rather than simply "information-centered." True education was to devolve from the self-perceived needs of the students, and it should develop from an understanding of <u>why</u> they wanted to learn certain things, <u>why</u> certain types of knowledge might be important for them <u>personally</u> rather than simply as a means to another and distant end such as institutional pre-requisites or some distant privilege that might

accrue to the holder of specific and privileged knowledge. The crucial factors in any educational undertaking were the learners: **who** were they? **what** did they want to know? **why**? **how** did they want to go about learning? This educational project had to operate with a working model of the human personality and the exercise of freedom. Because the school had a commitment to social change, learning at The New School would also involve balancing personal needs and freedom with the need to live and work collaboratively with others.

The New School was founded on philosophical premises which had their roots primarily in the works of Maslow, Rogers, Brown, Moustakas, and other Humanistic psychologists and philosophers. There were various other sources for the original development of the New School's educational philosophy: Dewey, the existentialists, the values clarification philosophers and educators, and feminist and Black theorists. Later on, The New School would become influenced by work in critical pedagogy and peace education. It must also be understood that numerous teachers, administrative assistants and students who passed through the school were influential in shaping its philosophy at various times. The New School's philosophy is one which develops continually in a dialectical and dialogical manner: ideological position-praxis-experience-feedback-discussion-modulation of position-development of praxis-experience-feedback, etc. While the philosophy becomes more elaborated, its basic premises of individual and group

empowerment remain constant.

The educational point of departure to prepare young people to better their society favoured in the founder's Abstract of the Original Proposal was the development of a strong self-concept. Indeed it was considered an essential condition to appropriate and productive inter-personal relations. The development of the self was considered to be a primary function of education:

> While we as a society devote much energy to teaching the students to think logically about such matters as solid geometry, number systems etc., explicit training of the student in methods of processing information about himself and others in his inter-personal world is almost totally lacking. The development of a collection of hypotheses about oneself, the self-concept, is largely haphazard and the product of unexamined and unverbalized experience. Lacking the necessary skills for seeking and processing information about ourselves, is it any wonder that few of us can construct relatively clear and unambiguous accounts of our goals, aspirations, values, traits and abilities? And in the absence of learned skills necessary to the understanding of inter-personal interaction, is it any wonder that many individuals are confused about their relationship to self or to others?[31]

The critique of education quoted above, echoes a similar critique made by the American educational philosopher, **John Dewey**, almost half a century before:2

> The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without; that it is based upon natural endowments and that education is a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure.[32]

It is not coincidental that there should be this parallel between an early progressive educator and more contemporary

proponents of the human potential educational movement, because there are various parallels between the two movements.Certainly the second was informed by the first. The progressive education movement began in protest against the narrow formalism and inequities of public education around 1890 in the United States , peaked in the 1920's and 1930's and then "collapsed in the years after World War II."Like the Humanistic Educators, the Progressive Educators also saw schools as levers of social reform, education as an instrument for individual self-realization or growth and as a place where people could learn how to adjust to the rapid changes taking place in their world.[33] John Dewey, who was the chief articulator of the movement's aspirations, saw education as an essential factor in the growth of individuals. It was the business of educators to find those conditions most conducive to growth:

> A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile.[34]

Dewey's concept of growth, however, was much more focused than what was to become the prevailing notion of the Humanistic psychologists who succeeded him in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. To him, "Growth in judgement and understanding is essentially growth in ability to form purposes and to select and arrange means for their realization."[35]

Dewey saw education as a means of helping people grow, helping them experience freedom, or giving them power. Growth, to Dewey, had specific characteristics related to understanding objective information and making wise choices on the use of that information. Giving people power did not include the notion of "power over." Dewey's concept of power is expressed in the phrase, "power as a means to"---it describes the individual's being enabled to act wisely on his/her own behalf:

> There can be no greater mistake, however, than to treat such freedom as an end in itself.It then tends to be destructive of the shared cooperative activities which are the normal source of order. But, on the other hand, it turns freedom which should be positive into someting negative. For freedom from restriction,the negative side, is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation.[36]

Because of his emphasis on "freedom/power to", Dewey was convinced that the learner must participate "in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process" and that there was:

> ...no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying. But the meaning of purposes and ends is not self-evident and self-explanatory. The more their educational importance is emphasized, the more important it is to understand what a purpose is; how it arises and how it functions in experience.[37]

To Dewey the learner's experience (what would be called "relevance" by later critics) was an essential point of departure for

undertaking to learn something. However, he emphasized that this preliminary connection was only the **primary** step in a learning process:

> But finding the material for learning within experience is only the first step. The next step is the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person...It thus becomes the office of the educator to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement will expand the area of further experience.[38]

Dewey did not believe that all experiences were automatically educative. In order to be educative, they had to ..."tend both to knowlege of more facts and entertaining of more ideas and to a better, a more orderly arrangement of them." He saw learning as a progression from the first personal experiential connection to a more "objective" sense of reality,[39] thence to the capacities for self-control. To Dewey,freedom was to be ultimately found in the fullest exercise of self-control.

> In the case of education, modulation means movement from a social and human centre toward a more objective intellectual scheme of organization, always bearing in mind, however, that intellectual organization is not an end in itself but is the means by which social relations, distinctively human ties and bonds, may be understood and more intelligently ordered.[40]

Existentialists share some of Dewey's concern with issues pertaining to freedom. Because the human situation is "essenceless," humans are "confronted in every waking moment by phenomenal situations to each of which there are numberless

responses we could give."[41] Clearly they must learn to make choices. Van Cleve Morris in his book, Existentialism in Education, traces the process through which people must go before they are even ready to enter the realm of choice. Drawing on other existentialist philosophers, Morris claims that when people realize how utterly arbitrary the fact of their individual existence is, they undergo an "encounter with nothingness:"

> The encounter **with nothingness**, seemingly so unpromising as a starting problem in philosophical discourse, is in fact the test we should be willing to take as a demonstration of our worth in the world. It is not nothingness but the **encounter** with nothingness which provides the vehicle for our humanness to exhibit itself...Nothingness, after all, is not a foregone conclusion; it is only a **possibility**.[42]

However, this state of consciousness, while causing individuals their moments of darkness and alienation, need not end in despair but in the knowledge that one may create

> ...the project of living one's life in such as way as to be deserving of something better than nothingness and obliteration; to confront nothingness, to **deny** nothingness, by filling it up with a life that ought never to be lost or annihilated.[43]

This project is particularily difficult to realize because there are so many claims on people's attention and desires. Creating a raison d'être is difficult and is one of the tasks of education. In order to be amenable to the learning of truly valuable subject matter, individuals must consider themselves "worthy" of the knowledge. To achieve this end, they must recognize their own irreplaceability as well as their own "belongingness" in society.

Very often people develop a false sense of affiliation through the arbitrary descriptions imposed by others: nationality, class, race, gender, creed. These are neither essential characteristics nor can they be chosen at birth. Rather, they are simply classifications, "facticités" as de Beauvoir named them, which must be replaced by chosen values as we attempt to infuse our lives with a sense of meaning and purpose. The creation of values is the task of the learner:

> ...I am the starter of the value-making process, but as such I myself have no base to stand on that can tell me which values I should start making. In this role, then, I discover that I am the originator, the inventor, the creator of values...**In the act of choosing, man brings values into being.**[44]

There are necessary conditions for constructing a meaningful life: freedom, the awareness of one's own freedom, and the understanding of one's personal responsibility in valuing and choosing action appropriate to one's freedom and life. People who choose not to address these conditions of meaning are often relegated to a kind of personal and moral numbness; on the other hand, choosing to choose---recognizing one's possibilities of creating a life of meaning---creates the possibility of living in good faith and authenticity. Finally, if individuals should strive for authenticity in their life's experience and moral positioning, then an authentic society is also desirable and possible. In view of the need for freedom in establishing authenticity, such freedom from moral or material coercion is essential to the maintenance of an

authentic society.[45]

The task of education for the existentialist is a complex one in our imperfect world where the human striving for authenticity must **per force** take place within the dramatic tensions of variably coercive social institutions like the family and the school itself. While Dewey defined the child as having various innate dispositions to be encouraged by the educator, the existentialist will not acknowledge the possibility of innate dispositions: rather, the objective is "...to be aware of the **possibility** of being disposed this way or that. **It is to be aware that one is the author of his own dispositions!**" Learners may become fully aware of themselves as the shapers of their own values and lives. Through their own efforts and unique ruminations, they may posit what "...a human being **ought** to be", thus moving beyond "mere intellectual discipline, beyond mere subject matter, beyond mere enculturation, beyond mere `fundamental dispositions,'to the ...zone of value creation."[46]

It is important to bear in mind that exercising freedom to choose ones values and taking responsibility for them do not exist in an emotional vacuum. There is always an affective level to each thought, each choice. In fact, in Humanistic Education as practised at The New School, the feelings related to choices are an integral part of the data examined before making choices. This is not the trivial "if it feels good, do it" school of thought. Rather, it is based on the recognition that in order to make authentic choices,

people must understand their emotional roots and their impact upon themselves and others. These insights must be weighed along with all other values which people may wish to attribute to any situation.

Being aware of their feelings is important not only as people make choices of value, but as they learn. It is important for learners to appropriate knowledge, to filter it through their own emotional as well as "factual" and experiential knowledge in order to comprehend it in a way that informs their lives with authenticity. This means that in order to achieve authenticity, learners must subject the profferred knowledge to an epistemological analysis which takes into account its meaning, signification, social context and emotional connection to them. Through this process, their knowledge becomes unique and transformed into a meaning which informs their lived [and only] lives.

There is an inherent paradox in supporting the role of the teacher as agent of awakened awareness in the learner while at the same time acknowledging the individual's need to achieve awareness of him/herself as a single and unique subjectivity in the world. This problem arises continually at The New School; later I will discuss this in detail. Suffice it to say now that neither Dewey nor Morris comes to terms with this issue: who really knows the "true" dispositions of the learner which should be encouraged by the teacher? How can a teacher awaken a student to his or her own

unique subjectivity without influencing the content of the learner's perception? In both cases the teacher must **respect** the learner's autonomy while at the same time precipitating active involvement in what may become a painful moment of insight for the learner.

C. Maslow and Rogers

The New School's original basic texts were anti-school works popular at the time of its inception: books, broadsides, magazines and campus newspapers. However, the serious texts given to us for consideration were works specifically on Humanistic Education, as articulated by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Many of the first teachers at the New School had taken part in overt political action in the Black movement, the anti-war movement,and the women's movement; we were familiar with Marxist analyses of society. We clearly saw the function of class in determining our students' perceptions and choices. In a college as ethnically, racially and socially diverse as ours, it is undeniable that ethnicity, class, gender and race are strong determinants in our students'interests, behaviour and aspirations---and in allowing for conditions where self-actualization can take place.

Abraham Maslow criticizes the educational system as having as its chief concern, efficiency..."that is, with implanting the greatest number of facts into the greatest possible number of children, with a minimum

of time, expense and effort."[47] He argues that education should not be "extrinsic" [for various signifiers of status] but "intrinsic," for the pleasure of knowing more about oneself and one's full potential as a human being:

> The ideal college would be a kind of educational retreat in which you could try to find yourself; find out what you like and want; what you are and are not good at. People would take various subjects, attend various seminars, not quite sure of where they were going, but moving toward the discovery of vocation, and **once they found it,** they could make good use of technological education. The chief goals of the ideal college, in other words, would be the **discovery of identity,** and with it,**the discovery of vocation**...part of learning who you are, part of being able to hear your inner voices, is discovering what it is that you want to do with your life.[48]

Maslow clearly saw growth as the objective of education, and he named the highest form of growth "self-actualization."The self-actualized person must be "in a state of good psychological health" with basic needs satisfied, and a life's work or "mission in life" which is of intrinsic value to him/her. Maslow identifies as necessary conditions for self-actualization the satisfaction of a "hierarchy of needs," beginning with people's needs for basic biological survival and moving upwards to needs for security, belongingness, dignity, love, respect, and self-esteem. Self-actualization is a development of the personality which frees the person from neurotic problems so that s/he is able to come to terms with the real issues of the human condition. To Maslow self-actualization was not a static state, but rather a dynamic life-long process.

> Growth is seen then not only as a progressive gratification of basic needs to the point where they "disappear,"but also in the form of specific growth

> motivations over and above these basic needs, e.g. talents, capacities, creative tendencies, constitutional potentialities. We are thereby helped also to realize that basic needs and self-actualization do not contradict each other any more than do childhood and maturity. One passes into the other and is a necessary prerequisite for it.[49]

Maslow also believed that under optimum conditions,

> There seems no **intrinsic** reason why everyone shouldn't be this way [self-actualizing]. Apparently, every baby has possibilities for self-actualization, but most get it knocked out of them...I think of the self-actualizing man not as an ordinary man with something added, but rather as the ordinary man with nothing taken away. The average man is a human being with dampened and inhibited powers.[50]

While Maslow liked to speculate that self-actualization was available to all people, his own studies of people he considered self-actualized convinced him that although they were exceptional, they did not have a life free of dilemma. Their problems were those of isolation, detachment and fear of over-shadowing others. Maslow also posited that men and women might experience self-actualization differently. In a letter, he claimed that because our culture disconfirms feminine modes, "our conceptions of the universe, of science, of intelligence, [and] of emotion are lopsided and partial because they have been constructed by man...If only women were allowed to be full human beings, thereby making it possible for men to be full human beings." However, he also thought that the closer both men and women came to self-actualization, the more similar they would become, each having <u>all</u> the human qualities.[51]

In order for people to achieve self-actualization, they must be prepared to take increased responsibility for their lives. To

achieve this end, it is necessary for them to develop coherent value systems. Maslow identified key principles regarding the need for values:

> 1. All humans, including children, need a coherent value system.
>
> 2. Lack of a value system in the larger culture breeds certain forms of psychological disorder.
>
> 3. Individuals will crave and search for a coherent value system.
>
> 4. People prefer having <u>any</u> value system, however unsatisfying, to none at all---that is, complete chaos.
>
> 5. If there is no adult value system, then a child or adolescent will embrace the value system of peers.[52]

While several of these principles are corroborated by our experience at the New School, what is significant here is that Maslow's theories,and then Rogers'theories, both paved the way for the development of further work on values clarification which in turn got integrated into the field of Humanistic Education. Indeed, the issue of values and valuing as a central factor in education has developed in a incremental manner from Dewey onwards. Maslow was to become increasingly concerned with what he considered a crisis in values in his society:

> In recent years and to this day, most humanistic scholars and most artists have shared in the general collapse of all traditional values. And when these values collapsed, there were no others readily available as replacements. And so today, a very large proportion of our artists, novelists, dramatists, critics, literary and historical scholars are disheartened or pessimistic or despairing, and a fair proportion are nihilistic or cynical...
>
> [We are in] a chaos of relativism. No one of these people now knows how to defend and validate his choice.

This chaos may fairly be called valuelessness.[53]

Educational settings can create the optimum circumstances for self-actualization for "psychologically healthy" students by encouraging them to experience joy, refreshen their aesthetic consciousness, control impulses, and find meaning in their lives. Maslow acknowledges that often young people, living in pathological states of passivity and drug and alcohol dependency, do not come from situations of great biological, social or psychological deprivation. He describes their state as a "cognitive and spiritual sickness," and attributes it to the lack of transcendant meaning in their lives. This meaning must come from an appreciation of more abstract qualities like truth, beauty and justice. Once these values are internalised, the boundaries of the self will extend beyond the constricting personal sphere of interests to include the whole world:

> ...we would have a great flowering of a new kind of civilization. People would be stronger, healthier, and would take their own lives into their hands to a greater extent. With increased personal responsibility for one's personal life, and with a rational set of values to guide one's choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they lived. This movement toward psychological health is also movement toward spiritual peace and social harmony.[54]

Finally, Maslow believed that if teaching were carried out in a way that stressed personal discovery, this would encourage learners to have "peak-experiences,illuminations,the sense of mystery,and of awe" in the process. He considered the appropriate circumstances

to be "...certainly one of the pressing tasks for professional educators."[55] Indeed, Maslow was convinced that the "power of the peak-experience could permanently affect one's attitude to life...It is my strong suspicion that one such experience might be able to prevent suicide...and perhaps many varieties of low self-destruction, [such as] alcoholism, drug-addiction, and addiction to violence."[56]

Maslow's answer to the existentialists' "nothingness" is that the only way to avoid a sense of meaninglessness is to create one's own meaning, to get in touch with the marvels of the world through cultivating autonomy, independence of culture and environment, a continued freshness of appreciation, a GemeinschaftsgefÜhl, good personal relations, and a good sense of humour: in short, the way to arrive at meaning and purpose in life was to undertake the discipline and struggle towards self-actualization. In our imperfect world people must be educated towards this end.

