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**ADULT EDUCATION IN A TRANSITION SOCIETY:
THE CASE OF HONG KONG**

By

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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By

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Hong Kong, a British colony and the focal point of this thesis, will return to China in 1997. The purpose of this study is to present an interpretation of this dramatic changes that Hong Kong undergoes, and a significant adult learning perspective, with the aim of empowering Hong Kong's people to participate in this social transitional process.

Based on A. D. Smith's transunit social change theory, the author views that this reunion could become an opportunity for Hong Kong to participate in the construction of a new Chinese culture, rather than a tragedy. Amongst the adult learning theories, the author has identified that the views of Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow are the most significant adult learning perspectives for Hong Kong. Finally, the author proposes an adult learning program in the form of a social movement initiated by an adult learning network.

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INTRODUCTION

This study emerged from an extended dialogue between the philosophical beliefs of adult learning and the dramatic reality of the potential changes of Hong Kong as a transition society. This is a difficult task due first of all to the dilemma of educational theory versus educational practice in which adult education is becoming increasingly divorced from its philosophical and historical roots; second, the dilemma of the educational function of being a formator as well as a transformator. The educational system, as a result of institutionalization, has become more like an instrument of socialization for the members of our society rather than the source of change. Third, our commitment to the development of the transformative character of adult learning in a transition society is challenged by the present stereotype of adult education. It is difficult to describe something indeterminate and with moving character. As James D. Thompson said: " Our culture does not contain concepts for simultaneously thinking about rationality and indeterminateness, especially about something half-closed and half-rational" (1967). Thus it

is difficult to understand how an educational practice can be held either outside or inside of the institutions that have either half-closed or half-opened forms of organization. Even so, this study represents an effort to give some expression to the beliefs of humans and human learning power, and to show how they can be meaningful and integrally involved in Hong Kong's transition society.

The fact that the colony of Hong Kong will return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 has raised many fundamental questions about Hong Kong's future, both in terms of the effects of the mass reaction of the Hong Kong people, as well as the way in which China will choose to deal with this addition to its territory. We cannot predict China's governmental strategies toward Hong Kong because it depends on too many internal and external variables of Chinese society. The main concerns of this study will thus focus on how Hong Kong's people may perceive this change; how this change can be made meaningful in a manner that involves the people in this change process; and how adult learning can become the transformative dynamic in helping people become the agents of this process of change.

Change is a natural phenomenon of human life and of the universe. This is why the focus is not on the how, the why, or the what that change will bring, but on the way educational perspectives will encourage human life to

continually transform and become more human. To use Paulo Freire's term this is the process of 'humanization'. Adult learning activities within this framework refer to the transformative processes which can provide the dynamic to make humanization possible in the changing journey of history.

This study is based on the philosophical views of two adult educators: Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow. They differ on certain views, but they both recognize humans as being at the center of their world and actors in it; they believe that adult learning is a process rather than just a course, a transformative process, rather than a formative program, by which people can become the actors, not the objects, of their own history and the history of society. They both also emphasize the reflective and communicative competence of adults which has often been neglected in our present society. These important concepts will be presented and referred to throughout this study. But because of the pragmatic nature of this study, they will not be presented as theoretical arguments but rather as a basis for philosophical reflection from which potential guidelines for practice can be drawn.

Transformative adult learning theory, a concept used by Jack Mezirow, offers us some indication as to what kinds of human competencies need to be fostered to become the

dynamic of the self and collective transformative process. The competencies that foster humanization are: Knowing one's individual and collective identity, which enables the adult members of society to be aware of and to articulate their position in time and space, their relationship with their world and their history; the critical reflective ability which can continuously contribute to a better orientation of our thinking and our actions and can give us new insights; the communicative ability which builds of individual and common identity, and make rational reflection possible; the willingness and the desire to participate and to commit to the mission of humanity which can only be stimulated by the awareness of our position in the world and our relationship with it, but not by compelling exogenous forces. These are considered to be the dynamics which are promoted by adult learning activities in Hong Kong's transition society in view of Hong Kong's contributions to the transformative process of China's society. These are also the contributions of Freire and Mezirow to our understanding of the role of adult learning in a transition society, within which lie the potential changes which can foster transformation.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to offer a potential adult educational practice in a transition society by defining the philosophical justification for the view that a transition society has a special role as a change agent in the process of social evolution. By exposing and critically

assessing some of the key philosophical positions of adult learning, this study aims to present a new form of adult educational practice which can be implemented across the boundaries of organizations, and which unites the different adult learning efforts in order to contribute to the transformation of individuals, groups, and the climate of whole societies.

This study aims to accomplish four general tasks within its four parts: The first part provides an overview of some of the dominant views of adult development and adult learning theories and their relationship to adult educational practices, within which the transformative adult learning theory drawn from the ideas of Freire and Mezirow is presented. At the same time, different views of social change will be presented, i.e., A. D. Smith's transunits social change theory which offers us a most meaningful and positive view of our transition situation within which change is perceived as a chance for newness rather than as an unavoidable consequence of the past. The second task, and also the content of the second part of this study, is to outline the images of Hong Kong's society by showing its differences with China and its future potential changes, and how such changes can become a turning point for its own development and the development of Chinese culture. This all depends on the perspective of Hong Kong's people and their transformative dynamic. The third task is the most

important part of this study in which we develop our own philosophical position based on the views of Freire and Mezirow, a position that suggests that adult learning can become the dynamic of the transformative process of Hong Kong and China. The final part and main contribution of this thesis is the suggestion of a form of adult education which takes the shape of an adult learning network. It is because of this interactive character of the networking, the transformative dynamic can be stimulated, and the adult learning activities, both individual as well as collective, with their possible forms and settings, can be joined as the dynamic of the transformative process in forming a new Chinese culture--one which will be more inclusive, rational, and human. It is with this vision, that this thesis will view adult learning as a dynamic transformative process in contributing to humanization--to make human life more human.

CHAPTER I THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The aim of the first part of this study is to introduce and examine some of the most common views of adults, adult learning, and social change. Many of the themes and arguments touched on in this part will recur in greater detail in the chapters that follow, but a general introduction should provide a useful perspective within which the issues to be raised later can be located.

The presentation of a theoretical perspective of adult learning and social change provides a basis for a rational but subjective alternative within which the hard core of our practice can be formed. This hard core is expressed as our beliefs and our value system which will provide guidelines for potential practices in the concrete social context. Thus, to formulate our beliefs about adult learning and to understand social change, this part of the study is divided into two sections. First, we present several well known adult development and adult learning theories, within which the transformative theory has offered us a broader and deeper understanding of adult learning, with adults being the center of human history. Second, we reflect on the meaning of a 'transition society' with different views of social evolution and social change. The transunit theory of social change, a theory described by A. D. Smith to explain

how the different social units can influence one another, can offer a compatible view in making the changes in Hong Kong even more meaningful. It is only in understanding this that adult learning activities will find their indispensable position in a transition society.

1 Views of Adult Learning and Educational Practices

The area of adult education actually involves philosophical questions, even though not every adult educational theorist would claim to be a philosopher. These theories, however, all build on philosophical questions such as: Who is considered an adult?, What are the learning characteristics of adults?, Why should adults learn?, How do adults learn? And based on the understanding of these questions, where does the role of education intervene?

Who is considered an adult?, the most simple question, is often the hardest to answer. It is this kind of question which lies at the heart of adult educational studies, and upon which thousands of people endeavor to reflect.

A huge body of literature, as well as many groups of theories, have made significant contributions to the understanding of how adult learning phenomena. The

developmental view, the behaviorist view, and the humanist view are the most prominent theories, which deeply influence the understanding of adult learning phenomena and the current practices of adult education. The aim of this section is to trace these views of adult learning, to describe some of their principle features which determine their approach to educational practice, and to critically assess their claims and their limitations. Finally, this section considers the transformative view of adult learning suggested by Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow as potentially the most significant view for a transition society, and within which a new understanding of adult learning and the practices of adult education can be drawn. This particular understanding of adults and vision of adult education is presented, and conclusions are drawn with a critical discussion which under scores the value of the transformative approach and its significant application to a transition society.

A The Developmental View

A great deal of research has been done on understanding adult nature from a biological view which was suggested by a group of theorists who have been known as developmental theorists schooled in the Freudian tradition. Developmental studies have as their common focus the progressive and sequential aspects of the entire span of human life, with

age being a convenient index of sequential progress. In other words, adulthood is a stage in the course of human life, and chronological age is an indicator. There are different assumptions about the nature of development; two general approaches are known as the phase approach and the stage approach.

The phase theorist, such as Daniel Levinson, views adulthood as a part of the journey from birth to death, following an underlying universal pattern. He compares this human journey to a single cycle of seasons -- a series of periods which are relatively stable segments of the total cycle, each having its own time. As Levinson pointed out, "To speak of seasons is to say that the life course has a certain shape, that it evolves through a series of definable forms,...Every season has its own time; it is important in its own right and needs to be understood in its own terms " (1978, p. 6). The phase theorist's basic assumption of human development is progressive and sequential, following the same predictable pattern. Thus adults like the plants and animals which develop in response to the changing seasons, develop in response to their social tasks which are determined by their physical, social and natural timing according to the progression of chronological age. Levinson has identified certain clusters of developmental tasks involved in establishing and maintaining various life structure components. These very specific life tasks can be

predicted accurately within a few years of chronological age. Thus, for the phase theorists, the concept of development is a continuing response to central life tasks. The success of adult development depends on the accomplishment of their developmental tasks which mark the phase of adulthood.

Although having the same interest in understanding adulthood from a chronological view, stage theorists take their direction from personality development in which the successful adaptation of prior stages is the determinant of success in the following stages. The crucial characteristics of this approach about adulthood are that it offers a conceptual explanation of the adult's development in the course of their encounters with the social environment at each stage of their life, it emphasizes that childhood development -- the earlier stages of adulthood -- are the building blocks upon which success or failure in the later stages -- adulthood -- depend, and each stage presents a new challenge that must be negotiated successfully. Both C. Jung and E. Erickson have voiced concern that the important dimension of adult development involves reworking assumptions about one's world that have been wrought from childhood. Erickson presents an example of the development of the sense of autonomy, which exists to some extent in earlier stages, such as infancy, and develops until the later stages of adulthood. These individuals formulate

their particular ideas and concepts of autonomy through their encounters with the environment throughout the progression of their years (1980). These encounters result in crises, which are to be described for each stage. The potential crises of successive stages can predict and describe the adjustments of perspective which are accomplished in their own time. Adulthood is described by Erickson in his eight stages of the life cycle as the stage of care and responsibility. Adults in this stage need to develop a "new different love of one's parents, free of the wish that they have been different and an acceptance of the fact that one's life is one's own responsibility " (1980, p. 104).

According to the developmental view, adulthood is a stage or a phase of an individuals' life which progresses by age, like a biological organ which is controlled by nature, biological laws, and time. Nevertheless, both the stage and phase approaches recognize that the life cycle is not an unchanging flow, but that the stages are qualitatively different from those that precede and those that follow, and that each stage has its diurnal, atmospheric and psychological character (see Levison, 1978, pp. 5-6). Changes occur within each stage, and a transition is required for the shift from one stage to the next. Each stage is important in its own right and needs to be understood on its own terms. As suggested by the Jungians,

if the development of childhood was good enough, adulthood would be tranquil. With the various tasks that arise at or about a certain period in the life of an individual, successful achievement leads to happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks. When transitions occur in adult life, adults cope in different ways with them. These transition points give shape and direction to the various aspects of a person's life. With this view, adult development is basically linked by age to specific cognitive, emotional, and physiological developments and capacities; it is measured by the scales of adjustment and achievement of tasks in each phase of life, the developmentalists also conceive that knowledge and learning are stage-related.

This is why the developmental approach emphasizes that the individual learns his/her way through life. What should or would people be learning? For Havighurst, one of the phase theorists, " people should learn the task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks" (1948, p. 5). This stems from the developmental view that transition during one's life span is a time of learning in which individual adults search for suitable ways to cope or to deal with change. Adults, during these transitions, often seek educational experiences

because of the necessity to take a step back and observe their lives and reconsider their needs and options. Thus, learning means 'to change'; and the deliberate effort to help adult learning through adult education is especially significant during the transition from one life period to the next. In other words, educational activities are the catalysts for helping people change.

Educational practice, according to this approach, is inclined to match instruction with a well defined and well formed curriculum which is suitable for each stage of development. The main goal of adult education would be to help adults cope with the crises of their age's stages in the life cycle, particularly with the task of the encounter of adults with their environment. Thus, adult education is task oriented. Therefore, according to the developmental view, educational decision making relies on the competence of a few people with little participation from the participants, just as it would be inconceivable for doctors to allow their patients, or even nurses, to decide how medical ailments should be cured. In short, the developmental approach to adult education is task oriented, focussing on life-problem solving, and emphasizing formal and prior childhood education, considering adult education as a remediation of failure during prior education. The emphasis is on psychological therapy for failure during childhood development rather than learning for growth.

Counseling, psychoanalysis or learning coping skills are the most common practices of this approach.