Carl Rogers characterized the traditional classroom as a locus where only the intellect is valued, in which authoritarian rule is the accepted policy with the teacher as powerful possessor of all the knowledge and the student as obedient recipient. There is no place for emotions in the traditional classroom. Teacher-student and intra-student trust is at a minumum in such an oppressive environment. Rogers' response to the conventional educational setting and methodology is to develop a theory of "person-centered

education" where cognitive skills may be combined with better knowledge of self and of interpersonal behaviour: "...when students perceive that they are free to follow their own goals, most of them invest more of themselves in their effort, work harder, and retain and use more of what they have learned than in conventional courses."[57] One of Rogers' deepest criticisms of education is of its mistrust of the students implicit in the prevalent arrangement of orders governing almost every part of the students' schools lives:

> Consequently at the very age when he should be developing adult characteristics of choice and decision making, when he should be trusted on some of those things, trusted to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes, he is, instead, regimented and shoved into a curriculum whether it fits him or not.[58]

To critics who insist that if left to their own choices, students would choose not to do anything, Rogers has this response:

> ...Now that education is such a dominant force in the life of the young person, I hope someone will get interested in very esoteric subjects if that's what intrigues him, and follow that clear emotion through. But there ought to be a place, too, for the emotional learnings, for getting to know oneself better as a feeling person.[59]

Rogers did not mince his words in his critique of contemporary education in America. Indeed towards the end of his life in the early 1980's he became increasingly critical, claiming that the educational system was:

> ...suffering from many elements of a crippling sort: the decreased financial resources, the dwindling enrollment, the tangled web of law and bureaucratic regulations that so often dehumanizes the classroom, a dangerous right-wing attack that aims to prevent freedom of thought and choice, and boredom, frustration, rage and despair on the part of

many students.[60]

In order to understand the full application of Roger's theories of education, however, it is important to understand his model of the "functioning person." To Rogers the dysfunctional person lives in continual fear of himself and the external world. Most of his hypotheses regarding functional people derive from his therapeutic model or goal. In this sense he is unlike Maslow who derived his notion of self-actualized people backwards by studying people whom he considered self-actualized de facto as a result of his familiarity with them or with their accomplishments and attitudes. The process of therapy through which Roger's client becomes "functioning" acquaints him with "...elements of his experience which have in the past been denied to awareness as too threatening, too damaging to the structure of the self." By experiencing these feelings fully and intensely, the client realizes that these feeling are part of himself, and that by accepting them he no longer needs to fear them but may choose to develop with or from them as a functional person.[61]

The characteristics to be found in the functional person are the following: s/he is open to experience; s/he lives in an existential fashion. This means that s/he will not live in anxiety about those things s/he cannot control and will not try to impose a rigid structure on experience. The person will "...find his[her] organism a trustworthy means of arriving at the most satisfying behavior in each situation."[62] While Rogers claims the person should

do what "feels right," he does not suggest impulsive action. He indicates that this "feeling" should be arrived at after factors in a situation have been weighed;this feeling should be the controlling factor. The functional person is creative; Rogers claims that all people are by nature creative, but that they are blocked off from their creativity by fears and social norms. Rogers is careful to emphasize that this paragon is hypothetical. He confirms that the more open a personality is, the more the person is likely to live in flux: "The most stable personality traits would be openness to experience, and the flexible resolution of the existing needs in the existing environment."[63] While Rogers is not simplistic enough to think that people in fact <u>have</u> absolute freedom, his solution of the freedom/ determinism polarity is somewhat glib and dismissive: "The fully functioning person...not only experiences, but utilizes the most absolute freedom when he spontaneously, freely, and voluntarily chooses and wills that which is absolutely determined."[64] Elsewhere, Rogers shows more sophistication:

> ...I focus on the self-deterministic, rather than social-environmental or genetic-deterministic values in my training of students. ...There is no doubt that our genetic inheritance sets certain limits on what an individual is going to be and become. Those limits are more capable of being stretched than we had supposed, but there are limits. There's no question in my mind that we are very much shaped by what happens to us in our childhood, in our family, and in our contact with society...But then there is also the fact that in the present moment, it is the person himself who is able to understand those factors that have contributed to who he is, and to choose his own future...I think as the person becomes aware of these various factors in his background, he can make realistic and sensible

> choices as to how he's going to both live with and transcend the circumstances of the past...I don't believe in free will in the sense that a person is free to do anything, but to deny the reality of the significance of choice as the strict behaviorists do is totally unrealistic.[65]

One way in which people who want to live the fullest versions of their lives may express their free will is in the search for authenticity. The person who has embarked upon such search "...values communication as a means of telling it the way it is, with feelings, ideas, gestures, speech, and bodily movement all conveying the same message." This person must be willing to engage in "painful honesty" and to pay the price of this honesty rather than to resort to "tactful generalities."[66] The person who has reached this level of development has worked out feelings of <u>incongruence</u> which arise when his "experience is quite discrepant from the way he has organized himself," when he dares to be aware of what he is experiencing without defending against it.[67]

The means by which people may arrive at the congruence which characterizes functionality is through what Rogers calls the "valuing process." Here people must rid themselves of "introjected" and often highly contradictory values from various formative sources through analysing the sources of those values and the affect attached to them. This means "restoring contact with experience" unmediated by the introjections of others. Rogers claims that rigidly held values are a result of insecurity. The mature person must have flexibility in valuing and be willing to

test values with an eye either towards self-correction or self-enhancememt. While Rogers claims he cannot set down absolute patterns of value-change, he does identify "value directions"[68] which he says move people in the way of personal growth and maturity; such people tend to move away from: façades, pleasing others as a goal in itself, and "oughts." They value as positive: "being real," self-direction, themselves and their own feelings, being in process, sensitivity to and acceptance of others, and deep relationships. They show an openness to inner and outer experiences and are open to their own inner reactions and feelings as well as those of others and the realities of the world.[69]

Like Maslow, Rogers believes that people can actualize themselves with or without therapy: "Self-actualization implies that the person is acceptantly aware of what's going on within and is consequently changing practically every moment and is moving on in complexity."[70] However, Rogers does not expect the kind of total transcendance or the attainment of peak experiences for his "functional" person that Maslow claims for his self-actualized people. Perhaps the difference is that to Maslow peak-experiences are an end in themselves, while to Rogers they form an epi-phenomenon, a possible result of becoming functional.

Rogers developed a coherent and elaborated theory of education; his theory of education and his practice were bent to the purpose of helping people become self-actualized, mature, and functional. True education, to Rogers, is the **"facilitation of**

change and learning...Changingness, a reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world." The key elements in this process were to be ..."certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal **relationship** between the facilitator and the learner."[71]

Here the teacher is referred to as a "facilitator" and shares with all participants the responsibility for the learning process. The students, facilitated through shared responsibility, alone or with others, develop their own programme of learning based on their self-perceived cognitive and affective needs. While the humanistic educator is very important in initiating the class and helping it get started, this leadership role should decline as the class progresses, allowing the students to lead themselves and use the teacher as a resource person. The teacher becomes part of the class,sharing his/her experiences, feelings and skills with the students as they require them. [72]

Rogers carefully outlines the qualities necessary to facilitate real learning: "The facilitator is a real person,being what she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a façade." Part of this realness is expressed in a sense of "puzzlement," where the facilitator has the obligation to express ignorance or lack of understanding. The facilitator must also "prize" the other person's feelings and opinions and hold the belief that the other person is fundamentally

trustworthy. This prizing or acceptance of the learner "...is an operational expression of her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism." Empathic understanding is a necessary quality. Here the facilitator "...has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems **to the student...**"

Finally, the facilitator must be willing to live in uncertainty where only what she discovers in the **process** of facilitating will guide her along the way.[73] Rogers is fully aware of the doubts that these criteria will raise in the minds of possible facilitators: they might feel incapable of fulfilling the demands of "unleashed curiosity;" will they have the academic resources? Do they have the courage, creativity, tolerance and humanity to accept such a responsibility?[74]

Rogers moves from identifying appropriate facilitative attitudes to identifying appropriate facilitative **behaviours.** The facilitator: is instrumental in setting the initial mood or climate of the group; helps to elicit or clarify the purposes of individuals and the group; relies upon the motivation of each student to implement those "purposes which have meanings for him;" tries to organize and make available appropriate resources for learning; identifies himself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group; in responding to expressions in the group, accepts and addresses both the cognitive and affective attitudes in direct

relation to their presence in the group; becomes increasingly integrated as a member of the group; takes initiative in sharing his feelings and thoughts with the group without imposing them; and continually endeavours to keep aware of and accept his own limitations.[75]

Consistent with his philosophy of the person, Rogers has great faith that teachers who really want to become facilitators in this manner, will learn how to do it:"We've also had experience enough to know that some people who are not particularly skilled but who possess some basic attitudes can be trained in relatively short intensive periods to become much more skillful as facilitators of communication."[76] Rogers believed in and provided experiential training for numerous teachers and leaders in order to facilitate their learning the skills of facilitation.

Having identified key factors in facilitative attitudes and behaviours, Rogers also outlines pedagogical methods which are enhancing of personal growth. The focus is on an emerging curriculum always connected with the students' self-perceived needs. The students will only be motivated to work on issues which are real to them. Humanistic Education values the continuing process of learning rather than objectively verifiable products. There is an on-going process of self-,mutual-, and group evaluation. Students are empowered in every facet of the learning process, they are motivated towards self-discipline and accountability within groups. Rogers argues that this kind of

learning is deeper, proceeds more rapidly, and becomes more internalized by the students than the learning acquired in the traditional classroom. He suggests the use of contracts which will give learners both security and responsibility; conversely, students who do not desire this kind of learning should always have other options in a course. He suggests that all learning should be presented as an inquiry with each learner a full participant. He is also very partial to the use of simulation in teaching, arguing that it provides,

> ...the student with first hand experience of various processes which occur in real life: with decision-making based upon incomplete and changing information, made urgent by deadlines; with the difficulties of communication, the sometimes disastrous results of misunderstandings and crossed messages, or the discrepancy between verbal communication and actual behavior; with the handling of interpersonal relationships in negotiation, bargaining, and "deals."[77]

Rogers also supports programmed instruction for the "functional learning of subject matter" which requires step-by-step application. His only proviso is that programmed learning should be presented as a fairly limited means to learn and should never take the place of creativity in learning.

On the more affective level, Rogers believes that the basic encounter group is an excellent **locus** for learning. If it is properly handled, it should result in increased self-understanding, more independence in the individual and an increased comprehension and acceptance of others.[78] The group should start with little imposed structure and the leader's function is to

"...facilitate expression, and to clarify or point up the dynamic pattern of the group's struggle to work toward meaningful experience."[79] Rogers gives an excellent description of the kind of processes found in encounter groups; many of these processes take place in successful Bands at The New School.

> In such a group, after an initial "milling around," personal expressiveness tends to increase. This also involves an increasingly free, direct and spontaneous communication betwen members of the group. Facades become less necessary, defenses are lowered, basic encounters occur as individuals reveal hitherto hidden feelings and aspects of themselves, and receive spontaneous feedback---both negative and positive- from group members. Some or many individuals become much more facilitative in relationships to others, making possible greater freedom of expression.[80]

Finally, a sine qua non of Rogerian education is self-evaluation and group evaluation of both the facilitator and the learners. This is an essential step to ensure that learners take responsibility for pursuing the aims they set for themselves in their contracts and that facilitators are continually learning.

D. Some Humanistic Educators

Both Maslow and Rogers came to Humanistic theory and education through their work as psychologists. They had an important influence on numerous educators who also wrote on pedagogy and ideology of the person. Here I will discuss two such educators who were to become influential in the Humanistic

Education movement and whose works were introduced to the staff at The New School.

George Isaac Brown wrote on the applications of Humanistic Education in a book entitled Human Teaching for Human Learning where he differentiates between healthy and sick societies:

> A sick society at worst could totally turn on itself in a blazing necrophilic orgy of self-destruction. A healthy society learns from its mistakes and allows its members to grow toward authenticity, communication and productivity. It makes available a continuing choice between the tranquillity of reflection and the excitement and gratification of individual and group creative endeavor...[81]

In the next paragraph, Brown gives a "Cook's tour" of the history of education (beginning with Socrates) in order to prove that education has had a profound effect on "human powers," and the formation of history. He claims that his country, the United States, is "...at a new threshold. Simultaneously emerging in our time are a number of approaches to the extension of human consciousness and the realization of human potential."[82] Brown then coins the term "confluent education" to describe the process which he believes will bring human consciousness and society to further heights:

> ...confluent education describes a philosophy and a process of teaching and learning in which the affective domain and the cognitive domain flow together, like two streams merging into one river, and are thus integrated in individual and group learning.[83]

Brown presents various civic goals which could be met by confluent education. By addressing the students' feelings, one could accord them more power which increases their sense of freedom

and consequent responsibility. While he does not elaborate on how this is done, he claims that "Gestalt-therapy experiments were especially productive in teaching the relationship between freedom and responsibility."[84] He also believes that properly conducted confluent education could stabilize students' reactions to injustice and frustration. If the intellect and emotions did not work in concert, there could be a veritable "volcano" of feeling which would result in revolution. Properly managed, these feeling and thoughts could be channeled into "innovative action."[85] The third civic goal of confluent education is "Americanism and Patriotism." Here Brown reveals a highly indiviudalistic bias: the individual comes before the state, but properly developed individuals will naturally see the value of tolerance and a free society as well as the evils of a totalitarian state. "Concern for preserving the freedom of our country must permeate the very being of every citizen."[86] Brown articulates what he considers to be the necessary conditions to succeed at these somewhat questionable goals:

> The ideal pedagogical condition is where a learner, fully possessed of feelings of personal adequacy as an explorer in the universe of experience, finds the adventure of new experience a prospect of challenge and excitement. Thus he learns. And he thirsts for yet more experience. He feels most alive when he is learning, whether what he learns be pleasant or unpleasant. This kind of vitalized learning involves both affective and cognitive dimensions. That is, the learner learns as a whole person, with both mind **and** feeling.[87]

The quality of Brown's argumentation here gives a good sense of the shallowness of his ideas as well as the vagueness of his pedagogical advice. The reader should not be taken in, however, by the blandness of his assurances that confluent education can stem the tide of revolution by turning people to the promise of innovation. This cannot be construed as benign when one realizes that he is writing in the America of the early seventies, a country which has had numerous riots in its major cities, precipitated by the "frustrated" and oppressed (a word he does not seem to know) citizenry. It is disheartening to realize that he is advocating the use of Humanistic Education and techniques for social control, and ultimately in order to ensure that **civic** power remains in the hands of conservative self-interest which maintain the social institutions which regulate the access of the "frustrated" population to those resources they need and want.

At the inception of The New School we used the terminology of "confluent education" primarily because it was used by the Director as well as our Community Facilitator, the latter having been educated at the University of Massachusetts Ph.D. programme on Humanistic Education. However, the concept was presented extra-contextually without the benefit of Brown's jingoism and paradoxical use of a pedagogy of empowerment to derail people's carrying through what they felt they wanted to do if that something were revolution. Later on, however, we dropped the term because it was so specialized that nobody understood it outside of our small

community. We found it more comprehensive to talk of "holistic education" because it broadened the scope of learning to include the social, political, aesthetic, spiritual and physical development of the person along with the affective and cognitive aspects which, taken alone,are somewhat amorphous as categories.

Clark Moustakas, writing in 1972, is much more focused on notions of the self and of personal growth. Moustakas tries to come to terms with the notion of self. On the on hand, "...the person can never know the self in conscious, defined terms, nor can the self really be classified or categorized;" conversely, one can get somewhat in touch with the self through its expressions which mean both uniqueness and universality. The self is also the locus, the "unalterable source and base to which all growth is ultimately ascribed."[88] Moustakas differentiates between the self and the personality. The personality is more available to people:

> Every person is born a unique individual and remains so throughout his life. Even when the development of personality has been thwarted and the potentialities of the self are unfulfilled, a certain core of quality intrinsic to one's inner nature persists and stamps a mark of individuality on the person.[89]

He also believes that the individual is born with personal integrity which can be stifled but never completely destroyed.[90]

Moustakas' model of the human, then, includes an elusive self which is sometimes expressed insofar as the personality is allowed to develop in keeping with the person's innate integrity. The way in which the self finds its expression is through "Being:"

> Being is the boundary and structure of individual life...Only in true expression of one's own being can

> growth occur. Being is the experience of oneself as a totality, as a whole, in the immediate presence. In the being experience there is no sense of time or direction, or separation of self from other. There is a complete absorption, self-involvement, and fullness. One cannot plan to be. The full presence of being includes listening and enables the individual to develop in every way he can...Being is the form, pattern, or context of individuality. It is the basis or guide which determines the nature of the development of a particular person...[91]
>
> Though a necessary condition to growth, being is good only as itself. Being is complete in itself and does not necessarily lead to changes in development. Being exists in the individual's absorption in an activity where there is sheer satisfaction in perceiving, contemplating, sensing, listening and expressing complete experience.[92]

If being is the organizing factor which allows for the innate self to develop into a person, self-actualization or personal growth can be called "becoming." Moustakas does not believe that all experience and learning necessarily lead to growth or becoming. Only "true" or "significant" experiences can lead to self-actualization. The experiences which lead there must be consistent with the person's aims and touch a person "...in his being and in his course of becoming. Then the intrinsic nature, being and becoming merge into the self."[93] Such experience must "...touch the core of one's being and contain an underlying unity and distinctiveness. It must be immanent or immediate...it must involve expressions of self which unify or integrate one's intrinsic nature with an immediate state of being and a process of becoming or growth."[94]

One may well ask how one knows that an experience is contributing to growth of the real self when the self itself is so

inaccessible and the clues are so ephemeral. Moustakas says that first of all, the person must know what he wants even if it is only unconscious. It might also be a rational and studied desire. It must be the affirmative expression of the self related to something of intrinsic worth to the individual, something which the individual perceives him/herself as "needing."[95]

Like the other writers discussed here, Moustakas is convinced that freedom to grow and develop brings with it the element of responsibility in an individual's life. The primary reponsibility is that the self be consistent with the self's innate tendencies:

> To be positively free is to be simultaneously spontaneous and thoughtful, self-enhancing and other-enhancing, self-valuing and valuing of others, accepting and responsible.[96]

A central quality is needed to work all these elements together into the highest possible personal growth---there must be an element of unity or wholeness:

> Without this unity of the self or persistence of pattern in life, without the integration of intrinsic nature and being and becoming into meaningful wholes in vital experience, there can be no self, only conflict and inconsistency.
>
> The unifying pattern of the self makes the real person a whole person. The unity integrates thought and feeling and gives coherence to everything the individual does...The unity itself, the harmony of one's own life seems to come from an increasing capacity to find in the world that which also obtains within the depths of one's own being.[97]

Moustakas does not seem to be sure if the self is an innate and elusive primordidal structure within each individual, or if it is simply the unifying pattern that gives growth to our

personalities. It might be both. Since he attributes a rather mystical function to the self, his philosophy of the person is not clear.