It should also be noted that such perspectives of adult development and adult education practices mainly are focussed on simplifying human and social phenomena in a stable and determined way. The stratification of individuals according to their age groups, as suggested by the phase theorists is the consequence of this perspective. Most criticism of this approach is provoked by the stereotyping and immobilization of educational activities into certain paradigms, which neglect the changes of social context and lead to inappropriate educational strategies. The negligence and the rejection of the particularities of different individuals and the capacity of humans to be the actors in their own lives gives this approach a very limited scope. The task-oriented adult educational practice is used to stratify individuals in accordance with the complex network of roles that sustain the existing social order, and the individual adults are viewed as players of suitable roles instead of autonomous people. This would be even more dangerous in a feudalistic society which is heavily controlled by social norms and social expectations. If this approach was the only foundation of adult educational practice, adult educators would have the role of being the guardians of social order, and adult educational practices would become the tools which enforce social norms and

preserve social stability rather than inducing social progress.

B The Behaviorist View

The view of education as the process of changing the behavioral patterns of people is the view held by most educators. This approach is drawn from behavioral psychology, having a heritage in positivism, a system of philosophy which opposes any metaphysical or theological claims as the basis of valid knowledge. This perspective is known as behaviorism and claims that valid knowledge can only be established by reference to that which is manifested in experience. The conviction which underlies such a view is that the way to know an individual can not be by his/her mind, but only by his/her behavior, which can be observed and justified. The behaviorists believe that only by controlling human behavior can a better society result; and the human behavior is shaping and maintaining by the environment. As B. F. Skinner, the most recognized behavioral psychologist, advocated: "It is the environment which acts upon the perceiving person, not the perceiving person who acts upon the environment" (1971, p.188). Behaviorists look at human behavior as a result of the responses of an individual toward his/her environment, that humans learn to behave in certain ways because such actions bring them the most satisfaction. Successful behavior

becomes the reinforcement and the motivation for further action. Adult human beings are considered by the behaviorists as involuntary and dependent organisms, whose behavior is conditioned by a reflexive response toward stimuli, and is determined by the events experienced in an objective environment. Since actual behavior is the result of past experiences, personal experience is the most important information to know in order to trace the development of an individual organism. The concepts of feedback, reinforcement and reward then are the most important tools implemented by behaviorist educators in the teaching process.

Education is considered by behaviorists as a process of changing the behavior patterns of people; or simply, as a way of teaching, "an arrangement of contingencies of reinforcement under which students learn" (Skinner, 1968, p. 64). Thus, behaviorists look at education as an applied science, the utilization of the scientific method which, with the precise goal, accurate planning, reinforcement conditioning, and appropriate measurement, would be the way to ensure the most successful educational outcome. The non-scientific components, such as value judgment and social ideals which cannot be explained or justified by the application of scientific knowledge are out of consideration. Behavioristic educators hold to the conviction that it is possible to produce a well organized

educational situation or educational procedure which can be employed to attain well defined educational goals and to make objective educational decisions. Competent educators, must choose and recommend educational strategies that are mainly instrumental in the achievement of whatever educational goals are determined. At the same time, educators are planners, controllers, and managers of educational activities. The efficiency and effectiveness of changing individual behavior are the criteria of educational evaluation. The application of the behaviorist approach in adult education is widely incorporated into programs in adult vocational education, adult basic education, and even in the areas of health education and work place education which involve the steps of needs assessment, instructional materials planning and performance measurement. With this approach, the curricula of adult education needs to be well planned according to the job description or the assessment of the final result.

For example, the Adult Performance Level (APL) approach to the design of literacy programs is established by the competence levels needed to ensure adults the ability to function successfully in today's society. This is one example of the implication of the behavioristic view in the adult education field.

Another great impact made by the behaviorist approach

in adult education is program planning. A great deal of literature about adult program planning are based on the positivist tradition which states that educational decisions can neatly depend on the instrumental questions concerned with educational means and procedures, while value questions concerned with ends are incoherent. The educators holding to this perspective rely on scientific and rational planning skills to predict ideal educational outcomes. Ralph W. Tyler's educational accountability (1971) is an example. Tyler emphasizes the importance of measured educational goals, assessment of effectiveness of learning, and accountable procedures. Houle's fundamental system (1972) and a group of planning theorists including Boone (1985), are well known in the adult education field. Even though there are no particular adult education theorists who can be identified as behaviorists, the behavioral approach's influence has been manifest in the areas of adult education policies, programs and practices.

Even with this brief presentation of the behaviorist approach, it has been shown as a subject of critique. The greatest challenge to the behaviorists emerges from two main sets of arguments: Who is the actor in the educational process, and what kind of linkage is there between the educational aims and the educational means? Within the behaviorist approach, educators and administrators take a dominant role in the adult learning process. They adopt

the role of a learning technician applying the principles of operant conditioning so as to ensure effective learning. Their commitment to a well designed procedure is the dominant way they ensure the well predicted outcome, and it is always regarded as appropriate for the social needs and the institutional goals within which the individual has no control. Obviously, this dependency on the planning procedure results in the inclination of the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own situations and change them through their own actions. It can be argued that even though human actions are largely defined by the expectations of society, human actions are not merely based on 'objective reality', but are defined mainly by one's interpretation of one's actions and situations. Human action is not purely objective, but rather subjective. Therefore the behaviorist approach can be seen as failing to describe how individuals interpret their actions and their situations, and failing to recognize that the ultimate actor in the personal transformation process is the learner who acts and reacts with his/her desires, feelings and interpretations, and with his/her abilities of reflection, rationalization, being aware, being critical and being selective.

Other criticize the behaviorist approach for its failure to recognize the particular relationship between educational aims, and the means employed to achieve them. Behaviorists tend to rely on the scientific method to attain

'efficient' and 'effective' problem solving goals. critics say it is naive to deny that educational 'means' are value laden because they incorporate attitudes toward other people, and educational activities always involve human activities. The instrumental criterion of efficiency and its effective application in an educational context is always incoherent and has moral constraints; it always incorporates some moral notion of what is permissible to do to other people and what is not. For example, the empirical results of experiments with animals conducted by the early behavioral psychologists, would be unacceptable in an educational context. The fact that moral values enter into all educational decisions, means educational aims cannot be the end products to which educational processes are the instrumental means. Aims are expressions of values in terms of some distinctive educational character bestowed on them. And it is the educational aims that largely determine what is to count as an educational method, but not vice versa. When we talk about the educational aim we are talking about a subjective value based on the whole view of the destiny of humanity.

C The Humanist View

If behaviorism is the most widely implemented theory in the educational context, then, humanism is the most accepted by educators. Behaviorism is so precise, with its empirical

method for human behavior. However, humanism is so ambiguous, having adopted various philosophical traditions such as ancient Greek philosophy, Renaissance, existentialism, modern psychotherapy, and even Marxism, that we have difficulty in defining it. Although it is not the task of this study to analyze such a complex philosophical tradition, it is important to emphasize the great influence humanist beliefs have had on adult education.

Humanist philosophy is built upon the idea of human self-confidence, dignity, autonomy, and capacity for self-fulfillment and satisfaction. Humanists prefer to look at the human being as a whole and are opposed to the behavioristic view that humans are behavioral organisms. Humanists have a faith in human potential. They consider human beings as being inherently good, free and not determined by external forces or internal urges as behaviorists claim, and that human beings have the ability to evaluate themselves in order to grow and develop. Thus, self-actualization is the goal of human development, and human beings have within themselves the power and potential for achieving this. According to humanists, being a self-actualized person is an adult phenomenon. Being adult is described by the well known humanist A. H. Maslow as being "grow into humanness in the society and the culture, the family" (1970, p. xviii).

Within this humanistic belief system, learning is a human activity which emanates from the learner. Thus, the learner is the best judge of whether learning has met his/her needs and interests. Building upon the belief that human beings are essentially good and perfectible, humanism emphasizes the 'auto-centered' and 'self-directed' educational approach. The central aim of education is to make the learner progressively more self-aware, more in touch with himself, aware of his own uniqueness. Therefore, the task of education is to center the authority within the learner himself, and to develop within the learner an attitude of responsibility toward his own learning.

The most well known translation of this humanist approach to adult education theory is M. Knowles' andragogy which is recognized by almost every adult educator as the landmark of adult education. M. Knowles, influenced by E. C. Lendeman and C. Rogers, focused his theory of the internal dynamics of learning in adulthood and called it 'andragogy' (1984, p.4-7). The four assumptions upon which andragogy is built are: An adult is one who has arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for one's own life, of being self-directed; an adult is a growing reservoir of experience; an adult is ready to learn; and an adult is more problem-centered than subject-centered in learning (1970). It is from there that Knowles draws numerous implications for the design and evaluation of learning activities. The

unique contribution of Knowles is to make a clear distinction between child and adult learning. His theory clearly emphasizes human-centeredness and recognizes that humans have the capacity for their own self-actualization. With this humanistic educational approach, Knowles' description of the adult character is drawn from the most basic assumption of humanism -- that human beings are essentially good and perfectible. This labels him as a humanistic adult educator.

Andragogy is well known by adult educators, but at the same time, it has also been challenged. The assumptions of human self-fulfillment, self-readiness, and self-directedness have led to arguments by some educators that these are human developmental goals rather than parts of the natural human condition. Therefore, the characteristics of self-directed adults who are ready to learn how to solve their own problems through their own experience would be the same as those characteristics of adult learners who are voluntary participants in learning activities. The problem that is inherent in this view is that the description of adult learning is drawn from participants in adult learning activities rather than potential adult learners. In many place this means that, since adult learners are drawn mainly from the middle class, the characteristic of adult learners are the same as those of middle class. This raises the question of programs for

adult learners as being comprised of activities of the middle class.

Even though recognized as a humanist adult educator whose main concern is the learner, Knowles' four assumptions can be interpreted as being pro-teacher rather than pro-learner, a theory closer to a theory of teaching than to a theory of learning, and he has described his theory as "the art and the science of helping adults learn" (1970, p. 38). His assumptions are more likely the descriptions or the guidelines of good adult teaching practice, which facilitate the development of a comprehensive understanding of the teacher's role as an educator by engaging in a reflection of the adult character. Knowles has created an ambiguous problem with teaching and learning by labeling andragogy as a teaching theory with intention of empowering adult educators with a better knowledge of their students. The consequence is that most adult educators are identified as teachers just like all teachers who enhance other adults to learn with the appropriate methods.

By establishing andragogy as the science of helping adults learn, Knowles fails to describe the learner's learning process of transformation of 'self' from one stage to another. In other words, what are the processes the learners need to go through, and the kinds of strengths or

dynamics that would help the learners learn or grow?
Without the consideration and explanation for such adult learning or changing processes the application of adult educational theory is narrowed.

D The Transformative View

The discussion so far has been an attempt to explain the phenomenon of adult learning from different theoretical perspectives according to the different understandings of human beings and adults in particular. Human beings act within the world, their actions are determined not according to objective reality, but rather, according to their subjective interpretations which are influenced by their experiences. The theories which have been mentioned have failed to enable us to describe how individuals interpret their actions and the situations in which they act; how the different learning processes would transform the understanding and the interpretations of the person individually and collectively, and how the progress of humanity in the journey of history will be enhanced. The next section will introduce a family of adult education approaches which stem from a critical theory, which will be called a transformative adult learning theory in this study, and two scholars, Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow, who are considered the two foremost representatives of this transformative adult learning theory.

i The Philosophical Foundation of Transformation Theory

Both Jack Mezirow and Paulo Freire are strongly influenced by the German philosophers. Freire declares that he was most influenced by Marx and Eric Fromm, and Mezirow has elaborated his theory based on the critical social theory of German philosopher J. Habermas. Even though this study has no intention of discussing the Marxist or Frankfurt Schools of philosophy, since it would be beyond the scope of this study, we will point out some influential concepts which can help us understand the value of the transformative theory in adult educational practices and its significance for a transition society.

The family of ideas called critical theory, coined by M. Horkheimer, is a philosophical explanation of human destiny (Ko, 1986). Its conceptualization begins with locating human beings in the center of humanity. Contrary to humanism, critical theorists never consider man as an individual, but rather, as a member of humanity as a whole. To recognize the nature of human beings by separating them from other members and from the world, would be to fail. For critical theorists, humans are not inherently good, as humanists presuppose, but rather weak, and they suffer from self-imposed coercion. But critical theorists also disagree

with the developmental and behaviorist approach which purports that human beings are not living in an 'objective reality' over which the individual has no control, but humans have the ability to critically reflect on their own situations and overcome the oppression of distortion and the social condition, and through their reflective actions - 'praxis' - man transforms himself and reconstructs the world in order to realize his true 'potentialities' or 'essence' (W. Carr & S. Kemmis, 1986).

The main concern of critical theory, therefore, is the emancipatory process of human beings through their own reflection and actions. Learning from this viewpoint is a process which is derived from an interest in human beings, and permits the learning participants to be oriented toward transforming themselves and their situations through their own reflection and actions. The concept of participants is very important. For the critical theorists there are not two classes -- teachers and learners -- in the learning process, but rather, all who are involved in the learning process are the participants. J. Habermas claims, "The vindicating superiority of those who do the enlightening over those who are to be enlightened is theoretically unavoidable, but at the same time it is fictive and requires self-correction: in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants" (1974, p. 40). In the learning process the human communicative action, which Habermas calls

discourse, is indispensable. Therefore, the critical theorist desires an ideal speech condition which allows for a flow of ideas and arguments and for participants to be free from the threat of domination. From this will emerge the emancipation from distortions and the rational autonomy, this ideal speech condition is a form of life, and also, an ideal educational environment.

ii The Transformation Adult Learning Theory of J. Mezirow

Jack Mezirow, whose adult learning theory stands apart views adult learning as a transformative process. Drawing from the Frankfurt School's philosophical tradition, Mezirow bases his transformative theory on the beliefs of Kant, Marx, and Habermas, which purport that the ultimate goal of human development is to become, or to realize his/her true 'potentialities' or 'essence' of being human. Human beings are social beings for Mezirow, they can never be understood if separated from their world. Humans are the creation of their social and historical situation bound by their prior experiences, but at the same time, humans are also creators, who can form and transform themselves and their environment. For Mezirow, adults are characterized by growth in their critical reflective abilities which permits them to assess their old perspectives and achieve new interpretations of their experiences. As he points out, " As we age, we can

become more attentive to context and more critically reflective of meanings taken for granted that at an earlier age we perceived as context-independent" (1985, p. 25). Such critical reflective ability then according to Mezirow become the unique characteristic of adulthood: "Adulthood is the time for reassessing the assumptions of our formative years" (1990, p. 13).