Convoluted as his definitions may be, they eventually bring Moustakas to the field of education, which he calls "the world of the learner." This is a world of "...personal meaning and involvement...centered in the self with individual and peculiar forms of interests, activities and concerns."[98] He also emphasizes that the presence of values must continually be acknowledged and analyzed in learning situations.

To Moustakas, the growth of the learner or group of learners depends strongly on the atmosphere created by the teacher, or "nurturer." The teacher must set the tone "...not as an authority, but as a person concerned with the becoming nature of each member in the group and with his own personal growth. He starts with his own philosophy, his convictions, his attitudes, not with a definition of his function or role."[99] The teacher: must listen with respect and acceptance, making elaborations where necessary; must learn to listen beyond the surface for the "real" person; must not impose himself on the learner but must allow the learner's point of view to emerge and evolve; must create an environment of mutual acceptance, trust and love. The teacher must also: have and convey a firm belief in the potentiality of the learner; support individuals without minimizing the feelings of the group and acknowledge the fact that the process of self-exploration implies

risk-taking. Moustakas expresses ideas similar to Rogers' notion of realness:

> ...only when the instructor is present in the full human sense, not hypothetically but truly, is he able to grow as a unified totality and thus provide an occasion for the growth of others.[100]

Moustakas addresses the relations of teachers with each other. Because he advocates continuous self-searching on the part of the teacher, he must take the responsibility of describing the best atmosphere for the teacher's growth, especially since self-searching can only occur "...in an atmosphere of affection where the terrors of loneliness are assuaged and the impulse freely to link hands with others is strengthened."[101] He claims that it is difficult to get teachers to trust one another and advocates their openly discussing their possible mistrust and doubt about the process. He emphasizes that if teacher-evaluation or any pressure is associated with the development of intra-teacher relationships,the teachers will not respond with trust or openness.

While teachers can create optimum environments and facilitate well, the "...actual nature and substance of learning comes from the person's own choices, preferences and ways. When we think there is directive teaching separated from the learner's involvement, we are only fooling ourselves."[102] For this reason:

> The educational situation which most effectively promotes learning is the one in which (a) the uniqueness of the learner is deeply respected and treasured and (b) t person is free to explore the relationships, ideas, materials, and resources available to him in the light of his own particular interests, potentialities, and experience.[103]

Ultimately, the effective teacher must become a learner as well: "He cannot enable another person to grow unless the process he initiates also affects him."[104]

In the first year of The New School our staff development meetings were the locus of endless discussions about the nature of the self. There did not seem to be agreement on much other than that it was ephemeral. Moustakas' model of the self was never brought to our attention. Where he was perhaps most influential on the founders of the school was in his emphasis on staff development, on creating an atmosphere of trust and safety in the staff. The notion of teachers learning through teaching has always been an operant value and practice of the school. Tachers frequently express in their written academic profiles the personal objective of learning through teaching.

E. Values Clarification

The issue of values and valuing is crucial to the philosophical and educational views of the existentialists and the Humanistic educators. Because of the importance of people's ascertaining their own **unmediated** values in order to make appropriate choices for themselves and thus achieve meaning, or self-actualization, or mature functioning in their lives, it became obvious that it would be valuable to develop ways of helping people to articulate, evaluate, judge and perhaps change their values and

priorities. Only with this kind of clarification could people responsibly express their freedom and choose wisely for themselves.

Various educators, philosophers and psychologists have worked on means of rendering values and values choices dynamic to learners. Values clarification, by means of various exercises and "Strategies," would help people to turn confusion and conflict "...into decisions that are both personally satisfying and socially constructive."[105] Consequently a comprehensive methodology of group and classroom techniques was developed to facilitate the learning of seven broadly defined value skills:

> 1) seeking alternatives when faced with a choice; 2) looking ahead to probable consequences before choosing; 3) making choices on one's own, without depending on others; 4) being aware of one's own preferences and valuations; 5) being willing to affirm one's choices and preferences publicly; 6) acting in ways that are consistent with choices and preferences; and 7) acting in those ways repeatedly, with a pattern to one's life.[106]

Drawing on the work of both Dewey and the Humanistic psychologists, researchers in values clarification then developed seven **processes** of valuing in an educational setting: Prizing and cherishing---this means supporting the learners' articulating what **they** value; publicly affirming---creating a situation where the learners must take public positions on their values; three kinds of choosing---from alternatives, considering consequences,and choosing freely from one's own feelings and proclivities; acting---encouraging the learner to act on the basis of his cherished values, thus closing the gap between saying and doing; acting with

a pattern---helping people eliminate behaviour patterns which are contradictory to their beliefs.[107]

This seven-fold valuing process was refined in a later essay by Howard Kirschenbaum. His new schema, "The Valuing Process," is much more sophisticated and is the beginning of the process that bridged the Humanistic Educators with the later Critical Educators. This new schema is worth replicating here:

I. **Feeling**
1. Being open to one's inner experience
   a. awareness of one's inner experience
   b. acceptance of one's inner experience

II **Thinking**
1 Thinking on all seven levels
   a. memory
   b. translation
   c. application
   d. interpretation
   e. analysis
   f. synthesis
   g. evaluation

2. Critical thinking
   a. distinguishing fact from opinion
   b. distinguishing supported from unsupported arguments
   c. analyzing propaganda, stereotypes,etc.

3. Logical thinking (logic)
4. Creative thinking
5. Fundamental cognitive skills
   a. language use
   b. mathematical skills
   c. research skills

III. **Communicating---Verbally and Nonverbally**
1. Sending clear messages
2. Empathic listening
3. Drawing out
4. Asking clarifying questions
5. Giving and receiving feedback

6. Conflict resolution

IV. Choosing
1. Generating and considering alternatives
2. Thoughtfully considering consequences, pros and cons
3. Choosing strategically
   a. goal setting
   b. data gathering
   c. problem solving
   d. planning
4. Choosing freely

V. Acting
1. Acting with repetition
2. Acting with a pattern and consistency
3. Acting skillfully, competently.[108]

Later on in the same essay, Kirschenbaum indicates many imperfections in this even more complex schema, emphasizing that it is important to improve on it in order to make clear how values clarification fits in with or, in fact **is**, Humanistic Education.[109] There is no doubt that the authors of work on values clarification see it as an essential aspect of Humanistic Education.[110] Other points frequently emphasized in favour of values clarification are: it is a concrete workable set of strategies; the preoccupation is consistent with a democratic and pluralistic society; it is pedagogically fairly easy to do although teachers must be cautioned not to present themselves as values authorities; rather than a loss to subject matter, the use of this pedagogy enhances the students' understanding of subject matter; it is useful to address a variety of issues and subjects; it is not dangerous, involving only fairly low risk exercises; it is not meant to **replace** all other pedagogies, and it can often be well used in conjunction with

them.[111]

Certainly the directions given for the use of values clarification exercises sound somewhat like a primer of Humanistic Educational attitudes:

> When using the activities and strategies for values-clarification, encourage a classroom atmosphere of openness, honesty, acceptance and respect. If students feel that something they say about their own beliefs and behaviour is going to be ridiculed by their peers or frowned upon by the teacher, they will not want to share their thought and feelings about value issues.
>
> The teacher must help the class learn to listen to one another. One of the best ways he can do this is to be a model of a good listener himself. He can indicate by his verbal and nonverbal expressions that he is interested in what the students think, and will seriously consider their ideas and possibly be influenced by them.[112]

Despite the authors' strong arguments that values clarification is inherent to Humanistic Education, it does not necessarily follow that either their schemata or their exercises are sufficient components to render an educational setting Humanistic. Indeed the methodology, **implicit** in some of their exercises and in accounts of the structuring of classes in various disciplines, is somewhat antithetical to Humanistic Education. The central principle of Humanistic Education is that the point of departure for all discourse in the learning environment is the concerns of the learners. If this discourse and discussionn indicates that a values clarification approach would be helpful, then is the time to introduce appropriate exercises and techniques. However, it is clear from many of their exemples that their

approach is much more programmatic than the usual Humanistic Education approach should be. They have organized their exercises or the structure of the discourse **a priori** without checking out the immediate concerns of the learners. Certainly, many "trainers" have designed repertoires of values exercises which they give in workshops to participants whose concerns they do not know. These highly "portable" programmes of values clarification exercises have become a lucrative field where " professional development seminars" involving large groups of people are orchestrated. In many cases the programme will comprise a "bag of tricks" which can be done fairly effectively even with people who do not intend to invest too much affect in the proceedings. However, there is a significant qualitative difference between responding to hypothesized values conflicts and responding to those which emerge organically through group interaction. It is in the latter case that learners may happen upon insights of a sufficiently compelling nature to encourage them to attempt behavioural changes. Groups at The New School have made very good use of the kind of exercises developed by Simon and Kirschenbaum, but usually in response to specific concerns which arise. Values clarification exercises often cut through the defenses people construct in difficult situations; under the conditions mentioned above, they may offer the facilitator and learners a new and often more authentic way of relating to one another. It has been my experience that the best use of values clarification is when it emerges **directly** from the

discourse within a group.

The works on values clarification to which I have referred here are early works written around the time of the establishment of The New School. Those were the works which we consulted in learning how to use techniques appropriate to Humanistic Education in our teaching. While numerous works on the subject have been written since, there has been little real development in the theoretical schema on which the original writers based their claims. The work on values most relevant to our teaching at The New School has been the analysis of values and valuing processes with respect to gender undertaken in recent years by Carol Gilligan and Mary Belenky and her group in their book, Women's Ways of Knowing.[113] I shall refer to these theories later on when I discuss the influence of feminism on the theoretical framework of education at The New School. Another potentially interesting field of values study in the future should be the emerging work on critical thinking and its application in education.

F. Critiquing the 60's and 70's

The period in which most of the Humanistic educators were writing was an exciting one in which people felt they could solve the problems not only of school, but of society itself, with Humanistic Education. However, there were soon to emerge various critiques of what was often perceived as an environment of

"excess" in which students were not "taught to do anything." The critiques tended to fall into several categories: the "back to basics" movement which has slowly evolved into the dusting off of fairly arbitrarily chosen selections from the old and hackneyed "great works canon" approach; and the critical theorists who maintain that in order to change schools [and then society], one must subject them to a socio-political analysis which takes into account the dominant conservative interests they protect, their place in society, and an epistemological analysis of the hegemonic nature of curriculum.

While critics acknowledge that there were some valuable innovations in the 60's and 70's which have left an "important residue," they claim that "...the combination of the political backlash and a serious economic recession has worked to wipe out many if not most of the very modest and mild changes of the 1960s." This view usually leads to the perception that the current changes in social ethos and practice are a systemically repressive force:

> Our consciousness has reverted and regressed to one involving scarcity, survival, competition, and stagnation. The language of growth, potential, daring, and challenge has become muted: a sense of infinite possibility has been replaced by timidity, expansiveness by caution, long-range thinking by the bottom line, visions by quotas...Freedom has come to mean license to the powerful rather than liberation for the weak; equality is seen as the privilege of competing rather than the right to dignity; individualsim has come to mean greed rather than moral autonomy; and community has come to be oriented around terms of class rather than terms of humanity.[114]

Jonathon Kozol was one of the first writers to critique comprehensively the humanistically oriented experiments of this period, as exemplified by the free school movement. His critique is essentially that "free schools" are the off-spring of the disaffected educated white middle and upper class, whose lives he characterizes as "passive, tranquil and protected" and dependent on "strongly armed police" and "well-demarcated ghettos." Having characterized the supporters of free-schools in this way, Kozol claims that "Free-Schools ...cannot, with sanity, with candor, or with truth, endeavor to exist within a moral vacuum." He also considers their existence to provide an "ideal drain on activism and the perfect way to sidetrack ethical men from dangerous behavior."[115] Indeed, he claims that these schools are not merely non-political, but actually "...in many instances, conspicuously and intentionally anti-political."[116] Kozol visited numerous free schools in his country and observed practices which could not have been identical from school to school. Nonetheless, he often confuses theory with practice, claiming that,"Leather and wheat germ may appear to constitute a revolution in the confines of a far-removed and well-protected farm or isolated commune ten miles east of Santa Barbara," but that they do nothing for the disinherited poor.[117] Since the free-schools meet the aspirations of the privileged white classes, Kozol considers them virtually incapable of meeting the aspirations of the poor:

> How can the Free School achieve, at one and the same time, a sane, ongoing, down-to-earth, skill-oriented,

> sequential, credentializing and credentialized curricular experience directly geared-in to the real survival needs of colonized children in a competitive and technological society; and simultaneously evolve, maintain, nourish and revivify the "uncredentialized," "unauthorized," "unsanctioned" "noncurricular" consciousness of pain, rage, love, and revolution...[118]

Kozol dramatically attacks the narcissism which he relates to the free school movement's emphasis on "relevance:"

> The Free School that shatters the mirror and turns to face the flames is the one that will not lose its consciousness of struggle or its capability for a continued process of regeneration. When we forget the enemy's name, we turn our guns upon each other.[119]

Kozol is even less enamoured, however, of the American public school system. He describes the goal of the public school system as not to educate good people, but to indoctrinate them into being obedient citizens. He cites a telling quotation from the 19th century American educator, Horace Mann, who made it abundantly clear that schools were not only the best place to teach people to maintain the social order, but even that the taxes paid for the maintenance of the schools were ..."The cheapest means of self-protection and insurance [for those] who possessthe largest shares in the stock of worldly goods."[120] "The problem,with public schools," Kozol claims, "is not that [they] do **not** work well, but that they **do**."[121] In his critique, Kozol brings together two strains of the American education of his time: public schools are there to maintain the social order; the humanistic educational innovators are not most dangerous when they confine themselves to free schools, but when their pedagogy is applied within the public

systems:

> Their greatest contributions stand today in the same relationship to freedom as those of Einstein did to the preservation of life...[their works] are now being used by corporations such as I.B.M, Xerox and E.D.C. in order to develop the most clever methods ever known for teaching children how to phantasize a sense of freedom that does not exist.[122]

Kozol indicts the available schooling of his time: the mainstream public schooling for deceiving its clientèle by fopping off clichès of democracy and access while hypocritically maintaining the social status quo, thus implicating the oppressed in the creation of their own oppression; he indicts the free schools because they represent the interests and narcissism of a privileged class which nonetheless manages to acquire outside the schools those skills necessary to protect its status. These very skills are denied to the poor within the free schools and they have no access to them through the informal education provided by socio-economic class.

G. Paulo Freire and Critical Pedagogy

Kozol himself has said that he was influenced by his teacher at Harvard, **Paulo Freire**, who has in fact influenced many educational thinkers with his theories of critical pedagogy, developed through his work in adult literacy with the poorest agricultural workers in his native Brazil. While I will discuss Freire's philosophy further on, I would first like to review those

central ideas which are identified in the literature of critical pedagogy as comprising the purpose of education. In reading the work of the critical theorists, it is important to bear in mind that part of their praxis is to "reappropriate" language by attributing very specific and radical meanings to words of common usage while at the same time developing their own specialized vocabulary. While the critical thinkers are certainly not unanimous on all points, there is virtual consensus on the following points:

> (1) the schools represent a powerful force of social, intellectual, and personal oppression; (2) the reasons for such oppression are rooted in the culture's history; (3) they represent a number of deeply held cultural values-hierarchy, conformity, success, materialism, control; and (4) what is required for significant changes in the schools amounts to a fundamental transformation of the culture's consciousness.[123]

The points of major interest to the critical theorists may also be couched as questions in a "reinvigourated debate about education:"

> (1) What will be the approach to social inequality or social transformation? (2) What will be the approach to social inequality in the education debate? (3) Will curriculum be concerned with traditional and religious values, or will issues of gender, race, and class inequality come to the forefront? (4) Will the curriculum reflect the ethnocentrism of our touted "Western heritage," or will pluralism prevail through multicultural and global education? (5) Will vocational interests prevail, or can critical literacy and teaching be implemented? (6) Will the schools be controlled by central boards or teachers, administrators and communities?[124]

Starting with Freire, the critical theorists have developed a particular vocabulary to describe a set of inter-related and widely shared concepts which have grown through the dialectical

process of their discussion and writing. The first concept of importance is that of Critical Pedagogy itself:

> Fundamentally concerned with the centrality of politics and power in our understanding of how schools work, critical theorists have produced work centering on the political economy of schooling, the state and education, the representation of texts, and the construction of student subjectivity...critical theorists generally analyze schools in a twofold way: as sorting mechanisms in which select groups of students are favored on the basis of race, class, and gender; and as agencies for self and social empowerment.[125]

While The New School tended, on the whole, to focus primarily on the affective life of its students from 1973-78, as the economy worsened and the economic and social situations and expectations of our students changed, we had to enlarge the scope of our considerations. One danger in Humanistic Education is its isolation of the "Self" as an entity beyond material consideration. In order to help our increasingly alienated students understand themselves as social beings, the teachers had to understand the students' individual living situations and their relationship to systemic oppression, and we had to intellectually implicate the students themselves in examining their own living situations. Since such reflections are often painful, students sometimes express the desire to remain ignorant both of their inter-connection with their environment and of any awareness of both oppression and the possibility of liberaiton. While we don't relinquish the concepts of self-actualization or authenticity, it has become urgent to understand that:

> If the authentic man [sic] is our aim, then the authentic society is also our aim. That society is authentic in the degree to which it fails to provoke in the individual citizen these urgings to escape from his freedom.[126]

Only when people are aware of the psychological, cultural, and socio-economic determinants in their lives, are they able to negotiate the task of "inventing" themselves and their lives. The aim of The New School has always been an emancipatory one: to free people from the emotional shackles imposed by others' expectations of them and to help them achieve a high level of self-actualization which would result in personal happiness and reinvestment into their own community. For this reason, we have always worked with the notion of emancipation (however restrained it originally was) as primordial to our educational objectives.

Since the inception of The New School, we have been developing a conceptual structure and methodology, parallel and yet similar in essence to the "critical pedagogy" of **Paolo Freire.** It is difficult to identify the precise extent to which this tendency has been consciously adopted in the New School. While I recall reading Kozol's and Freire's work and hearing them speak in the early 1980's, other teachers' contributions are drawn from diverse intellectual and experiential sources. We have also drawn from the theoretical frameworks of Women's Studies, Black Studies, Gay Studies and Peace Education, all of which are inter-related in that they address the emancipation of oppressed groups and advocate radical change in the distribution of power in the world. In order to meet our

ideological objectives and our students' changing needs, we have had to combine some principles from these diverse sources with Critical Pedagogy into an elaborated form of Humanistic Education, which I have named "Critical Humanism." This educational philosophy addresses the issues of Critical Pedagogy, while at the same time addressing the often eccentric or individualistic psychological dimensions which to date have been virtually ignored in the literature of Critical Pedagogy.

Freire's writings have been very useful not only in his work with illiterate adults, but in the theories which emerged from that work. For example, he clearly identifies the hegemonic nature of school-knowledge, and how it effectively silences the masses:

> In the culture of silence, the masses are mute, that is, they are prohibited from creatively taking part in the transformations of their society and therefore prohibited from being. Even if they can occasionally read and write...they are nevertheless alienated from the power responsible for the silence.
>
> Illiterates know they are concrete men. They know that they do things. What they do not know is the culture of silence---in which they are ambiguous, dual beings---is that men's actions as such are transforming, creative, and re-creative. Overcome by the myths of this culture, including the myth of their own "natural inferiority," they do not know that **their** action upon the world is also transforming. Prevented from having a "structural perception" of the facts involving them, they do not know that they cannot "have a voice," that is, that they cannot exercise the right to participate consciously in the sociohistorical transformation of their society, because their work does not belong to them.[127]

Freire rightly does not consider mere literacy the solution to oppression, to the bettering of people's lives. While knowing how to read is a necessary condition to emancipation, it is not a sufficient one. The learners must develop a critical understanding

of:

> ...the reasons behind many of their attitudes toward cultural reality and thus confront cultural reality in a new way...The learners' capacity for critical knowing---well beyond mere opinion---is established in the process of unveiling their relationships with the historical-cultural world **in** and **with** which they exist. [128]

That is why:

> On the basis of the social experience of illiterates, we can conclude that only a literacy that associates the learning of reading and writing with a creative act will exercise the critical comprehension of that experience, and without any illusion of triggering liberation, it will nevertheless contribute to its process.
>
> And, of course, this is no task for the dominant classes.[129]

This creative act, also called "conscientization", is a form of "cultural production" as opposed to the standard cultural reproduction in schools. Although he is fully aware of the problematic situation of the dominant classes passing along learning to the dominated, Freire sees ways around this paradox. Because literacy is an "...eminently political phenomenon, it must be analyzed within the context of a theory of power relations and an understanding of social and cultural reproduction and production."

> By "cultural reproduction" we refer to collective experiences that function in the interest of the dominant groups, rather in the interest of the oppressed groups that are the object of its policies. We use "cultural production" to refer to specific groups of people producing, mediating, and confirming the mutual ideological elements that emerge from and reaffirm their daily lived experiences. In this case, such experiences are rooted in the interests of individual and collective self-determination.[130]

Below I will discuss the elements of the process of analysis which forms the heart of critical pedagogy. Freire is uncompromising in his statements on the purpose and role of the radical educator:

> Educators must develop radical pedagogical structures that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis of literacy. This includes, obviously, the language they bring to the classroom. To do otherwise is to deny students the rights that lie at the core of the notion of an emancipatory literacy...It is through their own language that they will be able to reconstruct their history and their culture.[131]

Freire identifies as the best learning process a socially contextual one in which learners situate themselves within their social context through a process of critical questioning. He argues that individuals must come to a critical consciousness of their "own being in the world." To him both teachers and students are agents engaged in the process of questioning the dominant ideology and constructing and reconstructing meaning. This dominant ideology:

> ...lives inside us and also controls society outside,... transformation is possible because .. As conscious human beings, we can discover **how** we are conditioned by the dominant ideology. We can gain distance on our moment of existence. Therefore, we can learn how to become free through a political struggle in society.[132]

The natural result of the dominant ideology is the creation of a "curriculum" which comprises simply the transfer of the guiding principles of the dominant ideology to the dominated.[133] Concomitant with this transfer of the "formal curriculum" are notions of "rigour:"

> We have to fight with love, **with passion**, in order to demonstrate that what we are proposing is **absolutely rigorous.**We have,in doing so,to demonstrate that rigor is not synonymous with authoritarianism, that "rigor" does not mean "rigidity." Rigor **lives** with freedom, **needs** freedom. I cannot understand how it is possible to be rigorous without being creative. For me it is very difficult to be creative without having freedom. Without being free, I can **only** repeat what is being told me.[134]

The first requirement for liberatory education, to Freire, is that teachers and students both must be: "critical agents in the act of knowing." Furthermore,teachers must be aware of a contradiction inherent in liberating education: unless the teachers are convinced of what must be changed, they cannot convince the students. On the other hand, although they are convinced of the value of their positions, they must respect students and not impose ideas on them.[135] Freire constructs a very complex model of learning and knowing which assumes **a priori** learner motivation. He is quite dismissive of North American difficulties in inspiring student motivation.

> I think it [motivation] is an interesting issue. I never, never could understand the process of motivation outside of practice, before practice. It is as if first I needed to be motivated and then I could get into action! do you see? That is a very anti-dialectical way of understanding motivation. Motivation takes part **in** the action. It is a moment of the very action itself. That is, you become motivated to the extent that you are acting, and not before acting...This book will be good if at the very moment in which the possible reader is reading, he or she is able to feel motivated because of the act of reading, and not because he or she read about motivation. Nevertheless, we are responsible for that, also. It means we have to work seriously...to make it more than a conversation.[136]

In our experience in The New School, it is often difficult to motivate students to open the book. Reading a book, as a cultural

act, frequently presents them with a technical difficulty that precipitates low self-esteem in the learners, to many of whom school has been the site of continual defeat. Very often, by the time they have passed through elementary and secondary schools, they have already labeled themselves as "stupid." They are further reinforced by a popular adolescent culture in which, as a result of the often meaningless reading to which students have been exposed in elementary and high school, they are rightfully suspicious of "book learning." The popular culture of the society is very "thing oriented." The extremely concrete aspirations of owning various signifiers of class or status reduce abstract or even "passionately applied" school learning to utter redundancy. While we generate discussion with them on the nature of these values, on their previous education and of the interests it represents, this dialogue is not always sufficient to motivate them to overcome their fears and **engage** with reading and what it may bring them. Their sense of cultural exclusion, indeed, often makes them want to create a strictly "adolescent" culture, or to participate in a pre-packaged culture which can give them immediate gratification with some illusion of meaning and control. It is precisely because humanistic educators address the psychological dimensions of a problem which cannot be fully addressed through the current analysis of Critical Pedagogy, that The New School is continually involved in the dialectical process of unifying the two strains of theory and developing from this process a pedagogy of

Critical Humanism.

Freire, however, does give a very valuable account of a cycle of knowing, which he sees as having two definite and separate phases related to one another:

> The first moment of the cycle...is the one of **production**, the production of new knowledge, something new.The other moment is the one during which the produced knowledge is known or perceived. One moment is the production of new knowledge and the second is one in which you know the existing knowledge.[137]

Freire claims that in regular schools knowledge is far from the students. The teacher is simply a specialist at transferring knowledge, rather than someone with the qualities necessary for both phases in the cycle of knowing: "action, critical reflection, curiosity, demanding inquiry, uneasiness, uncertainty."[138]

This cycle of knowing is exemplified in the experience of reading by the reader's doing more than to "...walk on the words" or to fly over them. "Reading is re-writing what we are reading. Reading is to discover the connections between the text and the context of the text, and also how to connect the text/content with my context, the context of the reader."[139]

Liberating education is not just a question of methods or methodologies: "The criticism that liberating education has to offer emphatically is not the criticism which ends at the subsytem of education. On the contrary, the criticism of the liberatory class goes beyond the subsystem of education and becomes criticism of society."[140] Freire emphasizes the importance of dialogic method between students and teachers:

> Dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it...[it] seals the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know...dialogue is a challenge to existing domination. Also, with such a way of understanding dialogue, the object to be known is **not** an exclusive possession of **one** of the subjects doing the knowing, one of the people in the dialogue. In our case of education, knowledge of the object to be known is not the sole possession of the teacher, who gives the knowledge to the students in a gracious gesture. Instead ...the object to be known mediates the two cognitive subjects...They meet around it and through it for mutual inquiry.[141]

A dialogic approach has always been used at The New School; what Freirean pedagogy adds is an enlarged notion of "reality" which includes the political-social-economic context in which the dialogue is taking place. Freire's education of liberation, which must result in social class empowerment, very concretely extends the Humanistic objective of self-actualization:

> Even when you individually feel yourself most free, this feeling is not a **social** feeling, if you are not able to use your **recent** freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualist attitude towards empowerment or freedom.[142]

The work of Freire can be of invaluable inspiration and help to humanistic educators. However, while the socio-political dimensions of knowledge and the individual's relation to it are well addressed by Freire, his notion of the "self" or a recognizably individual entity does not account for much of what goes on at the affective level of people's lives:

> The comprehension of the social is always determined by the comprehension of the individual. In this sense, the

> individualistic position works against the comprehension of the real role of human agency. Human agency makes sense and flourishes only when subjectivity is understood in its dialectical, contradictory, dynamic relationship with objectivity, from which it derives.[143]

While it is true that we know ourselves to a great extent in relation to the society in which we live, and in terms of our relation to dominance, it is also true that we may have understandings of the "real role of human agency" which derive from other experiences: aesthetic, spiritual, contemplative, etc.

Rogers makes mention of Freire in one of his works. In his chapter on "The Person-Centered Approach and the Oppressed," Rogers reveals that he considers the best work on the education of the oppressed to be by Freire. He clearly feels great admiration for and identification with Freire's work: "...The Pedagogy of the Oppressed was first published in Portuguese in 1968 and translated into English in 1970. My book, Freedom to Learn, was published in 1969. There is no indication that he [Freire] had ever heard of my work, and I had never heard of his."[144]

Rogers goes on to compare his work with Freire's. He says that although he is very grounded in concrete example and Freire is extremely abstract, he finds their principles almost "completely similar." He especially emphasizes that they have in common a model of understanding and sympathetic facilitators who do not try to impose their ideas and values, but work from those of the learners. Freire expresses a similar notion in his delineation of the "teacher-student with students-teachers."[145] As the ideal

Rogerian facilitator would, so does the Freiran teacher allow the learners to take over from him. Rogers also acknowledges that through the dialogical method, which provides for the critical consideration of the learners' lives, they begin to see themselves as transformers and to take steps towards change. However, Rogers hardly comments on the application of Freire's social collectivist vision to his own primarily individualistic model of human change. Rather, he applies his own theories to Freire's model by demonstrating how the emotions of individuals who feel powerless in groups may be turned to positive ends through a process of self-expression.

The import of Rogers' analysis is that facilitative attitudes of repsect, openness, acceptance and democratic choice within a group riddled with conflict can set in motion a process in which hostile and negative feelings are expressed, understood and accepted. As a result of this, individuals are accorded recognition and mutual trust begins to develop. Irrational feelings become defused by their expression and also by feedback from group members. Confidence grows individually and collectively and trust forms. In this climate a group can move toward "innovative, responsible, and often revolutionary steps...which can be taken now, in an atmosphere of realism." Leadership within the group multiplies, constructive action is taken by individuals and the group as a whole and individuals within it are able to take personal risks.[146] I do not know if Freire is aware of this work of

Rogers'. It would be interesting to know if Rogers' terminology would communicate clearly to him, and if Freire would agree with Rogers' causal association of unconditional positive regard and the consequently heightened self-esteem with the impulse towards transformative radical social action.

H. Theorists and Theory of Critical Pedagogy

While it is the writings of Freire that I myself have found the most applicable to the ever-developing pedagogy of The New School, it is also interesting to see our points of agreement and divergence with some of the key notions developed by the younger generation of critical philosophers.

The word "discourse" has become appropriated by the critical theorists to refer to a "family of concepts," composed of discursive practices which are governed by rules relating to the said, the unsaid, and the legitimation of the authority of voice. Dominant discourse is the "language" with which the power-group defines reality. [147] The controlling ideology, structure and dissemination of the dominant discourse is called the **hegemony.** This pervasive class dominance depends on the active participation of the dominated for its perpetuation. The participation of the dominated is ensured by the creation of "consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific

sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family."[148]

Education is,

> ...an important social and political force in the process of class reproduction. By appearing to be an impartial and neutral "transmitter" of the benefits of a valued culture, schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity....the importance of the hegemonic curriculum lies in both what it includes - with its emphasis on Western history, science, and so forth - and what it excludes - feminist history, black studies, labor history, in-depth courses in the arts, and other forms of knowledge important to the working class and other subordinate groups.[149]

One way in which the hegemony asserts itself in schools is through a hidden curriculum which comprises "...those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom life."[150] The notion of hidden curriculum is not exclusive to critical pedagogy. Over the past twenty years there has been significant research on the hidden content of schooling, on principles that govern the form and content of teacher-student relationships, and on the form in which subject matter is presented in books and from books to the students. Critiques on hidden curriculum have customarily focused on the inherent racism, sexism and classism in most educational material and presentation. According to the critical theorists, however, hidden curriculum, as defined by the "liberal theorists" tends to be descriptive rather than analytical. "There seems to be little or no understanding of how the social, political, and

economic conditions of society create either directly or indirectly some of the oppressive features of schooling."[151]

Radical perspectives on hidden curriculum, however, go beyond the merely descriptive:

> First, they help to explain the political function of schooling in terms of the important concepts of class and domination. Second, they point to the existence of structural factors outside the immediate environment of the classroom as important forces in influencing both the day-to-day experiences and the outcomes of the schooling process.[152]

In order to transform education, curriculum theory will have to include fundamental questions regarding the "normative assumptions underlying its logic and discourse." It will also have to analyze the "...structural `silences' and ideological messages that shape the form and content of school knowledge."[153]

Frequently this kind of analysis lies at the bottom of learning group negotiations at The New School. We do not only try discover the emotional base for students' interest in a topic, but in establishing the contract for the group, we search for means of approaching a subject that cut through the customary appropriation of information and respond to the way in which the students and teacher contextualize the subject matter in their shared world.

Another important concept is that of cultural capital. Cultural capital represents ways of talking, acting, modes of style, moving, socializing, forms of knowledge, language practices and values.[154]

> Certain linguistic styles, along with the body posture and the social relations they reinforce (lowered voice,

> disinterested tone, non-tactile interaction), act as identifiable forms of cultural capital that either reveal or betray a student's social background. In effect, certain linguistic practices and modes of discourse become privileged by being treated as natural to the gifted, when in fact they are the speech habits of dominant classes and thus serve to perpetuate cultural privileges.
>
> Class and power connect with the production of dominant cultural capital not only in the structure and evaluation of the school curriculum but also in the dispositions of the oppressed themselves, who sometimes actively participate in their own subjugation.[155]

This certainly has been our experience at The New School, where many of our students come from immigrant families where their parents have had very little formal education. Others are from Canadian born families who have lived through generations of subsistence income either earned through labour or through welfare. Other students identify themselves as "system kids,"who have lived in state-financed foster care or "group homes" for varying periods of their lives, usually due to various forms of abandonment. Their cultural capital puts them at a definite disadvantage in the mainstream educational system where students from the milieu most likely to benefit from the dominant culture have inherited substantially different cultural capital which is reinforced and confirmed, while that of the "disadvantaged" is systemically devalued.