Such a definition of adulthood embodies the unique character of the transformative theory, and the assumptions dealing with adult development and maturity also emerge. Mezirow has conceptualized that adults are not only progressing in chronological age, but their development is also expressed as inner growth through the reconstruction of their understanding about themselves and their world. Mezirow points out that transformative theory is "a developmental process of movement through the adult years toward meaning perspectives that are progressing more inclusive, discriminative, and integrative of experience" (1978, p. 106). The dynamic of this progressive growing process is the critical reflective ability of adulthood, which permits adults to overcome the " limited, distorted, and arbitrary selective modes of perception, and cognition, through reflection on assumptions that formerly have been accepted uncritically, is central to development in adulthood " (1991, p. 5).

The understanding of adult development through critical reflection provides a view of adult learning which differs from mere acquisition of information or behavior change. Mezirow, in outlining his learning theory, states that "the awareness of why we attach the meanings we do to reality, especially to our roles and relationships... may be the most significant distinguishing characteristic of adult learning" (1981, p. 11). Thus, for Mezirow, adult learning is neither for adjustments during transitional crises in the human aging process, nor for changing behavior with external intervention, or even for self-realization. Rather, it is a transformative process through critical reflection which involves "an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life" (1991, p. 161). It is from this view that adult learning in transformative theory is focused centrally on the changing of contexts rather than on acquisition of data. Such a learning process begins with the dilemma and moves forward as distorted meaning structures become transformed through critical reflection.

Critical reflection is not merely a form of reasoning,

but a form of participation in human communication, or what Habermas called 'the climate of discourse'. Because it is only in discourse that most significant errors are likely to be challenged by others, and through critical inquiry and argument we can determine that some judgments about reality are more correct than others. It is in this process that alternatives and new insights emerge and adequate actions are inspired by it. Thus, learning occurs when one is open to the scrutiny and criticisms of other people. In the process of changing, generating and reconstructing perspectives, new understanding and actions will emerge ending old learning but making room for new each time an individual or a group encounters a new situation and new experiences. In that sense, the transformative learning process is mainly self-directed learning, because learning is operated by an individual's inner self and through his/her interactions with others and with the world.

Adapted from Habermas' knowledge and the human interest' theory, knowledge is not produced by a 'pure' intellectual act, but rather, it is the outcome of human activity that is motivated by natural needs and interests (see W. Carr & S. Kemmis, 1986, ch. 5). Agreeing with Habermas' theory, Mezirow recognizes that most adult learning is multidimensional involving basic adult interests of controlling the environment, understanding meanings as we communicate with others, and understanding ourselves. Such

a view of knowledge and learning confirms that learning is not a kind of response to stimulus as behaviorists suggest, but rather, it is human living which produces interaction among other human beings. Adults do not learn to become mere intellectuals, but rather to live new and better lives.

Interpreted in this way, adult education is "understood as being centrally involved in creating and facilitating dialogue communities to enable learners to engage in rational discourse and action" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 354). The educational setting of such adult learning would not only be the classroom, but as Mezirow defines it, "safe places in which to try out new roles and ideas, a community of critical discourse, a sphere of freedom, and an authentic space in which the dialectic of freedom may be achieved (see 1991, pp. 206-207). Adult educators, in such educational settings act different from their traditional roles. Mezirow considers them as 'collaborative learners' who are critically self-reflective and who encourage others to consider alternative perspectives, enforce norms governing rational discourse, and encourage solidarity and group support (see 1991, pp. 206-207).

Even Mezirow has had difficulty in producing a perfect theory of adult learning theory which is not open to discussion and criticism. But his explanation of adult learning phenomena has provided us with a new understanding

of adult learning, and from which we can induce a transformation of adult educational practices. Concepts such as communicative climate building, learner participation in discourse situations, the development of critical reflective ability, adult critical character, three learning domains, and the learning process as a transformative process, are the new insights within which new understanding and new practices can emerge and reveal potential for a transition society. However, it does not lack challenges from others. Several educators have studied transformation theory and contend that Mezirow has placed too much emphasis on the individual's inner change rather than on social change, and having as a consequence "the lack of a coherent, comprehensive theory of social change, and a lack diffused throughout the internal structure of this theory" (Collard & Law, 1989, p. 102). The reason for such a lack of social character in Mezirow's theory obviously stems from the foundation of his theory. Even Mezirow refers heavily to Habermas' social critical theory, but his selection of Habermas' thought is reflected mainly in the concepts of knowledge, critical reflection, and discourse. Actually, the transformation of the individual is the central concern of Mezirow. This is why he claims that his theory is not a social change theory, even though he recognizes that the transformation of individuals would bring about changes in society. He prefers to place his belief in the power of education in a society, such as the

United States, in which social change is not seen as an urgent need. In contrast, another transformation theorist, Paulo Freire, sees societal change as the determinant and urgent need for a decolonized country, a transition society such as Brazil.

iii The Transformation Theory of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire has been influenced by his involvement with development of the Catholic Church Movement and the Brazilian Revolution. As a Christian and a Marxist (1990, p. 1), his view is not only a concept of theoretical building but more like an ideal whose only response is commitment. Freire situates human beings in the center of the universe and of history, and humanity's process within history continuously moves toward plenitude. As Freire claims, " man are in the process of becoming, as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality " (1990, p. 73). Men exist in the universe, but differently from animals, with their 'not-I' and 'I' awareness. Men are not only living in the world, but also " infusing the world with their creative presence by means of the transformation they effect upon it, not only live but exist, and their existence is historical" (1990, p. 89). Then, men are the actors, the 'subjects' of their own history. Opposite of the behaviorists, Freire believes in men who cannot be

controlled by external power, since "men respond to the challenge with actions directed at negating and overcoming, rather than passively accepting, the 'given' " (1990, p. 89). In the same line of thinking as J. Mezirow, Freire recognizes that it is the critical reflection ability of human beings which empowers human beings to overcome challenges. Freire contends that: " As critical perception is embodied in action, a climate of hope and confidence develops which leads men to attempt to overcome the limit-situation " (1990, p. 91). In short, human beings portray a vivid image in Freire's theory. Man, as a conscious being, has the ability to reason, to dialogue, to reflect, to act, to create and to participate. Finally, man is the being who transcend themselves and transform the world to build their future (see 1990).

If the developmental theorists view 'timing' as a journey from birth to death, and within which men progress, 'timing' will get its perpetual and dynamic expression in Freire's writings. For Freire, men exist in time, they are inside, they are outside, they inherit, they incorporate, they modify, but men are not imprisoned within a permanent 'today' (see 1973, p. 4). It is with such perception of timing then that the concepts of change and transformation get their meaning. Change is not dramatic in the sense that the world and humanity are in a constant process of transformation; and the way of transformation viewed by

Freire is the movement "between being and being more human" (1990, p. 93). And our reality is really a process which undergoes constant transformation. The adequate way for men to deal with these changes is integration -- an "integration with one's context" which is "distinguished from adaptation" (1973, p. 4). For Freire, adaptation in the transition period as suggested by the developmental theorists, it is "behavior characteristic of the animal sphere; as men relate to the world by responding to the challenges of the environment, they begin to dynamize, to master, and to humanize reality" (1973, p. 5). The development in this transformation then is continuing integration.

Based on the German philosophical tradition, Freire recognizes the ability of consciousness, awareness, and critical reflection as part of human nature, and the power to push human beings to progress in the transformation process of humanity. Freire is not talking about the process of learning, but he calls for conscientization which "is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence" (1990, p. 101); and it is also an act of investigation which introduces men to a critical form of thinking about their world. Therefore, for Freire, learning actually is a transformation process, and this transformation process is not only for individuals, but for all of humanity which he calls humanization. Thus, learning is a transformation and a humanization process beginning

with the investigation, and expressed in praxis which "is the action and the reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it " (1990, p. 66). This transformation process only emerges in encounters between men in which "the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized" (1990, p. 77). And it is in this encounter that the only learning method - dialogue - is exercised in its full sense.

Freire's educational approach is founded on faith in men, which was mentioned before. In despair over the traditional education approach, he contends that traditional education only dictates ideas but does not change them; there are only lectures but no discussions; only imposing but no initiation; only to storing of formulas but not to offer the student to think, only to assimilate the results of research; no effort to re-create and re-invent (see 1973). Freire declares that education is an act of love. It should be what he calls liberation education, or an education " for men to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades " (1990, p. 118). This kind of education is not merely a transference of information, and 'dialogue' is the only method through which the educational process can occur. Compatible with Mezirow's approach, in liberation education there are no teachers and students,

but men teaching each other. Instead of the problem solving method which is supported by the developmental and humanist theorists, liberation education introduces the problem-posing method through which men would "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation (1990, p. 71).

iv The Transformation Adult Learning Theory

This study has passed quickly over a number well known adult educational theories, including the developmental approach with the stage and phase theories, behaviorism, and humanism, and has used several pages to introduce the transformation adult learning theory which is taken as the basic reference of this study. As a consequence, it is difficult to assess all of the many studies of each theoretical family and the criticisms of each of the views. Nevertheless, there are some important points worth mentioning. In the process of reflection upon the fundamental assumptions of the developmental, behaviorist and humanist approaches, we can easily discover that they are developed through an outsider perspective which is based on the observation of the analysis of subjects who are called men, adults, or learners. And their suggestions are

based on the problem-solving approach, which is based on the diagnosis of adult's or learner's needs for success. Actual adult educational practices which are submerged by such views and attitudes would lose their dynamic easily and would keep their marginal status as supplements to the 'normal education system'. The stratification of human beings as to who can teach and who needs to learn is the ultimate obstacle of human development.

A brief description of J. Mezirow's and Paulo Freire's approaches has been presented, both of whom agree that humans have the ability to transform their lives and their world with their critical reflective abilities and their competence in communication. Humans then are the actors and the subjects of their own history and control their own destinies. Processing takes place not individually but in humanity as a whole. There are no teachers or learners, but all are transformers together. Learning then as the dynamic of this transformative process does not occur only in the classroom setting, but in all dimensions of human life. The intervening acts of this type of education are far from bureaucratic. Rather to create a climate, an atmosphere within which men have freedom to reflect, to discuss, to create, and to act. The ideas behind of this theory can lead adult educational practice toward a transformative process, in which adult education revives its dynamic and thus becomes the main education which can emerge in every

area of human life and every human setting. It is then that adult education will become the 'main' education, because it is an education of life.

2 Social Changes and Transition Society

To identify Hong Kong as a transition society seems to be meaningless, since transition would be descriptive of all of society, because life is never static. Human history is a continuous transitional process. Transition suggests a process, a movement from one position toward another new position. Transition always includes change, and some modification or novelty is expected as a result of the process of transition. Therefore, when we identify a society as a transition society, we refer to a society which is in the process of changing. Change is the rhythm of the advancement of history. Most of the time, humans resist change and try to maintain stability which many people think is the normal condition of human life. Human reaction toward changing situations is so different, and depends on each person's interpretation or perception of the change. Understanding, behaving, and valuing change is what learning means, and it is in these that the significant adult educational programs can be developed.

Studying the phenomenon of human social change has been

an interest of sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists during the last century. The processes and the forms of social change are so varied and numerous with such complexity and diversity that no single view could provide a significant explanation. Anthony D. Smith, a sociologist, has derived a simple grouping of the diverse social change theories into two main categories (1976), namely, the macro view and the micro view of change. The importance of mentioning such categorizing is not for the sake of analysis as it is not the main concern of this study; however, these two general views of social change have also represented the general attitudes of the Hong Kong people toward social change. Thus, it will be very important for us to identify our position of how Hong Kong's transitional situation would be meaningful for the Hong Kong people, and it is from there that we can correctly identify the function of adult learning for such a society.

A The Macro View of Social Change

The macro view of human history as a whole and with a long term perspective consists of the views of a group of sociologists such as: H. Spencer's social classification theory (1876); Max Weber's study of Protestant ethic and the development of Capitalism (1958); E. Durkheim's study of the types of social organization, how they develop from a simple structure to a complicated set of patterns which

constitute organization today (1954); T. Parson's social evolution theory in which societies go through primitive, intermediate and modern stages (1966); and K. Marx' historical materialism, in which the economic form of reproducing life is characteristic of the human stages of development. These sociologists look at human history as an accumulation of unintended and unplanned changes. With such views, changes are not as much the product of human purpose, but rather, an intrinsic law and power within society, a determinate process of development in the sense of both the realization of potentiality and the subsequent improvement of achievement in successive phase. These theorists are mainly concerned with the functions or objective consequences of the collective patterns of activity, and usually the study of pattern maintenance and stability. With this view the emphasis lies on the impact of the changes and the adjustments of people, while the role of human choice and action are almost whittled away.