The state of affairs described above calls for a pedagogy of empowerment which Freire describes as "conscientization:"

> The word conscientization...the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act, should not be understood as an idealist manipulation. Even if our vision in conscientization is dialogical, not subjective or mechanistic, we cannot attribute to this

> consciousness a role that it does not have, that of transforming reality. Yet we also must not reduce consciousness to a mere reflection of reality.
>
> One of the important points in conscientization is to provoke recognition of the world, not as a "given" world, but as world dynamically "in the making."[156]

Conscientization is encouraged through the development of a pedagogy that "takes the notion of student experience seriously...[by]...developing a critically affirmative language that works dialectically, engaging the experiences that students bring to the classroom."[157] This affirming pedagogy is related to the concept of voice, "...the shared meanings, symbols, narratives and social practices of the community or culture in which dialogue is taking place." There are various voices in each educational interaction: the teacher's voice which characterisitcally is the voice of the hegemony; the "school voice" which refers to the learned expectations of all learners; the students' voices which are shaped by their prior experience and particular cultural and social history. It is often through the mediation of a "teacher voice" that the "very nature of the schooling process is either sustained or challenged." So, while the teacher's voice can be a tool of oppression, a teacher who is a "transformative intellectual" can change the nature of discourse, can confirm the students' experience and roots, and can thus turn learning into an experience of empowerment. Together students and teacher live out the emancipatory possibilities of education.[158]

This search for and recognition of the unmediated voice is the cornerstone of empancipatory education exemplified in Women's Studies, Black Studies, Gay Studies, Peace Studies. All of these areas of inquiry and pedagogy are predicated on the need to question the current epistemology on the basis of whose interests it serves and whose standards are being met. These fields (they are the fields of great interest at The New School) attempt to redefine the nature of knowledge through arriving at information and conclusions based on the subjective epxerience of people as well as on externally and empirically verifiable "facts." They are based on the primacy of the subject's self-definition as opposed to the hegemony in which primacy is always accorded to the definitions generated by the conservative self-interest of a ruling class.

Certainly the search for and confirmation of authentic voice is of central importance at The New School where the student is recognized as the ultimate authority on his/her own life. This is true in the Bands where the many levels of self-definition are examined in themselves and in Learning Groups where these levels of self-definition are examined through the mediation of other subject matter.

While much of what the "critical theorists" say is interesting, provoking, and even rings true, I find them frequently caught within a great contradiction...especially when in the name of the accessibility of education and critical reflection to all,

they develop a highly rarified and dense vocabulary which is even dauntingly circumlocuitous to experienced readers like myself. By the creation of a specialised and often euphemistic vocabulary, and by the dubbing of even their most random ruminations with the new catch-word of "discourse," they also create a closed circuit of communication, totally removed from the ideology of their inspiration, Freire. The one positive aspect of their vocabulary, I suppose, is that it identifies their followers immediately, and one knows the general context of what will follow at the very outset. Consider, for example, the following quotation from Aronowitz and Giroux:

> Moreover, the concept of intellectual provides the theoretical groundwork for interrogating the specific ideological and economic conditions under which intellectuals as as social group need to work in order to function as critical, thinking, creative human beings. This last point takes on a normative and political dimension and seems especially relevant for teachers.[159]

I am not, however, only faulting them on form and the socio-political contradictions into which their choice of form has impelled them. It is their treatment of the "educator as intellectual" which concerns me, not so much in what they include as in what they omit. They choose four categories around which to analyse the function of the educator as intellectual:"a) transformative intellectuals, b) critical intellectuals, c) accomodating intellectuals, and d) hegemonic intellectuals." This categorization is immediately followed by disclaimers regarding

its completeness or the discreteness of these categories.[160]

My problem with the work of Aronowitz and Giroux in this context is that they discount the importance of addressing individual students as a starting point in the educational process, and seem somehow to believe that there is in existence a level and leveling function of general "discourse" which will reach all students and move them into the mode of being "agents" of transformation:

> ...making the political more pedagogical means utilizing forms of pedagogy that treat students as critical agents, problematizes knowledge, utilizes dialogue, and makes knowledge meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory. In part, this suggests that transformative intellectuals take seriously the need to give [emphasis mine] students an active voice in their learning experiences. It means developing a critical vernacular that is attentive to problems experienced at the level of everyday life, particularly as these are related to pedagogical experiences connected to classroom practice. As such, the starting point pedagogically for such intellectuals[emphasis mine] is not with the isolated student but with collective actors in their various cultural, class, racial, historical, and gendered settings, along with the particularity of their diverse problems, hopes and dreams. It is at this point that the language of critique unites with the language of possibility. That is,transformative intellectuals must take seriously the need to come to grips with those ideological and material aspects of the dominant society that attempt to separate the issues of power and knowledge. Which means working to create the ideological and material conditions in both schools and larger society that give students the opportunity to become agents of civic courage, and therefore citizens who have the knowledge and courage to take seriously the need to make despair unconvincing and hope practical. In short, the language of critique unites with the language of possibility when it points to the conditions necessary for new forms of culture, alternative social practices, new modes of communication, and a practical vision for the future.[161]

It appears to me that one contradiction in which the authors find themselves is that under the rubric of "empowerment," they still perpetuate the notion of the balance of power being on the side of the "transformative intellectual." It is the transformative intellectual who "gives" or bestows upon the students their "active voice." In consistency with their own notions of empowerment, surely the intellectual creates a situation where the students' active voices come forward of their own volition. In the latter situation, however, the "intellectual" who must "come to grips" with the "ideological and material aspects of the dominant society" might find that the students do not speak in <u>one</u> voice but in many. The model suggested by the authors does not allow students the option to refuse "civic courage." In a world where people disappear for much less than public critiques of the state, it is trivialising to assume that all it takes are "knowledge and courage" to render "despair unconvincing and hope practical." I find it difficult to imagine why they consider their use of social control as well as their repression of individual differences and proclivities to be empowering. On the contrary, it would seem to me that they are applying a patina of ideological purposefulness onto what may be, and in our society is almost destined to be, a group of individuals each of whom is grounded in and repressed by particular experiences and contingencies which must be validated and addressed as part of the process of empowerment.

It is no coincidence that the "discourse" of critical

pedagogy is essentially articulated by men. The emphasis on "public spheres" and the ignoring of the "private affective spheres" are consistent with the acculturation of males in our society. Focusing on the inter-personal renders them uncomfortable and complicates their assertions of the empowering possibilities of their ideology. There appears to be no room in their pedagogical theory for the positive effect of a direct relationship with the student or for a refined and empathic knowledge of a particular student's life-experience separated from the fairly crudely and statistically defined norms attributed to gender, ethnicity, class and race. All relationships with the students seem to be theoretically mediated by a complex and inaccessibly articulated educational theory which could lend itself to overt political posturing by the teacher, to be taken up with gusto by those students who have been trained that "doing well" in school consists of pleasing the teacher.[162]

I wonder how the younger generation of critical theorists would address the resourcelessness of so many of our students at the New School. Certainly their theories are most useful in situating the way in which education traditionally reproduces the inequities within the society. It helps contextualize our students' preparation, many of the values they hold, and their highly variable sense of social participation and power. The theoretical base of currennt critical pedagogy even helps contextualize the multitudinous sociogenic problems our students live and internalize

into low self-esteem. However, there is nothing in their writing which is helpful in communicating change and the possibilities of personal growth to the individual and often very resistant student who clings tenaciously to the belief that winning Lotto Quebec is not only possible but will resolve all of his/her problems in perpetuity.

The critical theorists address the issue of student resistance by developing a theory of resistance which exposes "...the ideology undelying the hegemonic curriculum,...its hierarchically organized bodies of knowledge, and particularly ...the way ...[it]...marginalizes or disqualifies working class knowledge as well as knowledge about women and minorities."[163] Student resistance may arise from various causes such as the monitoring of passion and desire, the creation of "dead time," and the reduction of interpersonal relationships to the demands market ideology. [164] Even the very bodies of the students become the site of authoritarian definition and control. One way in which learners express their resistance is through choosing ignorance: refusing "to acknowledge that ...[their]...subjectivities have been constructed out of information and social practices that surround" them.[165] The theory of resistance rejects currently popular explanations of oppositional behaviour by arguing that it has little to do with deviance and learned helplessness and really arises from "moral and political indignation." It shifts the theoretical discussion to a "concept of resistance" which sees resistance as an active

dialectical response to domination, which in itself is multi-dimensional. This response of resistance may become transformed by substituting analysis and consequent action for random behaviours.[166] Aronowitz and Giroux are careful to say that not all "oppositional" behaviours constitute actual politically based resistance and it is incumbent on the teacher to analyse the source for the behaviour through a "...mode of inquiry that is self-critical and sensitive to its own interests---radical consciousness-raising and collective critical action."[167]

They emphasize that:

> ...the ultimate value of the notion of resistance must be measured not only by the degree to which it promotes critical thinking and reflective action but, more importantly, by the degree to which it contains the possibility of galvanizing collective political struggle among parents, teachers, and students around the issues of power and social determination...When a theory of resistance is incorporated into radical pedagogy, elements of oppositional behavior in schools become the focal point for analyzing different, and often antagonistic, social relations and experiences among students from dominant and subordinate cultures..A radical pedagogy, then, must recognize that student resistance in all of its forms represents manifestations of struggle and solidarity that, in their incompleteness, both challenge and confirm capitalist hegemony. What is most important is the willingness of radical educators to search for the emancipatory interests that underlie such resistance and to make them visible to students and others so that they can become the object of debate and political analysis.[168]

One way in which such resistance may be transformed into a transcendant ideology of empowerment is through the "language of possibility." This language or pedagogy of possibility rests on a vision of collective human freedom:

Without a vision for the future, a pedagogy of

> empowerment is reduced to a method for participation which takes democracy as an end and not as a means! There is no moral vision other than the insistence on people having an equal claim to a place in the public arena.
>
> ...An education that empowers for possibility must raise social questions of how we can work for the reconstruction of social imagination in the service of human freedom...the project of possibility requires an education rooted in a view of human freedom as the understanding of necessity and the transformation of society.[169]

The education towards possibility requires that teachers educate students to,

> ...take risks, to struggle with ongoing relations of power, to critically appropriate forms of knowledge that exist outside of their immediate experience, and to envisage versions of a world which is 'not yet'-in order to be able to alter the grounds upon which life is lived.[170]

This means that the students' voices must be legitimated and the "cultural logic" of their subjectivity recognized.[171] Simon sees the contradiction in a pedagogy geared towards the empowerment of students which must "teach" them to use their voice while at the same time raising serious questions regarding the existing social forms. He identifies the dilemma this way: "How can we both legitimate the expression of a student voice and challenge at the same time those aspects of that voice which negate our educational/political vision?" Simon arrives at a solution to this dilemma by claiming that each person does not have one voice but a multiplicity of voices, and that the educator must encourage the kind of critical discussion which forces clarification and consequent radicalization.[172]

Aronowitz and Giroux identify various weaknesses in resistance theory which are certainly corroborated by our experience at The New School. They claim that some students see through the postures of the dominant school ideology but decide not to express themselves through rebellious behaviour; indeed, sometimes students may be totally indifferent to the hypocrisy of schools. They also claim that resistance theory does not take sufficient account of gender and race. However, the critique which is the most corroborated by our experience is that insufficient attention is paid by resistance theorists to "...the issue of how domination reaches into the structure of personality itself." They claim that:

> Radical educators have shown a lamentable tendency to ignore the question of needs and desires in favor of issues that center around ideology and consciousness. A critical psychology is needed that points to the way in which 'un-freedom' reproduces itself in the psyche of human beings...without a theory of radical needs and critical psychology, educators have no way of understanding the grip and force of alienating social structures as they manifest themselves in the lived but often non-discursive aspects of everyday life.[173]

In my opinion some of the work done on motivation and aspiration by Maslow and Rogers can be well applied to developing a critical psychology and radical praxis in dealing not only with the rebellious, but also with the indifferent. The techniques of values clarification developed by Kirschenbaum et al can also be used to bring emotions to the surface and introduce them to the discourse of critical pedagogy. Finally, it has been my experience

that some of the techniques of logotherapy described by Viktor Frankl[174] can also be adapted to this end. While we at The New School see the need for a more formalized psychology which takes into account the socio/economic/political context of the student and the group, we have not to date formulated an all-embracive theoretical base.

Henry Giroux sees the application of the education of possibility to be central to citizenship education which he considers to be one of the necessary aspects of critical pedagogy. The basic factors in citizenship education for Giroux are the following: the active nature of the student's participation in the learning process must be stressed; students must be taught to think critically, and the development of a critical mode of reasoning must be used to enable students to appropriate their own histories; students must not only clarify certain values, but they must articulate why they are indispensable to the reproduction of human life, and through the above process, students must learn about the structural and ideological forces which influence and restrict their lives.[175]

At The New School we experience frequent resistance on the part of students to completing work they themselves have contracted to do, to considering insights suggested to them in the Bands, or to ways in which the ideology of the school has become expressed through custom and practice. In reading the critical theorists, it is very clear to me that we have come to a similar **modus operandi**

to that which they describe with the exception that we also look into the possible psychological and personal reason for individual's behaviour. We first try to find the roots of the resistance and to understand the ways in which they are idiosyncratic and the sense in which they are systemic. In either case, we attempt to address the students' motives by helping the student(s) arrive at a critical analysis of the ground for their resistance. Sometimes the resistance points to the need for basic changes within the school which are discussed at community meetings and often put into operation in ways arrived at by consensus or a vote. The student voice, with all that it implies regarding ethnicity, gender, race and class, is primary in these deliberations. The deliberations are always based on a notion of possibility, and all solutions are seen as "in process" to be monitored with an eye to change. The contradiction referred to by R.I.Simon is one staff and students face continually. Our way of resolving it is ultimately to leave the behavioural choices to the people most affected by them, even if we are in basic ideological disagreement. The problem with the education for empowerment, from the point of view of an occasional dissident, is that as issues are worked out, frequently it is not possible to satisfy everyone. It is often very difficult for people to relinquish their "objective" visions of a situation or a person's choices and behaviour in view of what they might regard as an individual's wrong-headed desire "not to know" and insistence on continuing on a course of action

which is generally regarded as disempowering. The ultimate sign of trust which a community can give at this particular juncture is the trust Rogers mentions for each person's ability to accept "what they do not wish to know" only when they are ready to. As well, one must learn to accept that there are people who hold a totally different view of the universe from that of the critical humanistic educator and do not wish ever to relinquish it. While one can and should embark on a critical discussion and analysis with them, ultimately one must not only accept but confirm the person's right to a choice which may even be contrary to the views of the rest of the community. This often can bring into focus the perennial dilemma of democratic life: where do individual rights end and collective rights begin? While there may be no answer out there in the cosmos for this question, by regularily posing and discussing it, people's consciousness becomes raised and the issue becomes an important point of referral in our educational community.

Ultimately, the teacher must be the important link in providing an empancipatory education to learners. The critical theorists emphasize that critical teachers must be "transformative intellectuals" who are not only interested in individual student success, but are

> ...concerned in their teaching with linking empowerment--the ability to think and act critically- to a concept of social transformation. Teaching for social transformation means educating students to take risks and to alter the grounds upon which life is lived...[They must perceive the classrooms]...as active sites of public intervention, where students and teachers learn to redefine the nature of critical learning and practice outside the imperatives of

the corporate marketplace.[176]

Teachers must also be willing to be "bearers of dangerous memory," keeping alive the memory of human suffering by recounting the history of the marginal, the vanquished, and the oppressed and by actively opposing the hegemonic practice of "not naming" those things which challenge the **status quo** and suggest the elimination of the sources of human suffering by the realization of alternative possibilities for society.[177]

For Freire the function of a transformative intellectual is to "unveil" the reality hidden by the dominant ideology and to "dream about the reinvention of society."[178] Freire does not dwell on appropriate methodology to the same extent that some of his followers do. He claims that because "...a liberating teacher will illuminate reality even if he or she lectures," what is important is that critical thinking must be animated, that the speech have a "certain dynamism" to "provoke critical attention" and "unveil reality."[179] Freire also believes that ideology precedes practice even while it informs it dialectically:

> Teachers whose dream is the transformation of society have to get control of a permanent process of forming themselves, and not wait for professional training from the establishment. The more an educator becomes aware of these things, the more he or she learns from practice, and then he or she discovers that it is possible to bring into the classroom, into the context of the seminar, moments of social practice.[180]

Freire believes that it is only through a practice of such idealism that teachers can keep motivated themselves:

Being engaged in a permanent process of illuminating

> reality with students, fighting against the opacity and obscuring of reality, has something to do with avoiding a fall into cynicism. This is a risk which we have as educators, to the extent we work, work, work!, and often see no results. Many times, we can lose hope. In such moments, there is no solution and we may become mentally bureaucratized, lose creativity, fall into excuses, become mechanistic. This is the bureaucratization of the mind, a kind of fatalism.[181]

All the critical theorists agree on principle that radical pedagogy must be informed by a "passionate faith in the necessity to create a better world" and needs a vision of possibility, a kind of "concrete utopianism" which is a result of "creative risk-taking, of engaging life so as to enrich it."[182]

With increased human longevity and people's work lives ever lengthening, our society is being presented by the unprecedented human experience of teachers spending more than four decades in an occupation which demands great resources of energy. The question raised by the optimism of both Freire and Giroux is: where does one get the stimulation necessary to maintain the passionate focus demanded by critical pedagogy?