B The Micro Views of Social Change

Another group of researchers who have concentrated on human intentional change hold a micro or active view of social changes. Such views are D. Lerner's modernization theory which recognizes that modernization derives from innovations (1958); E. Roger's theory of diffusion of

innovation (1983); R. A. Nisbet's social change and history, which holds that most historical change results from the intrusion of an event (1969); and J. A. Bank's social movement theory, viewing social change as the rupture of the stable society (1972). Central to this view of social change is the recognition of the large role accorded to human choice and creativity. It is the role of rational human activity such as innovation, social movement, migration, and revolution. All of these sequences of human choice permit advances of history. The crucial issue, then, is not so much of gradual societal change or evolution, but of purposeful human intervention and selection. These studies are focused on the channel of change, the assimilation, the communication, the mobility and the mass media exposure of people through which new culture has emerged and formed. According to this view of social change, it is not human activity which becomes central, but a conscious, willed and planned activity, event, the act of choice itself. Therefore, for these theorists change implies a break with past patterns of behavior or beliefs and a conscious dynamic movement to another pattern. As a consequence, change always involves a period of conflict and crisis, men will try to incorporate it as smoothly as possible so as to preserve the identity of their group and its ways as far as they can. With this view, the intervention of individuals, movements and groups is crucial in the process of social change.

C The Transunits Social Change Theory

As we have mentioned above, there is no single theory that can explain the complexity of human social change phenomenon. Our intention here is not to provide a sociological analysis of social change. Our interest is to focus on the impacts of these different views; we assume that the strategies of people to deal with change depends on their perspective and understanding of the change. It is with this in mind that our understanding of social change needs to be pragmatic in the sense that it would be adequate for the particular changes which Hong Kong has faced. Hong Kong was a part of China, a unit which separated from China. The future changes of Hong Kong mainly consist of a change in the relationship between a particular unit with other units and with the large entity as a whole. A. D. Smith suggests a third view of social change which is called a transunits social change theory and has offered a more meaningful view of Hong Kong's transitional situation. Smith points out that there are some elements of social change which have been neglected by the two macro and micro views of social change. He emphasizes that many changes emerge from interactions between units, or units and the society as a whole. He claims that many changes are the product of mutual interactions between a given unit and others surrounding it. "Where changes cannot be convincingly

ascribed to either cumulation or sudden intrusion, or to voluntaristic planning, there is a prima facie case for deriving them from the linkages and currents formed by a given unit with others with whom it stands in mutually interinfluencing relations" (1976, p. 133). Smith points out that the transunits interactions are a long-term, more or less continuous pattern of interplay and partnership between two or more patterns or units, and in time, can provide a source and context for changes within particular units of that constellation. It is interpenetration or close relations themselves which constitute basic conditions for change within the constituent units. Then, analysis of change in terms of transunits interactions presupposes a world of rival power centers which exert mutual influences. Smith's argument here is concerned with the importance of the historical record, not only of sudden cataclysmic intrusions, but of broader and more lasting interactions between patterns and units which form the essential setting for analyses of human responses and innovations in the light of unique value commitments and ideals. It is in the dialogue between, on the one hand, the ever-changing context and web of interunits relations, and, on the other, creative human syntheses and activities, that much significant change - its origins, mechanisms and forms can be located and understood.

The transunits views of social change which emphasize

mutual interaction, interpenetration, dialogue and relationship between the different or rival power units is meaningful for a transition society such as the case of Hong Kong. For, with this view, Hong Kong's transition society will not be seen as an object to adapt deliberate change but one which has an active role as a change agent in the transitional process. And it is also with this understanding of Hong Kong's social change that the transformation adult learning theory as suggested by Freire and Mezirow, as being compatible to facilitate the diverse units in conscientizing their differences, in providing a critical analysis of the situation, in facilitating the interaction, and formulating a climate for dialogue, then adult learning activities will not be only supplemental, but rather the mediator and the dynamic of social change.

CHAPTER II A TRANSITION SOCIETY: THE CASE OF HONG KONG

The previous examination of the different views of adults, adult learning and implications for adult education has enabled us to understand, from a more sophisticated position, the rationality of our alternative. This reflection sustains our belief about adults' status in human history and the nature of adult learning with its contribution to the progress of human life. The transformative adult learning theory seems to be a more appropriate approach. However, if it is to have a future in the Hong Kong transition society, it must develop a relationship with the social conditions, concerns, and problems of Hong Kong. Only then will the transformative adult learning theory be a living force. Therefore, the second part of this study will concentrate on a description of the Hong Kong society which is characterized by its own historical development as a British colony, and yet at the same time, having an inseparable relationship with Chinese history. The development of Hong Kong's educational and adult educational system are the result of the interaction between the Hong Kong people and their environment in the journey of Hong Kong's history. The flourishing development of mass media and the freedom of the press in Hong Kong have allowed Hong Kong to play, and possibly continue to play an

important role in the history of China. It is this same group of people, especially the adult members, who will be considered the announcers of the new epoch of Hong Kong and the history of China.

1 The Case of Hong Kong

A The Social and Historical Background of Hong Kong

Hong Kong, a tiny territory with a land area of only 1,075 square kilometers, and 5,859,100 people (1990), is one of the most densely-populated places in the world. Hong Kong has been a British colony since the Opium War between China and Britain, and it was in accordance with the Convention of Chuenpi, January 20, 1841, that the island of Hong Kong was ceded to Britain. After the second Anglo-Chinese War (1856-8) which ended with the Convention of Peking, Britain obtained a perpetual lease for Kowloon peninsula as far as Boundary Street. And later, in 1898, by a convention signed in Peking by China and Britain on June 9, an extension of Hong Kong's territory, the New Territories - comprising the area north of Kowloon up to the Shum Chun River, and 235 islands - was leased for 99 years to Britain, and by then, the British unilaterally took over Kowloon City. During the past 150 years, Hong Kong, now a name including the territory of Hong Kong island, Kowloon

peninsula, and the islands became a center of Chinese emigration and trade with Chinese communities abroad. In the period of 1948-9, as the forces of the Chinese Nationalist Government began to face defeat in the civil war with the communists, Hong Kong received an influx of people unparalleled in its history. Hundreds of thousands of people entered the territory choosing to live under a foreign flag. The population totaled about 600, 000 by 1945, and rose by the mid - 1950's, to an estimated 2.2 million. Since then the population has continued to rise and now totals 5.86 million (1990).

Hong Kong, 'a barren island with hardly a house upon it' as described by Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary at the dawn of colonization, has been transformed into the eleventh largest trading entity in the world. It was an area without any natural resources or productive land, but became one of the most important financial centers in the world, exporting more than the whole of China. In the last several decades, Hong Kong has been prospering economically, but also, it has something considered as a rare phenomenon in the modern era -- a politically stable society. This is a somewhat unusual example of a colony in a post-colonial world. Located at the edge of a communist power which persistently vows to demolish all residual colonialism in the world. Hong Kong still displays little nationalism or other violent political activities. Some of

the reasons given for such political and economic development under a colonial government would be:

- 1) The laissez-faire capitalist economy which reveal the colonial government's attitude of positive non-intervention has embodied a low taxation policy coupled with minimal regulation of businesses which has also improved the living conditions of the people;
- 2) The colonial government is basically efficient and does not interfere with the Chinese lifestyle; the people of Hong Kong have been influenced by the very Chinese traditional 'bureaucratic paternalism' and passive acquiescence, and view as more important prosperity and a peaceful environment rather than participation in political or public affairs;
- 3) The agricultural character of the Chinese people, who make up 98% of Hong Kong's residents, is that of a hard working people who cherish stability.

B Hong Kong -- The Free Sphere of China

The success of Hong Kong is not only revealed by its economic development, which is easily recognized by people who look at Hong Kong on a surface level. Hong Kong is not only a free trading post, but also a free sphere vital for Chinese cultural development (Lee, 1991). The influence of

informational capital as a factor in Hong Kong's development can be witnessed explicitly through the production, circulation, and consumption of information. This has directly advanced the process of cultural reproduction and identity formation in Hong Kong. The fact that the circulation of information and the interaction of different ideologies are possible and facilitated has offered Hong Kong a particular status in the boarder Chinese society. Such freedom of the press cannot be enjoyed by most Chinese people who live under the communist regime in mainland China or under the arbitrary government in Taiwan. Therefore, Hong Kong has become an open widow for the Chinese people to view the world and a bridge to link Western and Eastern cultures. There is within Hong Kong news media which includes nearly 70 daily newspapers, over 600 periodicals, two private television companies, one government radio-television station, two commercial radio stations and a radio service station for the British Forces (1990). And most foreign newspapers and books can be easily found in street news shop or bookstores. Such a variety of channels of communication and the freedom of the press have made Hong Kong an international city and an interaction center between Western and Eastern cultures, and a bridge between mainland China and Taiwan. Therefore, Hong Kong has been called by some intellectuals, 'the free sphere of Chinese culture' (Lee, 1991).

C The Educational System in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's educational system is another important factor in the progress of Hong Kong's history. The public education system was established in 1847 with grants to the Chinese vernacular schools. Later, the voluntary schools - mainly run by missionaries - were included in the grant scheme. The most influential event introduced in education was the Ten Years Plan of the governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, in 1971. The government of Hong Kong began providing free primary education and three additional years of free education to secondary students was introduced by 1978. The educational objectives for both the policy makers and the citizens was predominantly a highly utilitarian means to economic and vocational ends. The main educational goal for the policy makers was to produce personnel to fit into the Colony's manpower plan. And the attitude of the people was to obtain knowledge for the pursuit of achievement and consumerism.

D Adult Education in Hong Kong

Since adult education is the main concern of this study, a brief presentation of the development of adult education throughout Hong Kong's history will enable us to rediscover the role of adult education in the journey of Hong Kong's development, as well as the image of adult

education which has been formed during the past few decades. Hong Kong's adult education has a very short history. It was only after the Second World War because of the need for rehabilitation of society that many small English learning or business training schools emerged. Some non-profit organizations also established evening professional courses such as bookkeeping or language classes for adults. This marked the initial development of adult education in Hong Kong. It was not until 1954 that Hong Kong's Education Department established an Adult Education committee. Since then, adult education has formally been recognized as an integral part of the educational system in the society. In the middle of the 1960's, due to the need for economic development, adult education in Hong Kong took the form of vocational and professional training: in 1965, Hong Kong University began to offer some non-credit courses for non-traditional students; and in 1969, public vocational schools began to offer evening classes. Adult education began to gain notoriety in the 1970's and 1980's. The government began to subsidize complementary education and the main objective was still focused on vocational training to assist the changing economic system from labor-intensive to capital-intensive, adult education being the instrument to do so. The aging of the population, averaging 26 in 1981 to 32 in 1991 (Nov, 13, 1991, Overseas Chinese Economic Journal) has made adult education become a crucial theme of education reform in the 1990's, and the development of adult

higher education has become the focus of recent and upcoming developments in adult education. Some concrete plans already instituted in the government's agenda include: The Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (Open University) which was formally established in June 1989. In the first year, about 4,000 students enrolled in various foundation courses. A third university augmenting the number of seats at the two universities is the plan for 1993. Such development of adult education reveals some characteristic of Hong Kong's educational system:

- 1) The average educational level of the Hong Kong people is quite high compared with prior generations, thanks to the Nine Year Compulsory Education Policy and the low drop out rate.
- 2) Higher education is necessary for economic development and the transition from a labor-power-intensive system to a capital-intensive system, and high technology is necessary for further economic development; and,
- 3) Education is valued by Chinese parents and they are willing to offer their children higher education, and now it is possible because of better economic conditions and fewer children in each family. In general, the Adult Education Section of the Education Department provides formal and non-formal education through a number of courses and

activities, and assists voluntary organizations through a subvention scheme. Formal courses cover remedial education, second chance education and education for personal development at levels ranging from primary to post-secondary. Over 20,000 people enrolled in formal courses during the year. Non-formal education courses cover a variety of cultural, social, recreational and educational activities. Most of these activities are organized by voluntary organizations and subsidized by the government on a case-by-case basis. About 28,000 people participated in these courses and activities. During 1990-1991, government subsidies were granted to 285 projects operated by 66 organizations. Some problems were pinpointed in a document of the UNESCO in 1982 (Shah, 1982) including government tardiness and weak financial support which caused adult education in Hong Kong to remain a marginal activity in the overall scheme of educational development. Also a lack of trained personnel and professionals. According to this document the educators hold 1 Certificate, 9 Diplomas, 1 Masters degree, and 1 Doctorate. Also, a lack of coordination made the development of adult education in Hong Kong much more arduous than necessary.

2 The Future of Hong Kong

The future of Hong Kong and its people is now clouded

with uncertainty by the approaching return of the colony to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. Hong Kong has always been recognized as a borrowed place, in a borrowed time, which China saw as a gross affront to national pride. The present Chinese government in overstating this case, declares that "to recover the Hong Kong area is the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people" (Sino-British Agreement, 1984). To realize this common aspiration, the governor supposedly being the representative of the entire people, negotiations were made between Britain and China, but described as Deng Xiaopin as, ' only a two-legged stool'. The people of Hong Kong did not possess the right to determine their own future because they were, and always have been, Chinese citizens. The Sino-British agreement, which confirms the recovery of Chinese sovereignty after fifty years of capitalism in 1997, guarantees Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region, personal liberties and maintenance of the legal system. This agreement was signed in Beijing in the Great Hall of the People on December 19, 1984. Hong Kong then entered into a transitional period of which decolonization is the end stage. Unlike other colonial societies, Hong Kong's decolonization is not considered a promise of hope and freedom. This process is considered by Hong Kong's people as a threat of disaster. The evidence for this is the hundreds of thousands of people who are voting with their feet. By emigrating to another place, living under another flag, hoping to find a safe place for themselves and their

families. The numbers of emigres began to rise in 1987 and the estimate for 1990 is 62,000 persons with similar numbers forecast in coming years.