It has certainly been our experience at The New School that the people who have managed to withstand the exhaustion and stress of continual self-criticism, the continual need to prepare in response to the students' articulated needs, and the on-going exposure to the pain of the students' lives are those who have approached the school with a transformative vision, and with a belief that schools may provide one locus where people can make a difference where they live and breathe.

I. "Emancipation Studies" and the Pedagogy of Critical Humanism.

At all times since the inception of The New School, Women's Studies has been a presence in the school. This has been due only in part to my continued presence as Director and teacher during a period when I have been consistently researching, publishing and giving talks within the field of Women's Studies as well as actively participating in various aspects of the women's movement. Each year there has been at least one other faculty member or external resource person who has worked from a feminist perspective. It can also be argued that the objectives of Women's Studies are consistent with those of Critical Humanism.

While the first Women's Studies course to be taught in a Canadian university was taught in 1970, courses in Women's Studies were taught at Vanier and Dawson Colleges by 1971. At the same time Women's Studies was being developed throughout the United States, and its earliest articulation of objectives usually covered purposes such as: involving women in the women's movement through education; serving as a focal point for developing a body of knowledge about women; acting as an institutional base for the struggle against sexism, and providing a center of resources which could be tapped by the women's movement for the community.[183] These objectives are clearly in line with many of the more fully articulated purposes of critical pedagogy spelled out above.

Other aspects of Women's Studies were also to prove important:

Women's Studies must compensate for the absence of women from curriculum by building a body of research on women; it must ensure the understanding of patriarchy in its historical perspective and of the effects of socialization and sex role stereotyping on women through a cross-cultural perspective; it must promote an understanding of women in history, of female sexuality, of the function of education as a codifier of sex-segregation, of the function of the family vis-a-vis women in all cultures, of the relation of women to paid and unpaid work, and finally of the relationship between social movements and women.[184] Added to the above list is the expectation that there be an analysis of scholarship by and about women in both the traditional disciplines and in interdisciplinary forms. The structures and conditions of women's oppression must be studied as well as contrasting models for self determination. Above all, it is considered essential to examine the relationships between the personal subordination of women and the broader social, political and economic structures. On a more affective basis, Women's Studies must also push women towards academic excellence.[185] Women's Studies addresses the personal and systemic dimensions of women's experience in both its formal and informal content by starting with the self as subject.[186] Women's Studies legitimate life-experience as an appropriate subject of analysis, it concerns itself with process as well as product, is multicultural and explores interlocking systems of oppression based on sex, race and class.[187]

While the above characteristics may not be true of every Women's Studies course currently offered, they do cover a wide cross-section of basic concurrence among Women's Studies teachers. Inherent in the creation of this new field of study is the struggle to create an epistemological shift in human knowledge by rephrasing and critiquing all the standard ways of developing questions, answers and paradigms. This developing epistemology rejects the dichotomous notion of cognitive/ affective learning in favour of a theory of continuum from the cognitive to the affective and unconscious levels of learning. This epistemology also recognizes that there are many ways of learning involving intuition, spiritual understanding, creativity, and socio/political contextualization. Women's Studies cannot avoid touching on the "personal" dimensions of the lives of both the teacher and the student: "The premise that men dominate women, in however partial or subtle or brutal a way, lends a certain urgency to feminist investigations."[188] This urgency is experienced on the level of one's personal life: "What does this mean for me?" "How will it affect my relationship with my lover, my brother, my father, my friends?" It is also epxerienced in one's public political sphere: "How can I escape this domination?" "Will it affect my future success or my ability to attain my own goals?"

Because Women's Studies has not only developed **from** the women's movement but grown inextricably **with** it, the emphasis on praxis and its role in social and intellectual transformation has

charged it with a mission far beyond the traditional intellectual preoccupations.

Women's Studies, then, has developed on the bedrock of an emancipatory philosophy affecting, at the very least, 51% of the world's population. From its very beginning it has emphasized the need for an epistemological analysis of the "knowledge" purveyed in schools. For this reason, Women's Studies also must pressure institutions on the basis of compensatory education: analysing current curricula and assuring that it is, at the very least, gender fair. Because of the charged nature of its subject matter, in practice Women's Studies has always had to address the affective and to confirm the personal experiences and insights of women. Since it is a new field of study, teacher and learner are thrust into a fairly egalitarian situation, especially when frequently the learner has had many "female" experiences to which the teacher may not have been personally exposed.

These elements in the theory and praxis of Women's Studies make it an excellent field for the pedagogy of Critical Humanism. At The New School, the issue of gender has been addressed from a feminist point of view in Bands, Learning Groups in most subjects, and in the community itself.

The developing praxis of Women's Studies has contributed to changing the praxis in more traditional disciplines and also to the creation of other fields of interest. For some years, men at The New School have demanded men's groups to discuss how they feel,

analyse and deal with the masculinist ideology which has shaped their lives. Over the years complementary ideology and pedagogy have developed in Women's Studies and Men's Groups. There has also been a continual interest in sexuality expressed by students of both sexes. Learning Groups in Human Sexuality and Bands have also combined many pedagogical techniques of Humanistic Education, Feminist Education, and Critical Pedagogy to provide a multi-dimensional approach to the issues which the students raise as their primary concerns.

Over the years there have been numerous learning groups on Black Studies, racism, prejudice, political power, and peace within The New School. These groups as well have dealt with the visceral feelings students have about these issues as well as with an analysis of the socio-political contexts of these subjects within the lives of the students. As Women's Studies, Men's Groups and Human Sexuality Groups are focused on an emancipatory model for the individual and society, so are groups on the issues mentioned above. Because these subjects are so viscerally based in the lives of our students, and because there is so much to analyze and learn, they lend themselves very well to a pedagogy of Critical Humanism which dialectically addresses the multi-dimensional levels of the learners' intersection with the subject matter. There is no doubt that because these are all fairly new fields of study which had the freedom and room to develop appropriate pedagogies of empowerment, they have provided for the school on-going models of possibility.

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13. Blake,"A Little Girl Lost," p.116.

14. Neill, p.4.

15. Neill, p.24.

16. Neill, p.8,

17. Neill, p.348-349.

18. Neill, p.26-27.

19. Neill, p.12.

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22. Neill, p.52-54.

23. Leonard, pp.1, 9, and 14.

24. Leonard, p.16.

25. Leonard, pp.18-22.

26. Leonard, pp.132-133.

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CHAPTER THREE

"CLIENTELE," IDEOLOGY AND PRAXIS AT THE NEW SCHOOL

A. "Clientéle"

> It is because money cannot buy the human gestures which confer respect, nor rights guarantee them as entitlements, that any decent society requires a public discourse about the needs of the human person. It is because fraternity, love, belonging, dignity and respect cannot be specified as rights that we ought to specify them as needs and seek, with the blunt institutional procedures at our disposal, to make their satisfaction a routine human practice.[1]

Often students arrive at The New School with a strong sense of entitlement. They understand themselves to be entitled to something they call "my education" as in "I need my education to get ahead." It is often instructive to inquire what they mean by "ahead." The ambition is usually quite modest; just being ahead of the minimum wage law. Having a future that promises the necessary resources for access to "state of the art" consumer goods. During their CEGEP years, most students are willing to work hard at part-time jobs in order to have those talismanic objects which they think will confer meaning to their lives and status to themselves. Increasingly over the years, we have observed that many of our students are more immediately committed to these low-paying dead-end "mall jobs" than they are to acquiring the skills they may need

to realize long-term success in their economic prospects, much less in their opportunity for interesting work, personal growth and social status. Learning college-level skills is sometimes difficult, requiring the ability to concentrate for lengthy periods of time and to be able to plan ones time realistically. These capacities are rarely fully developed in adolescents in our society whose time has been planned for them and whose concentration span has been conditioned over years to the 8-12 minutes between TV commercials. Education is recognized simply as a means of getting "somewhere" beyond the work available to young part-time workers, the most vulnerable group in the labour force.

School, then, may frequently be perceived as a conduit to more satisfying commodities. While education is seen as entitlement, so is consumerism, a notion continually supported by the media to which young people are addicted. It is my impression that the desire to have increased access to "things", coupled with a reluctance to defer gratification in order to ensure future success and achievement, are partially caused by the emotional vacuums and states of alienation in which many young people seem to live.

It is important to review the Maslowian hierarchy of needs based on the satisfaction: of physiological needs [food, water,sleep, physical comfort]; of safety needs [stability, order, freedom from violence, disease, disorder]; of needs for "belongingness and love" [friendship, giving and receiving affection]; and of self-esteem needs [recognition, respect from

others, self-respect]...all of which needs must be satisfied in order to strive for self-actualization.[2] Maslow developed this theory primarily in the post World War II period when there was great public nostalgia in North America for a fantasized version of the family life which had been interrupted by the war. People had short and sentimental memories, often overlooking the havoc in family unity and life created by the depression of the 1930s. Customarily many of the physical and belonging-love needs were expected to be provided for children by the nuclear and extended family, by neighbourhood, and by cultural and/or religious community. Because of the prevailing ideology of the time, Maslow had every reason to imagine the possibility of a clear, orderly and sequential development of human potential.

Later on, in Religious Values and Peak Experiences, Maslow would express an understanding that the society had fallen into a "chaos of relativism" which could be called "valuelessness."[3] The two decades since Maslow's death have brought even greater social change. Currently, one out of every three children in North America is the child of a divorce. It is predicted that by the year 2000, one out of every two children in North America will be in this position.[4] This means that by the year 2000, 50% of the population will have undergone the trauma of family bifurcation; this should clearly have a strong effect on people's expectations of human institutions and relationships. A recent fifteen year study of the effect of divorce on families conducted by Ruth

Wallerstein in California indicates that adolescence is a period of particularly grave risk for children in divorced families---the single most important cause they themselves identify of enduring pain and anomie in their lives. They have been found to be left with an enduring feeling of both physical and emotional adandonment, and to continue feeling the effects of family breakdown ten to fifteen years after a separation or divorce, especially if they have witnessed family violence. In the longer run, these children appear to experience real anxiety about their ability to create families themselves; this of course would affect their attitude to possible positive results produced by the deferment of immediate gratification. In the United States, children from divorced families account for an inordinately high proportion of children in mental-health treatment, in special education, referred by teachers to school psychologists, and an estimated 60% of child patients in clinical treatment and 80%-100% of adolescents in in-patient mental hospital settings.[5] Parents frequently do not get their lives on track after divorce and suffer a diminished capacity to provide parental guidance and those child-rearing functions necessary to ensure the psychological health of their families. In many cases it is the child who is expected to provide psychological support for a distressed parent. As well, children who remain with their mothers often experience a serious drop in the family's standard of living accompanied by regular observation of a lasting discrepancy between their parents'

standards of living.[6] By no means do most children of divorce usually benefit from resources exceeding the minimum child support awarded by courts. In North America, a large percentage of child support monies awarded to mothers and children by courts is not paid by fathers. Frequently children become pawns in power games between parents years after they've stopped talking to each other, or even formed relationships with new mates.

The subjects of Wallerstein's fifteen year study were all economically stable, white, middle class, educated Californians. Before divorce, the families did not have the problems of poverty and general resourcelessness which exacerbate the emotional problems of all children of divorce. In 1973, most students were able to produce at least one parent [if not both parents] for a visitors' night or graduation. However,increasing numbers of our students are not only from single-parent families, but they often have only the most tenuous ties with one or both of their parents. Some of them have no contact with their biological parents and call themselves "system kids," having been raised [frequently at their own request] through the warehousing of children by social welfare in foster or group homes. Even in cases of intact middle class families, frequently young people are expected to provide for their personal needs except for room and board at home. This means they must pay school fees and expenses, travel expenses, lunches, clothing and all recreational expenses for themselves. In short, they are not eligible for financial aid and **must** find jobs. Many

families have lived unrooted lives far from the support of relatives, and in many cases family stability has been permanentlv disrupted not only by divorce, separation or death, but by drug or alcohol abuse or mental illness among parents. Often young people are especially undermined by uncomfortable and ill-defined situations in blended families, disastrous serial marriages of one or both parents, and they are sometimes subject to various family-related and more public forms of sexual abuse. Statistics tell us that one in four Canadian women will be raped at some point in her life, and that one in five Canadian women has been a victim of childhood sexual abuse. Many boys also are victims of family violence, or at the very least, of wounding relationships with their fathers. [7]

Many students also work to support themselves away from families or the remains of families who have the means to support them at home. Frequently their physical or psychological survival is dependent on their being removed from pathological family situations. It is very difficult to persuade people in such situations to consider the long-range possibility of the acquisition of knowledge improving their lives. This is especially difficult with students who have histories of poor academic performance, because frequently as children they simply could not concentrate on school work. Every aspect of their lives was mediated by problems at home.

> We think of belonging as permanence, yet all our homes are transient. Who still lives in the house of their

> childhood? Who still lives in the neighbourhood where they grew up? Home is the place we have to leave in order to grow up, to become ourselves. We think of belonging as rootedness in a small familiar place, yet home for most of us is the convulsive arteries of a great city. Our belonging is no longer to something fixed, known and familiar, but to an electric and heartless creature eternally in motion...Perhaps above all we think of belonging as the end of yearning itself, as a state of rest and reconciliation with ourselves beyond the need itself. Yet modernity and insatiability are inseparable.[8]

Like all young people, our students hope that somehow "it will all work out in their lives." They frequently take a passive spectator role in their own lives and seem to feel powerless to effect change. Many of them love futuristic fantasy and science fiction, and yet the future of modernity seems to hold within it the promise of further alienation. It is almost impossible in this situation to set down strong roots of belongingness. Indeed, frequently we are alarmed by young people who have the ability to connect with anyone within seconds of arrival [they are experts at being moved around], but panic at the thought of closeness, of continuity, of striving.

For many young people, the pervasive presence of drugs provides an illusion of belonging, of solidarity, of meaning, and of freedom. Drugs promise an <u>ersatz</u> but instantly achieveable sense of self-actualization and affiliation. Relationships with dealers and other users are fraught with meanings and loyalties. While most of our students are not consumers of "heavy drugs," some of them are sufficiently regular users of marajuana and hashish for this habit to interfere with their ability to do college-level cognitive

work. It is also clear that there is no young person in our urban landscape who is not fully acquainted with the language of drugs and more capable of obtaining them than his/her teachers. By direct contact or by peer contacts to whom they may remain very loyal, increasing numbers of young people are implicated in the general violence and criminalization of our society.

Students of college age are undergoing enormous physiological, emotional and social changes in their lives. Their bodies are still undergoing internal changes which may result in radical change of appearance. Very often, leaving high school means parting from some good friends, or at least from a context in which they occupy a unique place. Sometimes coming to college is the first time they have been consistently absent from their neighbourhood on a day-to-day basis. All these factors can destabilize their sense of well-being and self-esteem. Thrown into the crucible of a large urban college, they often have difficulties maintaining a strong sense of identity. If they do not have a stable base of security in their lives, their need for self-esteem makes them vulnerable to the illusion of self-esteem provided by drugs,alcohol and casual sex. They are also vulnerable to an adolescent culture which markets "image" and "life style" rather than any substantive sense of accomplishment or identity. "Image" is attainable through the possession of magical objects manufactured with the intention of creating only a temporary sense of well-being. Their precarious self-esteem is in constant danger of sudden invalidation by

cleverly orchestrated changes of style which will force the young consumer to struggle to recapture that ephemeral sense of well-being through buying his/her way into the next market-researched image. Because of their lack of long-term goals, many young people from 15-24 years of age possess a large cumulative and disposable cash income attractive to manufacturers who undertake programmes of lucrative image-vending designed to maintain a constant distance between the young people's low self-esteem and idealised new versions of themselves which will keep them buying, keep them working at exploitative dead-end jobs, and keep them deferring serious education. They become increasingly deskilled for the kind of concentration required for academic work.

Frequently education is meaningful to our students only as a means of getting into a better income bracket in order to buy more. They have been appropriated by the notion of "self-esteem through possessions." The "farther reaches of human nature" posited by Maslow become transposed into the substitution of consumerism for human solidarity. Maslow's notion of self-actualization is reachable through a slow and organic process based on individual safety and belongingness. Without extensive discussion of the emotions hidden within our students, self-actualization may very quickly become transposed into a glitzy mirage of illusory safety and well-being, not unlike the instant nirvana promised by drug experiences or orgasm.

> Being human is an accomplishment like playing an instrument. It takes practice. The keys must be mastered.

> The old scores must be committed to memory. It is a skill we can forget. A little noise can make us forget the notes. The best of us is historical; the best of us is fragile. Being human is a second nature which history taught us, and which terror and deprivation can batter us into forgetting.[9]

While many of our students are not children of divorce, violated sexually or physically abused, or continually involved in alcohol,drugs or casual sex, most of them nonetheless have difficulty in understanding the value of education-in-itself. All schools have the mission [whether they recognize it or not!] of piercing the prevalent notion of education-as-entitlement-to-esteem-through-possessions and somehow celebrating the values of knowledge and understanding the universe.

While it is possible and desirable at this juncture to undertake with the students a project of critical pedagogy regarding the source of their values and whose interests are met by them, it is our experience that it takes much more than intellectual argumentation to convince people to give up comforting fantasies which have been created to compensate for the absence in their lives of the real human entitlements: comfort, safety, community, respect, love, self-esteem and the ability to form independent judgements based on an unmediated understanding of their own personal interests and needs. Such change may only devolve from re-experiencing in full wakefulness the lacks they are trying to fill. Critical Humanism brings to bear on their lives a critical pedagogy as described above, but also a pedagogy of the

emotions which connects them to the innermost roots of value and behaviour within themselves.

B. The Agenda of the State

At The New School we have developed a pedagogy which is designed to address the students' deepest feelings and the experiences and realities within which they are rooted. This holisitic pedagogy has as its objective to address the students' emotional lives through individual and group work in the Bands and in the Learning Groups where all learning should devolve "from self to subject," from the students' innermost needs to the pursuit of learning about a subject which will illuminate their understanding.

We are, however, working within a context where these objectives are not valued at all. The same formulae for staffing and budgeting are applied to us as are applied to all other departments and disciplines, many of which have totally different needs and an absence of a coherent and articulated educational philosophy. The irony is, of course, that many of our concerns are those expressed in the mid-sixties by Québec government's Parent Report for educational reform. Recently the Conseil des Collèges published a report on the failure and/or drop-out rate in the colleges, reporting that only 59% of all students entering CEGEP

complete their diplomas.[10] The report attempts to explain the reasons for the low success rate of our very expensive educational system in various ways, the first of which is through characterizing the student and his/her values:

> ...l'élève d'aujourdhui doit se situer dans une société qui a aussi connu un éclatement des valeurs autrefois considèrées comme fondamentales. Les valeurs spirituelles, dans le sense large du terme, ne sont plus entourées de la même auréole de prestige qu'autrefois et cela se reflète dans des attitudes face aux études. Si le jeune qui fréquente le réseau collégial aujourd'hui est citoyen d'une société fortement axée sure la consommation et sur l'utilitarisme, il adhère aussi à des valeurs qui lui sont personelles...
>
> Par ailleurs, les besoins et les attentes de 'l'élève d'aujourd'hui sont conditionnés par une situation économique en constant évolution. Le diplôme auquel il aspire ne sera plus, comme autrefois,un passeport lui offrant de larges garanties d'obtenir, dés la fin des ses études, un emploi à plein temps stable, interessant et bien remunéré.
>
> Dans ce contexte,il ne faut pas se surprendre que pour l'élève, au seuil de la vie adulte, les études ne constituent pas toujours la seule ni même la principale préoccupation. Sa vie se compose d'une alternance d'études,de loisir, de travail remunéré et d'autres occupations qui contribuent, chacune à leur manière, à combler ses différents besoins d'individu, mais aussi de consommateur.[11]

Beneath the generalizations of this "profile," one can very clearly see the complicity of the state and the business "community." Consumerism has become a nationally defined "need." There is no effort to analyse what "needs" are defined by the students, and whose interests are served by them. For this reason, it is unlikely that the Quebec educational establishment will be the site of a **systemic** effort to provide for the students an argument for the values inherent in simply knowing more about the

world, its past,how it functions, and learning to pose critical radical questions regarding the **status quo**. It is precisely because the values are dictated by the combined manipulations of government and industry in a "free-market" economy that consumerism is emphasized concomitantly with "Training for jobs" at the college level. The utmost cynicism, is to be found in the **caveat** that no one is guaranteed a full-time, stable and interesting job upon graduation, anyway.

The report also identifies seven most important reasons why students fail and/or drop out of school: their past school experience; the shock of passage from secondary school to CEGEP; the fragmented organization of studies at the CEGEP level; the motivation and academic aspirations of the students; the economic situation of the students and their employment; the teachers and the milieu of the colleges.[12] While these reasons for student drop-out and failure are all recognizable, it is nonetheless suprising that the report makes no mention of the general social disorganization in which many young people live. Drugs are not mentioned at all. The report does, however, mention the fact that increasing numbers of students work between 20-35 hours per week, which greatly affects their ability to perform well within the college system. They do not investigate **why** the young are working so much and how many of them are working for basic necessities of survival, and how many for the disposable income they need to feel self-esteem. It is my own suspicion that a substantial number of

students, who are working more hours than they need to survive or even have some disposable income, are simply placing their bets on several horses. As Canadians they feel entitled to a good standard of living and lives as charmed as those beamed to them on sit-coms. In the long run, they want the insurance policy of "their education" [which even the government claims bears no promise of financial reward]. Since they are unable to defer gratification sufficiently to try to "make it" in any inherently substantive way, they must labour to acquire ephemeral instant reinforcers of a desirable "image" and "lifestyle."

These contradictory goals are consistently reinforced by the validation of a rugged individualism which has swept over our society. If people want to enough, this romantic vision suggests, they can indeed "make it" to a place called "the top:"

THE LITTLE BLUE ENGINE

The little blue engine looked up at the hill.
His light was weak, his whistle was shrill.
He was tired and small and the hill was tall,
And his face blushed red as he softly said,
"I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

So he started up with a chug and a strain,
And he puffed and pulled with might and main,
And slowly he climbed, a foot at a time,
And his engine coughed as he whispered soft,
"I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

With a squeak and a creak and a toot and a sigh,
With an extra hope and an extra try,,
He would not stop - now he neared the top-
And strong and proud he cried out loud,
"I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

He was almost there, when - CRASH! SMASH! BASH!

He slid down and mashed into engine hash
On the rocks below...which goes to show
If the track is tough and the hill is rough,
THINKING you can just ain't enough![13]

The children's poem by Shel Silverstein, a parody of the much read children's book, The Little Engine Who Could, is an excellent illustration of the perils of superficial doctrines of "mind over matter" in a world where "matter" threatens us continually with annihilation way beyond our power to contain it by feats of personal and individual will. At The New School,we do not encourage the students to imaginary power or self-esteem based on chimera; rather by a pedagogy developed [and still developing] over fifteen years and continually refined to meet the changing needs of students, we work with the students to develop within them individually and collectively those tools they will need to liberate themselves from low self-esteem and social values which work against their individual and collective interests.

C. The Community as Educator

Students come to The New School as individuals and often are initially surprised to see that they are expected to be responsible and accountable for and to themselves and others in the community.

> I think The New School has made me more openminded...that those are values and they're within me and those have been recognized and they surfaced here. I remember the first time I was here the first thing I thought of was, "My God, I'm in business for myself!" That's what the feeling was. Like coming from the working world, I always felt that I was in business for someone else and it was true. I felt

> so good thinking that I was coming to school. It was,"Yeah, I'm in business for myself."...It's like here you have to make more effort...to spend yourself, just to spend your own talents and your own energy. It's a great feeling.[14]

The school also communicates to students an expectation that self-disclosure in a safe and accepting environment is an important means of arriving at self-knowledge, personal growth and authentic relationships with other people. Students soon learn that there is a dialectical relationship between personal growth, the growth of others and the creation of community.

> At The New School I learned that each person, each individual was very important and worthy of special attention and care because that's basically the kind of care we got at The New School.[15]

> It's really giving you the occasion probably for the first time in your life to consider your identity in the real world, in the world away from your family and the New School requires that you consider who you are honestly. You can't do less because people in your Band get to know you so well that...you'd have to be honest. You didn't have a choice but to admit to certain things and so it's difficult, it's really difficult to explain, but I think that it has a lot to do with providing a safe environment in which to look at aspects of yourself. Then you form relationships as a way of testing out those aspects and I guess what I'm saying is that perhaps the relationships are as lasting as they are because of that foundation of honesty, of candidness, of being exposed.[16]

Finally, students are exposed to the fact that they can make a difference wherever they are, and that humans have a responsibility to the living and those still to live, that our stewardship of the present is important. It is our contention that by helping the students to build the skills necessary for living authentic lives

determined by their own values and beliefs in peaceful community with others, we will help them to create, find and maintain meaning in their lives and make commensurate contributions to the transformation and betternment of society.

> It's expected and anticipated that you will look beyond yourself and look to other people, take responsibility for the growth of others as well as your own growth, as it's expected others will do that for you. You can't leave without taking it with you and I think it's certainly something that affects every part of your life in a very fundamental way as you go on, be it work, be it daily relationships or encounters, be it school. I think it really is a tool and a training that stays with you.[17]

> I really think I'm taking a strong awareness of people and the earth [from the school]. I've developed a compassion for the people and the earth as a whole and I've learned a lot about...[those subjects] here, and I always plan to have those strong feelings and will always try to do what I can for peace and solidarity...[18]

It must be said that the age of New School students lends itself to openness, to change, and to a desire to explore. Finishing high school is always a time of reflection and choice for young people. Will they continue in school? What do they wish to become? Do they want to work? To what extent can they risk making choices which would alienate or disappoint their parents? Should they move away from home...travel...live with a mate? Indeed, it would be amazing if no change were to happen between the ages of 17-22, the average age range of our students. It is important at this juncture in the development of young people to intervene with ideas and experiences which will broaden their world beyond the narrow confines of the consumerism which has already

dominated their lives since their first television advertisement.

The students who come to The New School often come from a situation of disenchantment with the regular high schools or CEGEP programmes. Almost 35% of our applicants are from other colleges or other programmes at Dawson College. They will say they "do not want to be treated as a number," or that they feel "lost" and disconfirmed in the regular academy. One transfer student said about his experience at The New School:

> I got a certain amount of confidence because I was validated as a person whereas I hadn't been in other structures. New School helped me to find the balance, to realize that no, I'm not the one with all the answers, but at the same time there's certainly value in what I have to say and I can trust my perceptions about things.[19]

Clearly, in order to provide a realistic arena for such explorations and feedback, schools must give considerable air-space to students. Where active learning is valued, students must speak, argue, listen, discuss whatever interests them. They must also be encouraged to reflect on the reactions they elicit, to respond, and sometimes to effect changes beneficial to them. While the Bands are the essential locus for such concerns, in practice we do not differentiate between "academic" subjects and personal growth. The self may be academically addressed, and the academic subjects pursued by the students must proceed from their articulated affective needs. It must also be emphasized that the students' membership in a recognizable small community is accorded great importance in our pedagogy as a locus of learning, personal growth

and political consciousness raising.

It is generally viewed as a privilege to be in a position to facilitate growth at such a key moment in the life of a young person. Certainly many of our graduates have identified their time at The New School as the beginning of a new era in their lives:

> It marked a watershed in my life. It gave me an awful lot of confidence, it let me learn a lot about myself...I think of the New School as being one of the highlights of my life up to now, and I believe the skills I learned there and the types of things I spent my time doing still figure very much in my life now ten years later.[20]

> I consider my adulthood to have started when I was at The New School, and some of the relationships that are most significant to me now began when my adulthood began at The New School.[21]

> One of the things I would like to say is that often I think of my past in terms of different phases and different periods and the current period, What I would consider the modern times of my life or the contemporary times of my life seem to lengthen and lengthen because I always think of it as starting at The New School. The modern era for me started at The New School.[22]

D. Ideology and Praxis

> Modern welfare may not be generous by any standard other than a comparison with the nineteenth-century workhouse, but it does attempt to satisfy a wide range of basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, warmth and medical care. The question is whether that is all a human being needs. When we talk about needs, we mean something more than just the basic necessities of human survival. We also use the word to describe what a person needs in order to live to their full potential. What we need in order to survive, and what we need in order to flourish are two different things.[23]

In considering ideology at The New School, it is important to bear in mind that the school exists within the context of a particular college, with a particular history, upon which it is dependent for every facet of its existence. The school cannot decide not to confer credits, or to cease existing, or to limit or excede a certain number of students and faculty resources. In fact, we must do battle for resources against other very costly programmes, many of which have the support of external credentializing associations such as those of nurses, radiology and radiography technicians and interior designers. The college itself is dependent on the state's assessment of its needs which must be supported by both the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology and the Treasury Board of Quèbec.

As mentioned above, The New School has been subjected to many difficulties in realizing our objectives because of cut-backs and losses of resources. Many gifted teachers who were instrumental in formulating the school's philosophy were affected by cut-backs, and were replaced on the basis of seniority, sometimes by people who had little sympathy with our philosophy and who, in a time of tremendous professional insecurity, could be reluctant to take on new methodologies. On the other hand, because of the critiques of faculty members who have poured through the school we have also undergone revisions and elaborations which have been very useful. It would therefore be incorrect to infer that the ideology of The

New School has solely been cobbled out of the writers, ideas and practices described in the preceding chapter. Rather, its ideology has developed dialectically through the presence of numerous students and situations which precipitated both discussion among and action by teachers whose contributions came from diverse belief systems: Islam, High Church Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, Reform and Orthodox Judaism, atheism, agnosticism, personally conceived mysticism and Rosicrucianism. There have been socialists, Trotskyites, laissez-faire capitalists, communists, anarchists, militant unionists and anti-unionists, apolitical people and individualists with a clear contempt for politics or the public sphere. There have been pacificsts and believers in nuclear deterrence; there have been both male supremacists and feminists; there have been neo-Freudians and Behaviourists, believers in social determinism and believers in absolute free will; and there has been a wide spread of class and ethnic origin among the faculty. On the whole, however, there has usually been a level of professionalism among the faculty that has rendered them amenable to trying to work in concert,contributing to the development of basic structures rooted in the origins of the school.

It is important to relate the belief system of the school both to the ideological positions described previously and to illustrate by actual examples how ideology may manifest itself through application to situations which arise within the school. Ideology in practice at The New School falls somewhere between the

individualism of Maslow and Rogers and the collectivism of the critical theorists. Our first relationship with the students is a personal one when each is interviewed for acceptance into the school. We are not particularily interested in their academic records except that they conform to the criteria set by the college in adherence to general CEGEP policy. We look for candidates who demonstrate an understanding of our objectives and an appetite for our methodology by a desire to grow,a willingness to try new experiences, to risk caring for others, and to contribute to a community. We do not accept people who appear to be seriously mentally ill, totally unmotivated, or addicted to drugs or alcohol. We have found that we have limited capacities to help people in such situations and that they tend to drain attention from those learners who can enhance their lives by attending The New School. This is an important point, because frequently such people are attracted to us in the mistaken belief that we are a Summerhillian school (although they might never have actually heard of that prototype) where they will receive credentials without being forced to extend themselves beyond their current situations. We are also reluctant to accept people whose ideological positions are rigidly hostile to ours; too much time may be spent in fruitless argument which could be better spent working with students who are interested in exploring their own possibilities of growth.

> We had accepted a young man who appeared bright and interested in his interview. Later, he attended a pre-term meeting of both "old" and "in-coming" New School students where the subject of values was raised. There was a lively

> discussion on which values were most central to the New School. It was concluded that respect of one another and respect of confidentiality were central to the functioning of the school. During a brief break this young man approached one of the co-directors and asked him if there were any values considered unacceptable at The New School. The response was that racism was such a value. This emerged as a problem for this young man who said he was a white supremacist who simply "knew" that he was better than people of colour and Jews. The co-director consulted other staff this issue; eventually it was decided that he would call the young man and explain to him that since the student body was multi-ethnic and multi-racial, he could only be welcome if he were willing to approach the experience with an open mind. If not,he would find the school an uncomfortable place where he would create discomfort if he persisted in his racist beliefs. He was unreceptive to reconsidering his beliefs and decided to withdraw his application. Arrangements were made for him to attend another programme.

Aside from our fundamental belief in human equality, the reason for our great concern here was that because an environment of safety is needed for peronsal growth and empowerment, it is essential that all members of our community feel safe and fundamentally accepted. While it might have been helpful to this young man to explore what purpose racism served in his life, this was a situation where we had to come to decide between the needs of an individual and those of the group. While we are willing to facilitate our students' arriving at articulating highly variable value systems, we cannot allow them to harm one another or themselves, no matter how sincere their beliefs may be. While we encourage personal growth and personal empowerment, we insist that these aspirations not thrive at the expense of other people's well-being , regardless of the benefits subjectively described by

learners. It is not our experience that each individual's notion of self-actualization leads towards the "psychological health...spiritual peace and social harmony" described by Maslow.[24]

Because we believe self-actualization to be the result of a dialectical relationship between the inner person [complete with an individual psychological and social history] and the rigourous exigencies of the particular social, economic and political context, we attempt to create an environment in which the students feel sufficiently safe to articulate their own beliefs, needs and feelings and receive thoughtful feedback from each other and the facilitators. We always insist that the individual is the ultimate authority on his/her own life: even to the point of making choices which we might perceive as self-denying or disempowering. The only exception to this rule of thumb is in the case where students are endangering themselves before the law, are endangering the well being of the school, or are in life-threatening situations. In such cases, we intervene and often seek help for the students outside of the school.