Hong Kong, a transition society, is expected to return to its mother country after 150 years of colonization, will leave its capitalist regime to return to a communist regime. Even with all the promises that were made in the Joint-Declaration and the Basic Law, still many fear the erosion of democracy and civil liberties. Uncertainty has raised many fundamental questions about Hong Kong's future. During such a critical time would adult learning or adult educational activities be meaningful for this transition society? Could the changes become a motivation, or a strain, a chance or an end? The answer can only be drawn from our understanding of change which is heavily influenced by past experience and the common view of Hong Kong's people.

3 Hong Kong, A Transition Society

As we have mentioned in the first part of this study, the importance of knowing the different views of human beings toward social change phenomena is not for the sake of theoretical analysis, but because the actions of human being depend mostly on their perceptions of events, and such

perceptions weigh heavily upon previous experiences. To understand the perceptions of the people of Hong Kong toward the inevitable change is important then for a better understanding of the premises of their reactions.

A The Dominant Views of Hong Kong Chinese about Social Change

Grappling with the problem of the impact of future social change in Hong Kong's society, will render meaning and predictability to the potential practices of adult learning and educational activities. It is not sufficient to describe the changes which are prescribed in the official documents, such as the Join-Declaration or the Basic Law. The promise offered by the Chinese and British governments' article are based upon the premise that they can impose an agreement on the people. Taking a close look at the cultural aspects of Hong Kong's society is a necessary prerequisite for understanding the meaning of change for Hong Kong's ordinary people.

Hong Kong society 98% Chinese, Chinese culture obviously influences in their perception of social change. Even after 150 years of colonization by the British, Hong Kong, unlike other colonial lands is still dominated by Chinese culture. The Chinese are basically an agricultural people who cherish stability and who have a rather passive

attitude toward change. In an agricultural society, people's lives are dependent upon and controlled by the power of nature. The Chinese people are a people with a long history, and through this long historical journey, people learn continually how to obey the 'tien' -- the creator of life and history -- and try to build up strong kin networks -- families -- to protect themselves from the constraints of nature. It is from these that the great historic imperial civilizations developed. With such a cultural background, the Chinese basically held a very passive attitude toward historical social changes. History is such an accumulation of successions beyond human control to which submission and adaptation is the only human choice.

Such attitudes are incorporated within Confucian ideology which was very closely tied to the political framework of the Chinese Empire and fostered by the literate group which fulfilled certain crucial integrative functions stabilizing the mechanisms in the imperial system. By stabilizing the change mechanisms in the imperial system, helping it to absorb changes regularly throughout its long history, this system also severely inhibited the development of a reformative or transformative capacity in Chinese society.

The family is another functional unit, a relatively self-enclosed and protective group with little individual autonomy which emphasizes collective rather than individual benefits. In such a society, the primary duty of

individuals was to increase family strength and resources, not to represent the worthiness of the family through some external goals and commitments. Within such cultural environments, dominant images of social change flow just like the tide, or like man's days, weeks or years. round. The changes of empires are considered the divisions between long periods or plateaus of stability, and movement by any part calls for a readjustment in position of the other parts; and usually readjustments of any social changes are made on the part of ordinary people. Therefore, stability is valued by the people and change takes on a negative connotation.

This view of social change and the advancement of history is the heritage of most of the Hong Kong people. They cherish stability and are rather passive when facing changes. According to a survey of 550 Hong Kong Chinese citizens conducted during the period of December 1970 - March 1977, 87.3% of the respondents would definitely prefer social stability and economic prosperity. As Lau concluded, " In Hong Kong, many people are disposed to preserve social stability at any cost, and this disposition implies that our respondents would withdraw from any activities which they perceived would lead to the disruption of social stability " (1981, p. 203). Even the transition process and the changes have been painful to Hong Kong's people; yet in the same survey, 52.7% of the respondents stated that " they

would still prefer to stay in Hong Kong and did not contemplate trying to transform it to suit their own cherished ideals" (1981, p. 206). As many as 91.1% of the respondents "felt they had no power to change the society" (p. 206). Furthermore, an even higher percentage of them, 97.6%, maintained that they had no influence whatsoever on the formulation of governmental policy " (p. 207). The government and the future change appears to be an invulnerable entity which controls their fate. They feel it is beyond their capability to do anything about it. As a result, the adaptation of the change rather than active intervention appears to be the guiding principle regulating the reactions of people in this transitional process.

Transition is a *fait accompli*, a predetermined process of the whole nation, or an inevitable process of history which individuals have nothing to do with. With such vision, many strategies have been adapted by the people of Hong Kong: the middle class people are trying to emigrate to other countries, business groups fearful of losing their own privileges have developed relationships with the Chinese leadership, and the vast number of ordinary people are trying to keep silent about public affairs and enjoy life which they believe is the way to exercise their 'freedom' during these 'last' few years.

B A New Vision of Social Change in Hong Kong

The dominant view of Hong Kong's people toward the changes cited previously should not lead to the assumption that the population is totally quiescent. With the advent of 1997, novel circumstances have been advanced by a significant proportion of the population, mainly in the middle class and with the intellectuals. A new vision for change with an emphasis on the intervention of people's rational choice has been introduced thanks to the thriving mass media and free press environment. Terms such as people's interests, democracy, act of choice, participation and human rights have spread throughout society during the last few years. Some new emphases regarding the orientation of Hong Kong's citizens are found in a study by Kuan and Lau (1989), which has also been supported by a survey conducted in 1985 (Lau, 1988, p. 43), in which the concepts of freedom and democracy were spoken of by the respondents. The study cited that:

1) The concept of freedom is valued largely by the people and is not based on a belief in fundamental rights but from an instrumental point of view;

2) The idea of democracy is also quite popular among the people of Hong Kong. Forty-nine percent of the respondents in the 1985 survey believed that elected leaders could rule

Hong Kong better than the existing leaders of the Government. Like the idea of freedom, the understanding of democracy among the Hong Kong Chinese is, however, very limited. As Kuan and Lau pointed out: " The pattern of responses clearly attests to the primacy of public opinion to democracy, but leaves election, responsiveness, leadership and others far behind " (1989, pp. 91-115). Although the ideas of freedom and democracy have made inroads into the minds of Hong Kong's Chinese, it is the pragmatic value of social stability that is most cherished by them. A study of the political culture of college students by Elaine Y. M. Chan and Joseph Cho-wai Chan, cited by Kuan and Lau (1989, p. 95) reveals that: 41.1% (N = 677) of the students expect the government to " manage the society" while "maintaining stability". This reflects that the Chinese people are still strongly dependent on public authority for the preservation of social stability. Even the students are expected to be more idealistic than the rest of the population. Hong Kong's Chinese are establishing 'negative' democracy by restricting the jurisdiction of political power; they are less interested in pursuing the 'positive' democracy of participation in the sharing of political power to plan the changes. While still remaining largely passive, the Hong Kong's Chinese are somehow able, in their values, to lessen subscription to traditional ideas, the objects of change. They have installed some restraints on their jurisdiction and

penetration. Public interests are recognized, but they are no longer solely defined by the government. Compared with the traditional Chinese, the Hong Kong Chinese are more prepared to grant legitimacy to private interests and confer upon them an autonomous status. A popular appeal of the democratic rhetoric is articulated by the people. In May and June 1989, hundreds of thousands of people spilled into the streets to protest against the Chinese declaration of martial law, and later in June of 1990, more than one hundred thousand again took to the streets to commemorate those who were killed in the Beijing massacre.

There is now intense concern about civil liberties in Hong Kong. In 1991, for the first time in Hong Kong's history, 18 seats of the Legislative Council are open for direct election. As a result, 16 seats were taken by democratic groups. All of these are the introduction of the new social view which reconfirms human participation in the evolution of history; even the passive view of social change still seems to be more prevalent.

CHAPTER III AN INTEGRATIVE VIEW OF ADULT

EDUCATION AND THE HONG KONG SOCIETY

In the previous two chapters, two sets of variables have been introduced. First, the different philosophical views in the areas of adult learning and social change, which have different impacts on adult educational practices and on the adult members of a society. Second, the social realities of Hong Kong, its future changes, and the different views of Hong Kong's people regarding these events. This section will identify an appropriate alternative that can express these ideological beliefs: the meaning of adult education and the ideal way of life; and at the same time, offer potential practices in response to the particular social-historical context, Hong Kong being the case of this study. According to the goal of this study, the concern is not a theoretical argument but a philosophical scrutiny, emphasizing some basic values and their potential operation which would be appropriate for the Hong Kong social-historical context. To determine the value of the preferable perspectives of adult learning, social change and the potential practices is mainly a philosophical work in which judgment is based on rational reflection and on subjective choice. It is obvious that the validity of such alternatives involves the conflicting questions of value, feelings, ideals and normative concepts. However,

the purpose is not to argue that different perspectives are incomparable or to formulate a single set of standards, but rather to develop an understanding based on the judgments of a particular society during a particular time in the evolution of human history. Therefore, the task of this final chapter is to clarify the alternative views, and make a choice based on relevancy to a transition society whose role is to be a change agent in the evolution of history. With these in mind, the first section of this chapter will focus on the identification of Hong Kong's transition society as a change agent with its differences as part of the whole entity--Chinese history. The second section will offer a determination of the significance of the transformative adult learning theory as revealed by its contributions to a transition society as a change agent.

1 Hong Kong , A Transition Society as A Change Agent

Given the existing circumstance of Hong Kong, the primary question raised is 'what can transition could be mean?' Hong Kong's people have been categorized as being either passive or active. Most of them hold the assumption that the future change of Hong Kong is an unavoidable historical process, a natural ending of this borrowed place in a borrowed time. The people who hold such views of the future are most concerned with the impact of change.

Because of past experiences, most Hong Kong Chinese must choose between emigration to seek another safe place to live or be alienated from public affairs and search for better economic benefits and enjoyment during the 'last free days'. A significant proportion of the population, mainly the middle class and the intellectual, are still stubbornly committed to the belief that the people ought to be able to control their own history, and that by choosing to act they can change their future. They are pressing for democratic and representative government. The initial development of such democratic groups has been slow due to the lack of democratic experience by the Chinese people and the condemnation of it by the Chinese Communist Party. They are viewed by the Chinese leadership as rebellious and have been warned that 'Hong Kong is a base of anti-communism'. The introduction of the emphasis on the role of the people in the transitional process has caused a lot of tension and confusion. Such tension between the people's demands for human rights and the dictatorship of the Chinese government have spurred several political crises during the last few years. A substantial proportion of the people believe that an excessive demand for democracy is not a wise choice for a transition society and that it will only cause the direct intervention of the Chinese leadership.

To categorize Hong Kong's transitional situation into two types of views, calling it an unavoidable historical

process or a situation which can be changed by people's intervention, are both a miss with regard to the characteristics of a transition society as suggested by Smith and cited previously. A transition society is primarily a society which experiences a passing from one condition to another. The implicit assumption of Hong Kong as a transition society is that although a part of China, its actual condition is outside of China and different from China. The differences between Hong Kong and China are obvious and have increased throughout the advance of its history of separation. Julian Steward pointed out in his work on cultural variation that each particular culture is viewed as a discrete entity, and faces peculiar problems of adaptation to its environment. It is through increased adaptation to its environment that a given culture assumes its distinctive form (J. Steward, 1955, 1977). Hong Kong has limited natural resources, the need for continuous adjustment to its environment, a particular culture, and a particular social system which has developed. This is a unique colonial system with an emphasis on the laissez-faire policy; a unique population highly educated and with expertise in creating an economic miracle; passive in public and political affairs; and a unique social system whose middle class is central and cherishes freedom and civil liberties, though strongly utilitarian in their beliefs. Hong Kong then has developed a unique culture different from China's, which is a society dominated by Communist ideology,

an arbitrary political system, a dictatorial leadership, and a planned economic system. According to Smith the differentiation between China, and Hong Kong as a part of China, is one important factor in creating change and promoting a new integration. It is based on this concept of differentiation that A. D. Smith has developed his transunit interactions theory. He emphasizes that the continuous interaction between two or more different units can come, in time, to provide a source and context for changes within particular units and within that constellation. As Smith claims: " Change in this case proceeds between and across units" (1976, p. 132). And these units " stand in mutually interinfluencing relations " (p. 133). The new changes which occur through the interaction of differential units is a stage of reintegration, a journey of progress through which a new culture develops. Smith's transunit social change theory provides new insights in understanding the characteristics of Hong Kong as a transition society. According to this perspective, the differences between China and Hong Kong then are a useful factor, not an obstacle, for creating the conditions for change and the advent of a new Chinese history. The fact that there will be a recovery of Chinese sovereignty in Hong Kong will make this interaction exercise a deliberate one, and this interpenetration will result in the transformation of Chinese history. With this view, Hong Kong as a transition society will play a positive and crucial role in the

development of Chinese history. By consciously keeping its differences and being open to interaction with its new partner, Hong Kong can become a change agent; and its differences with China will be the source of contributions to change and development. Hong Kong, then, a different unit but a part of China, needs to be ready to learn to dialogue and interact with other units and with the Chinese society as a whole; and by this facilitate the emergence of a new Chinese culture which will join in the process of humanization. With this view of social change and as Smith contends that "because the greater 'openness', must allow an important, but not overriding, role for individual and group creativity in the shaping of changes" (1976, p. 137). And, "it is often quite different from that intended by their elites and ruling classes" (p. 135). This view of mutual 'fit' and an active view of the transformation process will be meaningful not only for a particular case such as Hong Kong, but its explanation can also be relevant to the society which is characterized by differences of culture, race, or ideology, and which tries to work for a better world and brings about change. This perspective of bringing change, particularly reintegration through interaction among different units, appears more relevant when emphasis lies on non-violent and more lasting change in the progress of human history. It recognizes creative human initiative and the equal contributions of different individuals and groups in the evolution of the

human culture. It is with this perspective that Hong Kong, a transition society, will maintain a positive image while playing the role of a change agent. Then the transition period will be a process of participation, creation and interaction. It will also be the time of conscientizing the differences between the units and learning how to interact and to participate, and to make the transition period a starting point of progress. This is where adult educational activities play a vital role, a role as mediators of change.

The value-orientations underlying the previous perspective are clear: First, the reunion of Hong Kong and China is considered a chance for interaction with other parts of China and with China as a whole unit, rather than as a crisis. Second, the differences are considered the source for contributions toward formulating a new face for Chinese history, not for creating obstacles. Third, recognition of the participation of individuals as well as groups in the transition process. Fourth, emphasis on educational and communicational competence of individual members, especially contributing to more lasting changes rather than to revolutionary intervention. In this context we are naturally interested in the question: Will the ideas of Freire and Mezirow offer a significant adult learning process in which learning can become the dynamic of the transformative process of individuals and society?

2 The Contributions of Transformative Adult Learning To The Transformative Process of Hong Kong's Transition Society.

In the first part of this study, we have presented three theories of adults, adult learning and their implications for adult education. We have also introduced two adult learning theorists, P. Freire and J. Mezirow, and have synthesized their views of adult learning. Although they differ in some respects, both their views of adult learning as a process within which the transformation of society and its adult members become possible, are the same. It is their common transformative vision which has revealed hope for a transition society.

Reflection on their views would be meaningless unless it could offer a vision for potential practice in a concrete situation. Hong Kong, a transition society, has entered into a process of social change. The adaptation of the transunit theory of Smith cited in the second part of this study, leads us to identify Hong Kong as a change agent in the evolution of Chinese history through its interaction with its differences with China. Now it is time for us to reexamine the significance of the ideas of Freire and Mezirow for a transition society such as Hong Kong.

Some conditions have to be made on the formation of such a transition society to ensure that its adult members assume the responsibility of joining in this transformational and formational process. First, adults must be made aware of the uniqueness of Hong Kong's society, and recognize it as a force for change. Second, adults must use their critical reflective competence to transform and to form a new understanding of human historical evolution, and they must realize the power they have to control their lives to a higher degree. Third, competency in communication and dialogue in the process of interaction among individuals, groups, and societies as units must be strived for. The transformative adult learning approach will have valued by its abilities to meet those needs.

A An Adult Learning Theory Provides A Meaningful View of Transition Due to The Social Dimension

The views of Freire and Mezirow regarding their emphasis on the social dimension of adult learning are outstanding. Although they have different emphases, both recognize the social dimension of human learning. Freire's work introduces a cosmological view of the position of human beings in relation to their world and history. And it is in this cosmological view that Freire defines the meaning of human learning in the social evolution process and claims that: " Men are beings in the process of becoming - as

unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality... The unfinished character of men and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity " (1990, p. 72). Even Mezirow contends that his main interest is to construct a meaningful learning process with no intention to develop a comprehensive theory of social change. But he claims that educational practices which foster critical reflection individually and collectively will lead to individual and social transformation, and by this view, the learning process must be understood in the broader context of a comprehensive social theory (see 1989). Actually, Mezirow's view is influenced by Habermas' thoughts about the human learning process in regard to social evolution, Habermas describes this process as occurring at two levels: " The learning mechanisms have to be sought first on the psychological level... Individually acquired learning abilities and information must be latently available in world views before they can be used in a socially significant way, that is, before they can be transposed into societal learning processes. Since the cognitive development of the individual takes place under social boundary conditions, there is a circular process between societal and individual learning " (1979, p. 121). It seems that Mezirow has developed the focus of his learning theory on the first level -- the individual psychological level of individual transformation, and opens himself to the

supposition that Habermas cited, that such individual learning will lead to social learning and social transformation processes. With this perspective Mezirow considers his views as reformist rather than revolutionary. The different emphases on the social dimension of adult learning of Freire and Mezirow give us a complementary perspective. Freire's view offers us a philosophical foundation of the value of adult learning in the social evolutionary process and Mezirow offers us the mediating factors in the individual and the social transformation process (see Mezirow 1989).

According to these views, human learning is necessary for social evolution, and learning is an even more crucial factor in the reconstruction and the reintegration of society. The social evolution process of human beings is different from that of animals. As J. Habermas mentioned in his analysis of Marx's Historical Materialism, human social evolution is different in homo sapiens which integrate both organic and cultural forms of evolution "The introduction of new forms of social integration requires knowledge of a moral-practical sort and not technically useful knowledge that can be implemented in rules of instrumental and strategic action" (1976, p. 146). Therefore, adult learning is important for social evolution, but it appears more important at the moment of transition when societies search for new integration.

Freire and Mezirow have developed a clear outline of the contribution of adult learning in a transition society in which the new situation and the new tasks of such a society require awareness, knowledge and competence. When Freire reflected on the transition of Brazilian society, he pointed out that: "The time of transition involves a rapid movement in search of new themes and new tasks. In such a phase man needs more than ever to be integrated with his reality. If he lacks the capacity to perceive the 'mystery' of the change, he will be a mere pawn at their mercy" (1973, p. 8). And Mezirow has explained more in detail how the learning process can become a process of formation of a new society. In a changing society, "Adults in such a society face an urgent need to keep from being overwhelmed by change,... they discover a need to acquire new perspectives in order to gain a more complete understanding of changing events and a higher degree of control over their lives.... Thus, it becomes crucial that the individual learn to negotiate meanings, purposes, and values critically, reflectively, and rationally instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others"(1991, p. 3). This is the dynamic of adult's learning. The views of Freire and Mezirow present new insights into how human and social aspects can be integrated, the significance of the individual as the controller of social change, and the power of human learning in the transition situation. These ideas can be seen as the basis for a strong philosophical position

regarding the value of adult education in a transition society.

As has been described, two general views of social change appear in Hong Kong's society. While one emphasizes the adaptation to or the alienation from change, the other focuses on the intervention of people's force. The reality for us is clear enough that neither of these two strategies can bring about a more beneficial and lasting change which can contribute to new social integration. The preference for the transunit social change theory which emphasizes the differences and the power of interaction offers Hong Kong a new alternative of becoming a change agent in the evolution of Chinese history. Such a new and important task for Hong Kong requires certain competence of the people, especially the adult members of society. As suggested by Freire, Hong Kong, in order to be a change agent in Chinese culture, needs to begin by transforming itself. With this in mind, the educational challenge for Hong Kong then is not the question of quantity as emphasized by the government's plan, but is related to the effective development and use of the adult education enterprise as a major transforming power which brings the dynamic into the transformative process of itself and that of China. Therefore, the adult education enterprise must not be seen merely as a supplement to formal education as is the present situation in Hong Kong, but as an instrument of empowerment to foster the dynamics of a

transformative society. In recognizing the learning power of its adult members in the society, and emphasizing the importance of awareness, critical reflection, and communication competence in the learning process, adult educational practices cannot be eliminated from vocational or recreational programs, but must be permitted to enter into the different dimensions of human activities. This is not possible unless the transformation process begins with the adult educators and the institutions which are involved in the organization of the adult learning process; since their identity, their social awareness and their educational philosophy are the most crucial factors influencing not only the development of adult educational enterprises, but also the progress of the transformative process of Hong Kong's society. With the belief that adult learning is the dynamic of this transformative process and will lead to new social integration, the adult learning theories of Freire and Mezirow, in implementing adult learning in the development of the society and humanity, need to become the philosophical foundation of adult educational practice in Hong Kong.

B An Adult Learning Theory Emphasizes The Empowerment of People

Both Freire and Mezirow are humanistic in that they both have placed human beings at the center of history and

the universe; yet they differ from humanists who view self-perfection and self-realization as the goal of development. As has been mentioned before, human beings are considered by both Freire and Mezirow as still being in the process of becoming. They are conscious beings who have the ability to reflect, to create, to act; and to continually overcome the challenges on the road to becoming. It is human awareness and critical reflective power which assures human beings that they can construct their societies by their own hands. Therefore, the development of these abilities is the main interest of the human being and considered the ultimate goal of adult education. For transformation theorists then, adult learning and adult education is actually a process of development and a process of empowerment. Freire contends that the importance of education " is to help men help themselves, to place them in consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation " (1973, p.16). Empowerment here refers to the process of the development of human internal power, a process by which people seek, as Mezirow suggests: " a higher degree of control over their lives " (1991, p. 3). Such understanding of the learning process as a process of empowerment is, according to Freire: "enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities... on their very power of reflection. The resulting development of this power would mean an increased capacity for choice.... the people

perceive their reality as being of the greatest importance for the process of humanization " (1973, p. 16). Thus, for transformation theorists, learning actually is a process of humanization, an act of empowerment through which human beings can become fully human.

Transformation theory offers a very powerful vision of adult learning for a transition society. It emphasizes the fostering of the power of people, not only a few elites, to become the actors and through them to make the society a place of continual transformation and development. Hong Kong, with its historical background and its Chinese-like character, has adults who are weak in regard to individuality. The evaluation of individuals is judged not by their competence, but by their conformity to their social role. Hong Kong's Chinese, as well as all the Chinese in the world, bear the marks of a long feudalistic tradition in which submission of the people is one by product; and democracy has never been experienced in the history of China. Individuals are dispersed and submerged in the immensity of the social network. They are more likely identified as members of a family, or bearers of a family name rather than as autonomous and responsible members of the larger society. During this transition period, the lack of consideration for Hong Kong's people in the transition process is one of the results of this collective system and also the main cause of the alienation and the passivity of

the people. Hong Kong, in order to become a change agent through interaction with China, needs first to become a transitive unit. Therefore , the question of how to stimulate the motivation of the Hong Kong people to participate in the change process as autonomous persons must be the first concern in this transitional period.

Some people propose that a stronger leadership would help in solving such problems. At the same time, there are other groups of people who believe that extending an invitation to the elite, as governor's consultants, from the authorities would facilitate the transitional process of Hong Kong. These are seen as the unacceptable approaches since it entails people as followers waiting for good leadership. Meanwhile, their passitivity will lead to the loss of the dynamic of the whole society. To maintain the belief that motivation is always an internal stimulation is the outcome of human conscience and human choice. The concept of becoming a full actor, suggested by the transformative learning theory, is not the same as becoming an 'activist'. Rather, it refers to becoming a conscious person, one who can rationally reflect on his own, one willing to take the chance while understanding the consequences and the responsibilities. This cannot be the task of leadership, but rather, a task of learning and of educational activities. This is why there must be consideration of human learning as a transformative process

rather than a formative process, as suggested by the transformative learning theorists. Therefore, to assure its role as a change agent participating in the reorientation of Chinese history, Hong Kong needs to introduce an adult learning approach to empower its people. This is the ultimate goal of all adult educational programs and practices. This empowerment should be understood firstly to form a common understanding in which all the people are the actors and at the center of their own history and the history of their society. Secondly, to recognize and to develop the transformative abilities of the people. With these views, adult educational practices should emphasize the empowerment goal and the learning process. It is only through empowerment that the people of Hong Kong, not just a few of them but the whole population, will become the 'announcers' and the 'formators' of a new epoch. Also, with such understanding, the transformative adult learning perspective appears significant with its emphasis on the recognition of the transformational ability of human beings toward their own development and the evolution of society.

C An Adult Learning Theory With A Deeper and Broader View

The human learning process seems to be an indispensable transformative dynamic in social evolution. The acquisition of competence, as suggested by Habermas, should not be limited to technical knowledge which has as its goal the

improvement of the productivity of society; but rather, moral-practical knowledge, by which the reconstruction of the normative structure of society becomes possible (1976). According to Habermas the most important knowledge for new social integration is not technical knowledge as claimed in Marx's Historical Materialism, but the knowledge which he defines as that based on the interest of communication and the emancipation of human beings. (see Habermas' Knowledge and Interest, 1971). Elaborating on Habermas views, Mezirow formulated three domains of adult learning, having its own methodology for obtaining knowledge, and each having a different outcome for learning. The three learning domains formulated by Mezirow and mentioned in this study are the instrumental, communicative and emancipatory. Such delineation of the different learning domains is not based on the forms of learning as usually cited in the adult education field as formal, nonformal, and informal, but according to human interests which are based on the relationship of human beings with their world. Adult learning activities which foster this view are overcoming the boundaries of the educational setting by emphasizing the nature and the process of learning which should be exercised in different settings or forms of learning. The transformative adult learning theorists see adult learning in a broader and deeper sense which surpasses the limitations of settings and forms. As Mezirow describes it: " Learning is centrally the changing of contexts rather than

the mere acquisition of data " (1991, p.89). For the transformative theorists, learning actually is a transformation process both individually and collectively, and it can take on many forms. By this transformative character of adult learning, new self-awareness and new social integration are formed. In this view such self and social transformative processes can be actualized by the acquisition of the different learning domains of instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory knowledge.