Like Rogers, we believe that people can only accept changes in their lives when they themselves are ready for them. We encourage students to peel away all the impositions of "other voices," of other people's expectations of and imperatives for them and to reach within themselves and articulate their real feelings and desires. While we tend to subscribe to the Blakean-Sumerhillian notion of people as basically good and tending toward health, we

also recognize that by the time people reach the ages of 17-22, they may have been very damaged by their experiences and only marginally receptive to risking the kind of "trustingness" and reaching to other people for the perceptions and feedback necessary to informed self-confrontation which is an important stage in personal growth and empowerment.Self-actualization, personal growth and empowerment demand a very difficult and lengthy process and discipline which continue throughout ones life. Sometimes people must re-experience and re-view feelings or happenings with a more objective and critical eye. Sometimes teachers at The New School must be not only bearers of painful social memories, but catalysts for the consideration of painful personal memories which impede personal growth. Often we must address important questions with the students, such as: whose interest did a particular situation serve? How did they feel about a situation when it happened and how do they feel now? Was it what they wanted for themselves? What choices did they have then? Would they have other choices now? What concrete changes <u>can</u> they make and, more importantly, **do they wish** to make? Often the objective glance of other people can help bring a situation into focus.

> Linda was explaining in Women's Studies class why she could not keep up with her homework. Some years before her parents had divorced. Her father, a man of some means, was providing only minimum support to her mother, Linda and her sister with the result that all three women had to work hard to make ends meet. Her mother had a low paying job as a clerk and Linda and her sister worked as cashiers on Thursday and Friday nights and all day Saturday. Although the group sympathized with her plight, it was pointed out that she had other free nights and Sundays to do her

> homework. It was not so simple: the girls had to cook for their father on Sunday through Wednesday nights. He had told them that he couldn't eat anything they hadn't prepared for him for dinner. Although he had not threatened his daughters, they were under the impression that if they did not "feed" him, he would stop giving them any financial support at all. What about the nights they couldn't to cook for them, some one asked. What did he eat then? Linda didn't know; she supposed he didn't eat. "He must be very emaciated," I observed, "going without dinner four days a week." "Not at all," Linda replied. "He's very over-weight. He must weigh about 300 pounds." Then she paused and looked stricken; she understood. Her father was getting fed somewhere! Linda is a very intelligent young woman. Clearly the problem was not that she couldn't figure out her father's eating habits, but that the anger,fear and guilt associated with her feelings about him blinded her to his manipulation. After several further discussions on the subject in the group and between Linda and her sister, the two young women decided to confront their father and tell him that they could not afford both to support themselves and to feed him. Their world did not collapse; in fact, their father undertook to feed himself and eventually decided to give his daughters better financial support for their education.

There are many ways of approaching this situation: through a feminist analysis of divorce and how it penalizes women and children; through analyzing the systemic factors which make the mother unskilled and poor while Linda's father is able to command a large salary; through examining the factors of gender socialization which make it difficult for Linda and her sister to resist assuming the female role of "nurturer." There are also numerous psychological dimensions to the situation: what is going on with the obese father that he feels he has to "command" Linda's attention in such a role reversal? What needs of hers are served by this scenario? Can Linda extricate herself from her parents' continuing conflicts where she has been consistently used as a

pawn? Is it permissable to "say no" to a parent? What would be the most desirable relationship she could have with her father? How would this affect her mother? In short, given an analysis of all the factors listed above, what can Linda do to improve her situation at school and her feelings within her life situation? Over the term, all these and more issues were addressed in relation to Linda's situation with very positive and empowering results.

However, not all situations which are raised have such positive endings. The process of addressing issues is a familiar one: in dealing with presenting problems (falling behind with ones homework, in this case), students are asked to analyse the reasons for their recalcitrance. We do not proceed on the notion that people are "lazy;" we explore the situation together, trying to understand the motivation for self-destructive behaviours. We then explore possible reasons and remediations for the situation. The process frequently involves great sadness, crying, and often jubilation as well. My own memory of Linda's look of amazement and delight when she "discovered" that her father was eating behind her back has remained an inspiration to me in the intervening years, often giving me the energy to continue to pursue lines of thought in difficult situations. Other students took part in the discussion and were able to apply parts of it to their lives. The analysis of a barrier to self-control, self-improvement, empowerment and possible self-actualization in the life of one member of the class may become a catalyst for numerous revelations in others' lives.

It has the potential of becoming recycled many times over within the lives of all the participants.

Often discussion of people's lives can lead to greater insight and sometimes to action. However, there are times when the issues raised by students fall far beyond the remedial abilities of the school or a particular group. This is especially true in cases of people whose lives have been beleaguered with poverty, familial abandonment, powerlessness and actual physical and/or sexual abuse. People with such issues predominant in their lives are too focused on the lower levels of the Maslovian hierarchy of needs to exert immediate energy towards self-actualization. Although immediate remediation is rarely possible for people with very far-reaching problems, the discussion of them within the school is often very empowering for various reasons: often other people have had similar experiences and can share ways in which they have addressed them. The fact that others have had similar experiences is often empowering in that it removes from an individual a sense of personal culpability or shame. The revelation that certain situations are related to systemic oppression (poverty, family violence, and even abandonment) is often very liberating for people. This revelation might not resolve a particular presenting problem, but it might help direct an individual to a group, a helping agency or even towards an explanation which renders the problem more manageable.

Peter has been looking out the window all afternoon, ignoring the discussion swirling around him in the room.

Eventually the facilitator says to him: "Peter, you don't seem to be with us today. Is some thing wrong?"
Peter is silent for a moment and then says:"There is exactly five dollars between me and the street." It emerges that he has no more money, he is being evicted from his apartment and that he i. quite paralysed. He does not know what to do. No, he has no family to turn to for help. His father is long gone, and his mother herself is sick and lives on a small pension. He does not like to "burden" the group with his problems, he says. On further discussion, however, it turns out that he has always been a "poor kid" living on the edge of a middle class neighbourhood and going to a middle class school. He was the only kid without a bicycle in his whole class. He spent days making up stories about why he did not have a bicycle. What emerges is Peter's terrible shame at a poverty which is not his fault. There is discussion of poverty, of why people are ashamed of it and whether they should be. The group examines the anger some members express at parents who could or would not provide for them and the guilt provoked by this anger. Some attention is paid to the options particular parents may have in our society. Other students ask Peter if he would like a job and what he can do. Several people know of jobs and offer to accompany Peter to interviews. It is stressed that it is not for individuals to feel ashamed of their poverty, but that poverty exists to the shame of society. It is also underlined that if people do not know of your needs they cannot help you. Looking out the window is an ineffectual way of asking for help. In such a situation of complex systemic oppression, it is important to develop with the group a conceptual vocabulary which addresses not only the socio-economic factors in Peter's situation, but also the feeling such situations invoke. It is only then that one can address what action Peter might like to take on a personal and/or collective basis. It is particularily important that the **group** develop its own tools of analysis and that the facilitator resist the interpolation of already established descriptives which may not be recognizable to the students.

At the end of that term, Peter decided to get a full time job and attend college at night. While it meant leaving the New School (which is a full time day programme), it also meant that he was finally ready to take charge of his own life. While we would prefer

to see a society where Peter's kind of situation were not so common, we also thought his decision to become more financially secure was a sign of growth.It was also a clear indicator of the hypocrisy of the state's supplying a "free education" which was not really fully viable for the most disadvantaged people of our society.

While it is important for people to become aware of the introjections of others' values into their lives, there are many times when these values are culture-based; repudiating them would mean that the individual leave a primary cultural group. While this might in some cases be a viable choice, it is a delicate situation with very serious ramifications. At the New School, we discuss ethnicity and culture and facilitate the consideration of how individuals feel about cultural "imperatives" within their lives and the cost of denying them. Often our students experience a double dissonance: they are children of immigrants living within a private culture different from the public one; they also give voice to values which they themselves cannot always bring into line with the reality. It is important to acknowledge that cultural values from the "old country" have worked somewhere sometime and should not be diminished because they comprise an honest heritage. The cost of dropping values and customs must be considered. This kind of discussion is important for the self-acceptance necessary to personal growth and empowerment. It is also instructive to people from different cultures who can begin to appreciate the

reasons behind behaviours which may look strange from a distance.

Most people in our society voice the desire to be happy. While we hope for the alleviation of pain among our students as well as the development of their capacity for happiness, unlike Neill and Leonard, we do not consider happiness or ecstasy to be the sole aim of life. It is our observation that young people want to find meaning and purpose to their lives. By the combination of Humanistic and Critical approaches, we work towards helping our students become skilled at accessing their own feelings which are often disconfirmed by those whom they love and depend upon the most. We must help them to articulate their needs, identify their strengths and resources, and define objectives for themselves,making use of their own strengths and the resources within their environment to realize these objectives.[25]

No matter in what way they express the necessity of establishing a life's meaning, all the writers discussed in this study acknowledge that the search of, creation of and commitment to meaning are a long-term and on-going process throughout ones life.

Dewey considered the development of individual power "...to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation" an essential factor in the fullest exercise of self-control, the ultimate aim of education.[26] This view is of great importance to the existential thinkers who see the creation of meaning as the only way in which a subject can fill the existential void with any

meaning at all. "Without perception of the unique meaning of his singular existence, a person would be numbed in difficult situations...Work usually represents the area in which the individual's uniqueness stands in relation to society and thus acquires meaning and value."[27]

Maslow and Rogers tend to give similar value to the notion of a "life's work" where the "discovery of identity" is concomittant with the "discovery of vocation."[28] Maslow also identifies an almost mystical sense of wonder and awe which can inform life with meaning. To Rogers, meaning devolves from the person's discovering and expressing his/her own authenticity.

The early writers in the field of values clarification appear to believe that meaning can be achieved through learning "strategies" which will help people to arrive at decisions which are "personally satisfying and socially constructive."[29] It is our experience that values clarification techniques can be helpful in giving focus to student choices and student interaction. Values clarification, it seems to me, can often illuminate past choices and point the way for immediate action, but it cannot always deliver a long term project of meaning. It is, in my view, exceptionally valuable in facilitating group organization on both formal and informal levels, taking into account individual feelings of group members as well as the tasks set before a group.

> In the early days of the school, there was a Community Council to which each Band had to elect a member. In this particular Band, the facilitator's report that the Bands had been asked to choose representatives was met by a

silence until Eric spoke up. "I'll represent the Band," he said. The facilitator asked if this was agreeable to everyone. "Well I don't think..." began Lurlene after a pause and ther was silent. "Do you have an objection," the facilitator asked Lurlene. "Would you like to run, yourself? " she added. "It isn't that," Lurlene was hesitant. "It's just that I don't think someone like Eric could represent someone like me." "Why not?" asked Eric, somewhat defensively. "Well,you're always talking about your car and your holidays in Europe or the Caribbean or Florida. My mother immigrated here from Grenada because we were so poor there. We can't afford to go back there for holidays. She's got no husband and five kids and she works as a nurse's aid in a hospital. All us kids have had to work for our clothes and spending money since we were twelve. I just don't think you know what it's like, that's all." "Yeah," contributed Aldo, "your old man's the kind of guy my old man shovels his driveway in the winter." "You know what I think," rejoined Eric, "I think you're all prejudiced against me. It's not my fault my father's rich. I still think I can understand your lives. You're just jealous of me." It was clear that Eric was sincerely insulted and confused. It was not obvious that he had ever before objectively considered his situation of privilege. There was enormous tension in the room, and the task of choosing a representative had to be completed that day. Moreover, most members of the group were very silent because they did not "want to take sides." The facilitator suggested that there were many criteria on which one may choose representatives in a democracy. The one in this Band seemed to be that of equality. People did not believe they could be represented by those more privileged than they were. But how many people really believed in absolute equality? She took a piece of chalk and drew a line down the center of the floor. This line was to represent the notion of absolute equality of all people. Members of the Band were to place themselves where they felt in terms of equality and explain their position to others. The facilitator took the first turn by placing herself close to the line but a bit to the right of it, explaining that she would not feel comfortable being politically represented by retarded adults. Other people explained their positions; no one was fully on the "absolute equality" line. After all the members had explained their positions, they were asked to sit down and reflect, and then to take a position after having considered all the discussion which had transpired. Most people showed some modification of their positions. They had listened and reflected. It was clear that no one had the corner on political purity. This exercise taught the group many

> things: that class differences not only exist but are important to everyone; that if a group allows a power vacuum to develop, someone will usually undertake to fill that vacuum, and the "somebody" might not be the best choice for the group; people should speak up when they disagree; that it is important to reflect and insist on criteria for representation. The feelings behind people's positions on equality were aired and ultimately the group came up not only with criteria, but with a different representative and a model of accountability for this representative. Naturally the situation between Eric and Lurlene had to be somehow resolved. This does not mean that they had to become friends, but that they could recognize that their differences did not necessarily bar them from appreciating each others' positive qualities. There was a discussion of how people often globalize their dislike of one quality in a person to a total rejection of the person, rather than some aspect of the person. Finally the group did an exercise called the "positive spotlight" where each member had a moment in the "spotlight" where other members of the group could give only positive feedback of the qualities they appreciated in this individual. This was effective because not only did it rebuild Eric's and Lurlene's self-esteem, but it reinforced the self-esteem of all individuals in the group and built the group itself through a shared and multi-dimensional activity.

This particular exercise was extremely useful because it grew out of a group issue. It brought forth not only values but questions which could be used to clarify people's individual values and arrive at a group position. It was useful in helping the group achieve a sense of cohesion, meaning, and a way of mediating various perceptions and needs.

The critical theorists do not entertain notions of ecstasy and personal happiness. They are concerned with social and political transformation. Perhaps in their view it is through civic courage that individuals may find meaning in their participation in a collective dialogical learning situation which leads to social

change which then de facto has conferred meaning on their participation. They do not, however, allow for any idiosyncratic reasons for people to find meaning where it responds to their innermost needs which might be rooted in very personal and/or unconscious needs more than in collectivist Utopian impulses.

The concept of "voice" articulated by the critical theorists is especially useful for the self-actualization and empowerment of young people. While there are many ways related to class, gender,race and ethnicity in which they have been silenced,young people have also been silenced because they are young and not taken seriously in our society. The participatory nature of the school ensures that students find their voices. Feed-back helps them to strengthen their ability to communicate clearly and the common expectation of their feed-back to others develops in our students excellent listening and communicating skills. Because of the many hours spent in primary affiliative groups, Bands, where the the lives of the members of each Band comprise curriculum, by the time students have graduated from our programme,they have spent at least 300 hours in Bands listening, reflecting, responding, being responded to, and being encouraged to find and use their own unmediated voices.

> One year many students wanted to learn public speaking. They were all males and all the children of immigrants. When the teacher asked them why they wanted fervently to learn public speaking, their answers were: "My dad is a barber and no one listens to him in this society." "My father's a taxi driver and no one cares what he thinks." "I want people to listen to me, I want some respect in this society."

While it was essential to discuss the social-political-economic factors in their fathers' disempowerment, it was also important to address the young men's will to power. Where did this will come from and how did it feel? What does it feel like to feel powerless and what would make them feel powerful? In what situations do they feel powerless? Are there situations where they feel powerful? What was power? Or was power the ability to rule others? Did they have any idea of why only males had expressed an interest in this group? Was power simply to be found in voice? What is meant by respect? It became clear in the discussion that while these young men did acknowledge that their fathers had immigrated and contributed their labours to the survival of their sons, these sons wanted more than survival: they wanted to flourish. Self-actualization meant having voices which commanded respect; there was no guarantee, however, that these voices would be raised with either civic courage or with Utopian intent. It is our intention as educators that by covering as many facets of voice or liberation as possible, members of the group become conscious of the scope of issues in their lives and that this consciousness not only informs their choices but their behaviour. Most of all, by discovering and raising their voices at The New School, they will experience response and learn that their voices can and should make a difference where they live and breathe.

New School students are at the age when society is pressing the young to declare themselves: what are they going to be? These questions often fill them with panic and frequently they simply voice clichèd ambitions which will mollify anxious adults in their lives. By our emphasis on meaning and the meaningfulness of their own feelings, beliefs, choices and actions, we attempt to facilitate the students' consideration of their own uniqueness of contribution, their function as members of society, and their own beliefs, values, joys and interests as they slowly begin to formulate the terms on which they will decide their present and future being.

In these times of rapid social change, educational programmes designed to meet the needs of young adults should be flexible in their philosophies and praxis. While educators must develop the diagnostic skills to understand their students' articulated and silenced needs, they must also be able to offer their students a firm philosophical basis for empowering themselves. It is important not only to articulate the underlying philosophy of our educational offerings, but also to articulate our rationales for maintaining certain philosophical positions. Strong conviction, philosophical and epistemological reflection, and well honed diagnostic skills must combine in our praxis... in **how** we address our students' needs and develop with them appropriate curriculum and pedagogy. It is essential to complete such educational "contracts" with an honest evaluation of their efficacy and with maximum feedback for their

improvement. Educators must reflect on the process in order to reassess its worth both to the student and themselves. This process of evaluation is especially useful when there is sufficient level of trust among groups of educators to discuss their experiences in an atmosphere mutual support which can so enhance a work environment. The praxis of Critical Humanism is dialectical: having undertaken to apply this pedagogy with one group of students and colleagues,the educator can then combine their feedback with personal reflection to be recycled into future educational projects.

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