Adult learning takes on a deeper and broader sense through Habermas', Freire's and Mezirow's views. These are especially meaningful for Hong Kong's transition society. As was described in the second part of this study, Hong Kong's adult education contributed greatly to its economic development in the past by tapping into available human resources. It has always seemed to be the technological skill provider. For most people, adult education has been the way by which one could achieve a better life. And during the transitional period, the role of technical provider has been greatly appreciated and considered a unique contribution to China on behalf of Hong Kong after the reunion. This is no difficulty in identifying the acquisition of technical knowledge and the development of human resources as the primary goal on which Hong Kong's adult educational activities have been based. Actually, such a view of development has been challenged recently by

the dissatisfaction of the people who have discovered that their economic benefits could be threatened by their dependency on political power and by the policy makers. Thus, the acquisition of communicative and emancipatory knowledge appears to be important when we recognize that Hong Kong's importance to China is not only based on its economic contribution, but also its developmental experience which can be communicated and shared for the construction of a richer and better Chinese cultural history. Understanding the three learning domains has offered us a wider perspective of the adult learning process which previously only emphasized instrumental, skillful and technological learning. To understand what we need to learn in order to have real relationships with others and with the world, and to free ourselves from the distortion of presupposing premises and ideologies we must distinguish learning from schooling and enlarge our learning through different kinds of activities in life and through life. This is most true for the adult members in Hong Kong who always considered schooling as being for the youth of society. The role of adults has always been as one who teaches rather than one who learns. Schooling is a symbol of immaturity and threatening by the instruction of a superior role player--the teacher. Having a new perspective on adult learning will not only become more meaningful for the participants but it will provide a broader recognition of other adult members in Hong Kong society. Promoting the

understanding to all adult members that becoming learners is not a compulsory task because of personal failure, but it is the way to obtain the dynamic to join in the continuing transformative process of life and society.

The three domains of adult learning as suggested by Mezirow along with the social evolutionary views of Habermas, encapsulate emancipatory learning, the critical reflection of the premise, content, and the process of our experience which is neglected and most needed for the development of Hong Kong society. This is due to the Chinese-like character of Hong Kong's people, the political pressure from the dictatorial leadership, and the instrumental preference of educational practices. As a result, the competence of Hong Kong's people to critically reflect on social events is quite weak. This unbalanced development of Hong Kong's people has made them most competent in creating an economic miracle, but most passive in dealing with public and social affairs. Their understanding of Hong Kong's future is mainly based on past experience, and on pieces of information from the authorities. Their passive attitudes and their dependency on the authorities have become obstacles in Hong Kong's transition society which needs to take an active role as a change agent in Chinese culture. People who received a unique instrumental education have become the objects of the productional world and they are prohibited from the power of

controlling their own futures. When we talk about the need for Hong Kong to become a change agent, the educational approach which only emphasizes instrumental learning has come into question for its lack of potential in helping people to become creative, autonomous, and active participants in the transformative process. Emphasis on the development of critical thinking and awareness on the part of the adult members in our society is one of the important reform programs which Hong Kong adult education needs to take into consideration. Mezirow's transformative learning through critical thinking and Freire's liberal education through problem-posing are the methodologies which Hong Kong's transition society needs to adapt at all levels of the education system, and especially in adult educational practices, since it is the adult members in the society who have the responsibility of advancing the transitional process.

D An Adult Learning Theory Which Emphasizes The Value of Human Communication

Another characteristic of the transformation theory is its emphasis on the value of human communication. Two main domains suggested by Freire and Mezirow in the development of communication competence are: the development of individual and group (or collective) identity and the

development of individual and collective rationality. For transformation theorists, the importance of the act of human communication is built on the belief that humans are social beings who cannot exist without interacting with others, not only with other men but also with their world. Freire called such interaction 'dialogue'. He does not interpret 'dialogue' in the linguistic sense, but in a dynamic view of relationship--the triple-dimension relationships which place men at the center of history. As Freire claims: "Existence is a dynamic concept, implying external dialogue between man and man, between man and the world, between man and his Creator. It is this dialogue which makes man an historical being " (1973, p.18). Dialogue then is primarily an awareness of the position of individuals in time and space, and a commitment of individuals to total engagement as a member of history and of humanity. Therefore, dialogue in the learning process, for the transformation theorists, is never understood as only an instructional act of a teacher or a transmission of information, but the human dynamic through which they transform themselves and their world. As Freire claims: "Dialogue is the encounter between men, by which men achieve significance as men, and in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed in the world which is to be transformed and humanized " (1990, p. 77). Thus, the dialogue according to Freire's thought is primarily an act of identification, an act to search for the real position of individuals and

society in time and space, and their relationship with others and the world. Where do they come from? Where are they? Where are they supposed to go? The answers to such questions will bring them to an understanding of who they are, and what they can do, and what they are suppose to do. It is this identification of their own uniqueness that enables them to come to realize their relationship with others and with their world; real interaction and communication then becomes possible, and transformation emerges.

For Mezirow, human communication takes a more concrete path. He adapted Habermas' social communication theory and translated it into an adult learning situation. He used the term 'discourse' to express this act of human communication as did Habermas. In Mezirow's work, 'discourse' takes on a pragmatic sense and seems to be the dynamic and the method of validity testing in the learning process. As was presented in the first part of this study, for Mezirow, competency in the communication of human beings needs to be developed, through learning how to communicate and creating the ideal situations for communication. This transformation will emerge and "lead developmentally toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated perspective" (1991, p. 47). The criteria of an ideal discourse situation includes sufficient information, equality, rationality, participation, freedom, and rational

argument which described by Mezirow, becomes the criteria of evaluation of our learning situation, and even our entire society.

Freire and Mezirow offers us a concept of human communication competence which draws out two important features of human communication in a transition situation. First, the question of the identity of Hong Kong's people and the common identity of Hong Kong society. Second, the competence of Hong Kong's people for better communication with China and, at the same time, with other societies in the world.

The identity problem of Hong Kong's people has lasted a long time and has been the focus of much discussion. The blame for this is addressed mainly toward the colonial status of Hong Kong's society. However, this problem appears to be more important, in the sense that knowing one's identity is the prerequisite of effective interaction with others and with the world, and only by which Hong Kong's people will be able to define their future orientation. Recently, many discussions have been raised regarding the search for a 'Hong Kong common identity'. Some people point out that the loss of identity was caused by the mentality of living in a borrowed place. But others recognize that the educational system was perhaps one cause of such a consequence. In the educational system, English

is used as the teaching language, that history can be taken as an elective subject, and political criticism and social issues are kept out of the class room. This has resulted in the people of Hong Kong becoming capable in business and external affairs, but incapable of controlling their own future. Knowing one's identity in a borrowed place and in a borrowed time will become the crucial obstacle to the participation of people in the transformation process because they are not sure where they are to go, and feel powerless when facing their own future. The deficient educational system, and the familial mentality that prevails have made Hong Kong's people live only in the 'present', and interested only in the real 'benefit'. And for many, their future depends only on the protection given by other governments in other free countries. In order to be, it must become. Building a common social identity in Hong Kong will be the primary task of the transformative process, through recognizing and accepting the Hong Kong people's own uniqueness, their differences in comparison with other Chinese, and their position in time and space. With this identification, a true interaction with others, with China, and with the world will be possible. Therefore, the building up of individuals and the common identity is one function of Hong Kong's adult education enterprise, which will help advance the transformative process. Actually, there are already a few conscious-raising programs that have appeared recently in Hong Kong since the transition period began,

like the University of Democrats, a kind of public forum, the Citizens Educational Center, The Green Movement and the Social Events Criticism Program on television and in the newspapers. All of these learning opportunities have newly appeared with the goal of helping Hong Kong's citizens reflect on their own position in relation to others, society, nature and the world.

From a pragmatic view, human communication is also an act of individuals in relation to their external and internal normative reality of society. From this point of view, Mezirow has described discourse as the acquisition of the knowledge of communication and its importance for social evolution. Regarding Hong Kong's case, this pragmatic view of the development of human communication competence can be applied mainly in three domains: First, in the rationalization of the Chinese normative social structure; second, in the fostering of individuals' communication competence; and third, in the development of collective communication in a group setting.

To elaborate on these points, communicative action is known as normative social reality, according to Habermas. For him, social evolution is more dependent on the reformation of the social normative structure and fostering the knowledge of communication, rather than upon technical knowledge as suggested by Marx's Historical Materialism.

Chinese people are considered to be 'good' communicators in the sense that 'good' relations are those emphasized in familial and social settings. 'Good' relationships in Chinese society mainly refer to conformity to the expectations of social roles and social status. This is the criterion used to evaluate the virtue of an individual. Harmony' or 'no argument' are the codes of this normative structure. Judgment, or the validity of the rules of communication, are adequate relationships according to status, range, roles in the family and in society, rather than the claims of rationality. For example, the instruction of a teacher is always considered to be correct, not because of validity testing, but because of his/her role as a teacher. This also holds true for the role of the father in the family and the leaders in the country. The 'good' Chinese communicators are the ones who know the correct social roles, not those who critically reflect on statements or information received. To keep quiet is the social art of the wise man. The unquestioning attitude of most Chinese students proves this kind of communicative norm. It is clear that this normative communication structure has become one of the obstacles in the way of China's progress in the modern era. Rational consensus and legitimacy are the basic rules of a modern society. Hong Kong has been influenced by British tradition and its worldwide relationships, in which the existence of rational argument, the legislative protection of public rights, and

the freedom of speech, are its basic foundations and those on which Hong Kong can base their development as a modern city in the world. Perhaps it is not surprising that it is not the economic decline but rather the suppression of personal liberties, the total control over communicational channels, and the absolute power of the dictatorship of the Chinese Government that most threatens Hong Kong and are the reasons why people are escaping from life under the sovereignty of the present Chinese regime. Thus, the rationalization of Chinese communication is the most important task to undertake in the modernization of China. Hong Kong, then, with its own communicative knowledge will be a great contribution for that purpose. The promotion of rational communication will become one of the most important subjects of adult learning activities, through the formation of ideal discourse situations and spheres, as suggested by Mezirow. The view of making Hong Kong a free sphere with a climate of rational argument and reflection needs to be the orientation of Hong Kong's transformative process within which the competence of Hong Kong's people in rational discourse becomes the dynamic of this transformative process.

Second, to accomplish such a task the adult members of Hong Kong's society needs first to master the general rational rules of communication to the extent that they can become successful change agents. Ideal discourse, as

described by Mezirow, "provides the grounds for determining criteria for judging the level of development of ... the educational process and the social goals and practices as well. They become the bridge between the 'is', the present nature of the adult learning process, and the 'ought', and educational and social philosophy " (see 1991, pp. 77-78), and can also become the main curriculum of our adult educational programs. The communicative competence of Hong Kong's adult members needs to be fostered by the kinds of learning activities that are not limited to linguistic competence, but more importantly emphasize the ability to think critically about presuppositions, the stimulation of the challenge to participate in public affairs, the awareness of social and historical realities, and the acceptance of the rational consensus and the democratic way of life.

Third, since the people have been influenced by their traditions and by political pressure, the collective rational discourse opportunities are the most crucial issues in the modernization of China, and also probably, the most important contributions the transformation theory can offer for Hong Kong as a transition society. How to overcome conformity to pressure, the groupthink, the dominant leadership; as well as how to establish a free sphere of dialogue, have an equal opportunity to participate in decision making, establish an environment free from coercion

in order to assess arguments objectively, and how to channel accurate and complete information and alternative perspectives, will be the most crucial problems which adult education will face. Hong Kong, even with its colonial background, is the only unit in Chinese history where the criteria cited above have been exerted to a certain extent, and have the possibility of continuing to develop. The corresponding learning processes to acquire such knowledge are needed. Therefore, the establishment of group settings or collective dialogue situations for discourse through which a rational climate in the society can develop will become the content and the goal of adult educational activities, as suggested by Mezirow. Since the transformation process is a multi-interactional process according to our understanding of the transunit view of social change, such rational discourse groups or social settings will have double functions. First, to offer an environment for learning and exercise of rational dialogue where the participants are free from pressure. Second, to provide reciprocal support for new insights and changing actions in the transitional period. This kind of learning opportunity is rare in Hong Kong, but during the last few years, a few academic associations, and political unions, democratic groups, have begun to realize the importance of this kind of learning, and have formed such groups as the public forum. But because of its political character, it is not free from tension and conflict. The development of

such group learning opportunities with the educational goals of fostering communicative competence of the members of society, and creating the habit of rational dialogue among individuals, groups, and different social institutions, will be very important in the orientation of Hong Kong's adult educational development.

E Adult Learning as The Dynamic of The Transformative Process in Hong Kong's Transition Society

The prior statements make an assertion that adult learning is a sort of dynamic which advances the transformation and the reconstruction of whole societies. Hong Kong, a colonial land with feudal and familial traditions, lacks democratic experience, and is marked by the passive, utilitarian, and distorted identities of its members. Within such realities, transformative adult learning, which emphasizes the empowerment and the transformation of the members of society, offers a vision which includes a strong philosophical foundation for the value of human beings and their place in the process of humanization; a deeper understanding of the nature of human beings who are the actors and creators of human history with reflective, creative, and communicative abilities; an orientation and method of developing human competence for transforming themselves and their society; and finally, a broad meaning of adult learning which can be understood as

the dynamic of the transformative process. This learning process can occur in all human settings with new transformative actions, and new integration being its aims. With this transformative adult learning vision, Hong Kong's adult educational practices will be meaningful for the transition society with its contribution of the transformative dynamic. This adult learning approach rejects banking education, a term used by Freire, in which learners are seen as receiving objects, and offers a multidimensional and emancipatory view of learning in which the present Hong Kong adult educational practices are transformed, and adult educators are identified as participants, not directors of the transformative process. Thus, Hong Kong's transition society can be transformed by transforming. In other words, it must recognize the importance of adult learning as the transformative dynamic for building individual and common identity, fostering the critical reflective and communicative abilities of Hong Kong's people, creating the ideal environment and climate for rational discourse in Hong Kong, and promoting mutual interaction with China and with the world. Such practices can only be described by the word 'movement' which is created by the waves of transformation.

CHAPTER IV THE FUTURE VISION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN HONG KONG

From the previous assertion that was made there will undoubtedly be some criticism about the concept of 'transformative' adult learning as a search for something that is too much a utopia futuristic model. This is created by the optimistic assumption that human beings can transform themselves and their society, especially regarding Chinese history--that it can become more rational, inclusive, and human because of its reunion with Hong Kong. This would be still more difficult to believe for a utilitarian society like Hong Kong. The criticism of being too utopian a model is made against the pragmatic nature of transformative adult learning as being too abstract and that it rests on the unknown and unmeasurable results of theoretical assumption. But it is just this abstract and unmeasurable nature which makes the transformative adult learning process flexible enough to penetrate into different human settings and activities, and unleash an undetermined developmental power.

With the belief that adult learning is the dynamic of the transformative process, and recognizing the possibility of Hong Kong's transition society being a change agent with its differences and abilities of interaction, this study

attempts to offer a future model of adult educational practice in Hong Kong. There is no intention in this study of assuming a single adult educational model for all societies for all times; or to impose an absolute educational approach to fulfill our subjective pre-defined goal. The model that is offered is based on the social educational philosophies inspired by Freire and Mezirow which emphasize the empowerment of people by improving their self-identity, fostering their abilities of critical reflection, their awareness of reality, their communicative competence, and their ability to take action and participate in the transformative process of society. The model which is suggested is not a series of courses or some kind of curriculum. Rather, it is a type of 'movement' and a loose organizing of effort to transform and to create adult learning activities which will be exercised in different human settings and thereby becoming the transformative dynamic. Hopefully, through such endeavors, our society and our world can continuously become a big classroom, a learning climate, a sphere in which people are free to observe and to reflect, to act and interact, to create and to learn, to transform and to construct. The outcome of this kind of learning process is not evaluated by the quantity of data received but by the formation of a new culture which is more inclusive, rational and human in character. Humanization, then, is the ultimate goal of such a transformative learning movement.

According to this perspective, a 'movement' is the most suitable form of potential adult educational practice for Hong Kong. A movement bears several characteristics which can translate the intentions of an adult educational practice. According to C. J. Stewart, a movement is an non-institutionalized collectivity which proposes change and is large in scope. Social movements are supposed to transform perceptions of history and of society, and prescribe courses of action, as well as mobilize forces for action (1984, Chapter 1). A movement of transformative adult learning would be a collective action, a non-institutionalized collectivity, which proposes changes in our lives and the climate of society, making ourselves, our community, and our society more powerful to transform ourselves and our society. This learning movement is based on the values and beliefs of the educational philosophies that have mentioned previously, rather than on bureaucratic authority. It is this non-institutional character which will keep the collective action vital and powerful. Even de-schooling is proclaimed by some radical adult educators, but it is not the intention of this proposal of a learning movement. It is the concern that all human activities become educational; and these different kinds of learning activities become the dynamic of transformation in different human settings, whether they are in classrooms or shopping malls. The non-institutional and transformative character of this learning movement can also permit these learning activities

to overcome the boundaries of existing organizations. Because of the transformative nature of this collective action, adult learning activities will become more meaningful and new processes for learning will become a part of society. The process of this learning movement would then become a collective transformative process in Hong Kong's society.

The strategy in developing such a learning movement is first to form an initial group, which could be called a learning network. The concept of a network is well known by diffusionists such as E. Rogers, who considered it an important factor in the process of the diffusion of innovation (1983). According to this view, developing a learning movement in Hong Kong by using the networking model is relevant, for Hong Kong is a small place with a cultural characteristic that supports human interaction. And in Hong Kong there already exists flourishing communication channels, a key to introducing the learning movement in our society.

The idea behind an adult learning network is not to build an adult educational school or even to organize some special adult learning program and then label it transformative adult learning. But it is a real network initiated by a group of people, educators or non-educators, who have common values and beliefs about human beings, who

are willing to share and to participate in Hong Kong's transformative process by empowering its people through different learning opportunities, and who have a common vision and are willing to commit to the Chinese transformative process. This is not a replacement for the existing educational organizations nor for leader organizations which are felt to be more superior than others, but rather an organization of service providing an ideal discourse situation, an experimental place for new learning projects, a resource of information, and a place of encouragement and support for new actions. This is an educational network of people, not a government or political organization, whose ultimate goals are educational and developmental. It would encourage the development of communicative and emancipative learning programs and would try to translate the transformative value into different educational programs. Such a people-interacting network is not an organization or an institution but a loose built organization of an ideal discourse situation where people can be free to share experiences, to argue certain questions, to get information, to reflect on the premises of problems, and to get support for taking new actions. The commitment of people is not really to the network but rather the actual social group to which they belong: their family, their peer group, their organization, their work place. Their engagement in this adult learning network is mainly interactive, reflective, informative, supportive, and

active. This adult learning network would become a dynamic for every social group's own transformative process. It would be a very loose organization which could take the form of an information center, or whatever, with the goal of facilitating communication and collective reflection and action. It could also organize some transformative learning programs with the purpose of promoting transformative learning experiences, or serve as a model for the development of the learning movement. Such efforts could include citizen reflection groups, conscious-raising groups, or community leadership training programs, according to the inspiration of the people and with the joint efforts of different members in the network. Nevertheless, the main task of this network could be to initiate a learning movement in our society, not for revolution but for the transformation of ourselves, our community and our society. Its goal would be to diffuse the transformative values of adult learning and to create a new social climate and a new culture. It would do this by encouraging people to learn through reflection and dialogue with others and with the world and also to encourage people's learning actions, and to support the educational or social organizations which want to translate such values into their own programs or their own classrooms.

The communication rather than the instruction is the unique method of this networking. Its rather free discourse

situation permits real dialogue among the different organizations, groups, communities, and individuals who want to commit to enhancing the transformative character of human learning activities. The mass media: newspapers, magazines, television and radio, joint-functional activities, interorganizational projects, and the existing social educational programs, will be most useful to diffuse and to realize the meaning and value of adult learning. At the same time, this adult learning network is a form of construction and transformation of Hong Kong's society. The goals of such a network are not only for its own development, but for extending the transformative learning experience into the lives of Hong Kong's adult members, contributing to the transformation of Hong Kong's society, and finally, helping Hong Kong become a change agent in Chinese history.

People will question how to form such a network in the concrete reality of Hong Kong's utilitarian form of society, and how to break down the walls, or stereotypes of existing organizations. It is not an easy task, but it is possible. It can begin with some occasions for interaction such as seminars, conferences, or a series of courses with possible topics such as "the role of adult education" or "education in the Hong Kong transition society". From these opportunities of interaction and dialogue, invitations can be extended to those interested in joining in on such

sharing, reflecting, informing network. In the meantime, some information or a newsletter could be circulated among all the participants. Some joint-functional project could be started to foster the common beliefs and common commitments of the members of the network. The success of these kinds of constructive action will depend on some basic things: the attitudes of the developers of this network; the acceptance, recognition, and respect of the work of existing adult educational organizations; and the clarification that the goal of this network project is beneficial for the society as a whole, and not for the sake of its own achievement. The characteristics of adult educators described in Freire's book, Pedagogy of Oppressed are inspiring: Faith, Hope, Love, and Humble are the requirements of a real adult educator (1990, Ch. IV). This has also become also true for those at work in the process of developing an adult learning network and as well as the progress of a learning movement.

The idea of creating an adult learning network to initiate the learning movement is relevant for Hong Kong's society. First, the communicative, reflective, and active nature of the network makes it an excellent way of illustrating the value of human learning to foster people's abilities of reflection, emancipation and dialogue, as was mentioned above. Second, the network promotes the transformative learning experience which could be highly

accepted by the existing educational or social organizations, since it is supportive and constructive rather than constrained. Third, it is also the most suitable way to diffuse the ideas of the transformative power of adult learning and to enhance the transformative process. Fourth, because the main components of a network are people's common interests rather than bureaucratic construction, the network is more dynamic and flexible. Finally, it has a highly practical potential in Hong Kong's unique society where a flourishing communication network already exists, and where frequent interactions with China and other countries in the world already occur.

Building such a network could cause some problems. First, with a model of a network or movement, the professional and institutional character of adult education will practically be eliminated, and thus a stronger belief in human learning power will be required. Second, the unmeasurable outcome of this kind of practice of adult education will produce greater frustration and dissatisfaction for the educators or other people who join this movement. A stronger commitment and mutual support are required in the network. Third, the identity of adult educators will come into question. Since there will be many adult learning activities with different labels other than adult education, the new identity of the adult educator will require continued reflection based on the premise of our own

commitment to learn how to articulate our work with the people's language. This is not an easy task and it asks for a continued transformation of our own professional fields and a reviewing of our present training of adult educators. It is this challenge which will keep this developmental movement of transformative learning as our own transformative learning process enabling us to join other people in the transformative process of Hong Kong's society.

This proposal for a future practice built on principles of adult learning its will build up a kind of loose organization as a social and educational network with the goal of promoting adult learning as the transformative dynamic for our society. The network will be developed, not as its size grows but as the quantity of its adopters grows and builds up other networks or other kinds of learning organizations with the same perspectives. Through this developmental process, some transformation will be expected to occur in the existing educational organizations and in the perceptions of adult learning in the society. In this way, this adult learning network will introduce a learning movement which begins with the individual's learning process and transposes to a social learning process. In this sense, adult learning will become the concern of the people and the different educational and social organizations will focus their programs on the empowerment of learners. More and more public activities

will become educational in view and will foster the participation of people in the transformation of our society. In this process, both individual and collective transformation will occur, and the climate and culture of our society will be transformed, not into a preset model described by the authorities or the elite, but into a better way of life in which humanization is the aim. Such a new culture will emphasize the power of learning, the value of being human, the recognition of human reflective and communicative abilities, the participation of people, the emphasis on the democratic way of life in which the consensus of decision making through rational argument and discourse can be accepted. It is in this view that adult learning activities will take on their micro and macro perspectives. Adult learning will then be the transformative process of individuals and the dynamic of the transformative process of society. Only with these perspectives will adult learning become meaningful not only for particular participants in the adult learning programs, but for Hong Kong or other transition societies which will become change agents in the transformative process of the larger society.

This model of the adult learning network and the learning movement in a transition society is not only significant for Hong Kong's society, but it will also be meaningful for other transition societies, especially those

challenged by the differentiations of culture, religion, or race; anyplace where people need to learn and experience interaction and rational dialogue, and where people who are involved in such challenges need to be capable of reflecting on the opposing ideas, need to be aware of the social reality, and need to have the vision of the common mission of humanity. For this, the development of such learning movements and learning networks which focus on the value and the power of human learning will be one possible way of leading toward new social integration and the formation of a new social culture.

CONCLUSION

This study has covered an immense territory within the field of adult learning and educational practice. First, the vertical dimension of philosophical inquiry including transformative adult learning, which is a view of adult learning as a transformative process built on the views of Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow. Their views are the base on which the guidelines of the proposed practices of adult education are formulated. Second, the horizontal dimension of the complexity of Hong Kong's society with its colonial historical background, as well as its future dramatic political and social changes. Hong Kong can be understood

as a change agent according to the transunit social change theory of A. D. Smith, in which potential adult educational practices need to be significant and relevant. The transformative adult learning theory has found its position at the central point of this vertical and horizontal dimension with its human and social beliefs and its capacity to respond to the transformative needs of Hong Kong's society. The adult learning network, as suggested by the author of this study, is viewed as a learning, interacting, reflecting and acting movement created by individual participants to advance Hong Kong and Chinese societies, making them more rational, inclusive, and human. In such a movement, individuals are involved as the actors in a continuous learning process, in which they work together to create a new environment and serve as a base for the evolution of a new culture. This adult learning view and practice can include individual learning activities at different adulthood stages or social settings, as well as collective learning activities. Continual observation, reflection and action toward national or worldwide transformation is its goal. It is with understanding this perspective and practice then that we can see that adult learning is actually a dynamic in the human and social transformative process. Through learning, human beings, especially the adult members of society, become the agents of changing their own history and the history of humankind. Adult educational activities are the organized efforts to

promote the competence of human beings, and to create better discourse situations within which the transformative process can advance. Adult education then is crucial for a society, especially one in a transitional situation. It is not a supplement to the formal educational system, a set of courses, or some recreational activities. Adult education needs to become a learning movement, fostering the commitment and competence of the adult members in society, promoting individual and collective transformation, and aiming to form a new culture with a view toward humanization.

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