A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF IVAN ILLICH'S CONSTRUCT "DESCHOOLING SOCIETY" AND RELATED TERMS

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ABSTRACT

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF IVAN ILLICH'S
CONSTRUCT "DESCHOOLING SOCIETY"
AND RELATED TERMS

By

Charles Raymond Schindler

Ivan Illich's book Deschooling Society cannot be adequately criticized until the key terms of his discourse are carefully examined. The purpose of the study is to perform a philosophical analysis of Illich's construct "deschooling society" and selected related terms using the procedures Israel Scheffler presents in The Language of Education.

In addition to the analysis, a brief history of four aspects of American education which coincide with Illich's definition of "school" is outlined. The etymology of the term "deschooling society" is presented. Selected reviews of the book Deschooling Society are discussed to reveal the importance of clarification of concepts for understanding.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

(1) Illich is consistent in the use of the term "schooling" as a non-inventive stipulation throughout his book. Many of his reviewers slip back and forth from Illich's intended meaning of "school" to one or more of several common usages of the term "school."

(2) There is no logically necessary connection between the opposite of Illich's anti-programmatic concept of "school" and the proposals he offers as alternatives to schools.

(3) The concept of "deschooling society" and any specific programs issuing from it require separate evaluation.

(4) The term "deschooling society" is neither the referent of an educational definition nor an educational metaphor; it is an educational slogan.

(5) One of the conditions for evaluating the slogan "deschooling society" is the requirement of at least tentative agreement on relevant questions

of fact and concept before questions of value can be adequately entertained.

(6) Another condition for evaluating the slogan "deschooling society" is the requirement of at least a brief history of a social movement for which "deschooling society" is the rallying symbol.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Ivan Illich and Educational Criticism

> Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, section 109).

Institutional criticism like many another "sport" engages the interest and energies of large numbers of people at some times and lesser numbers at others. In our present season, institutional criticism in the United States is an overwhelmingly popular activity. This is not to say that criticism is at an all-time high. Post-Sputnik criticisms of American institutions of all kinds were certainly intense. It should not be assumed that an incidence of vigorous criticism is a result of the whim of fashion; quite the contrary. There are objective, empirically discernible factors which influence a widespread feeling that "the courts don't work" or "the law-making process doesn't work" or "the schools don't work," not the least of them being that Americans expect a lot from their

institutions. A study of these factors is beyond the scope of this work. In any case, the presence of these factors has precipitated some perceptive thinking about specific institutional ills. The recommended prescriptions range from attempts to provide "relief of symptomatic distress" to major surgery. Indeed, some critics maintain that the "patient" under examination is "dead on arrival."

Continuing with the medical analogy, "education" has recently been diagnosed as very ill indeed, suffering as it does from an overdose of "schooling." One of the diagnosticians who has proclaimed this sad news is Ivan Illich, author of Deschooling Society. Illich has been kicking around many of the ideas found in his book for quite a while, but the book is his most polished statement in one place of both his "diagnosis" and his "prescriptions."

Illich is not the first critic to suggest that schools produce what many people would view as bad consequences; Paul Goodman and Edgar Friedenberg, among many others, have been saying as much for a long time. Illich is not the first person to draw attention to the fact that

education and schooling are not synonymous. But Illich's book[1] stands a good chance of being widely read since it received extensive advanced publicity in The New York Review of Books and Saturday Review. Of course, it remains to be seen whether or not it will be an influential book.

For the sake of argument, it is assumed that Deschooling Society is an important criticism of contemporary American education. There is good evidence that this is the case from the fact that a very well-known critic of American education, John Holt, has just released Freedom and Beyond which picks up many of Illich's major points (the problems with our concepts of childhood, the evils of compulsory education, the dysfunctional nature of the consumption of credentials, the impossibility to pay for schooling for all, etc.).[2] The fact that Holt is in

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[1]For the sake of convenience, the term "Illich's book" will be used from time to time to denote Deschooling Society. The reader is not to infer that Deschooling Society is the only book Illich has written.

[2]Holt briefly mentioned these issues in an address given February 18, 1972, in Everett High School Auditorium in Lansing, Michigan. He said at that time that he discusses these points in detail in Freedom and Beyond which has subsequently been published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

agreement with Illich on a good number of issues which are presented in Deschooling Society and has published this agreement, almost guarantees rapid diffusion of the notions in Illich's book.

The Need for the Study

Critical books often are not read with the care they deserve. Many readers are quick with their judgments, taking sides early and spending the bulk of their mental energies protecting their views, instead of deferring judgment until the arguments are read through to completion. A useful procedure to employ when encountering critical literature is to read the piece initially with an accepting attitude and then reread it with the intention of questioning very carefully what is claimed. But the very nature of the words "deschooling society" as the title of a criticism is almost certain to prevent rather than encourage rational contemplation. The term "deschooling society" has great emotional force, since, on the face of it, there is the implied overthrow of an established and venerated institution. It is a very threatening pair of words for a great number of people! On the other hand,

there are people with enough of a propensity for anarchy who will relish the romantically revolutionary nature of this disestablishmentarian title. Vast numbers of readers can be expected to accept the tenets of Illich or oppose them for various not-so-well-thought-out justifications. In other words, the title of the book simply oozes those characteristics which can turn debate about the issues into the expression of gut reactions rather than reasoned discourse.

One of the tasks which philosophers set for themselves is to determine what questions are worthy of pursuit. Many philosophers consider the questioning of questions appropriate and fruitful. In a similar manner the criticizing of criticisms holds promise as well. The main purpose of this study is to examine the concept "deschooling society" as distinct from the issues discussed in the book Deschooling Society.

The justification for a conceptual analysis of the construct "deschooling society" should be readily apparent. If Illich's alternatives to schooling issue from educational concerns and not merely economic or political concerns, it might be fruitful to ask and attempt to answer some prior questions in order to establish the adequacy or

inadequacy of his concept, or concepts, or "deschooling." Questions about the intent of the terminology are logically prior to questions which attempt to evaluate the validity of the alternatives to schooling which Illich proposes. "Deschooling society" is a notion which has great "bewitching" potential and therefore should be examined with microscopic scrutiny.

Scope of the Study

It is considered appropriate in a study of this type to carefully lay out the scope of the work. One way to do this is to explicitly state what is not within the range of the study. The following negations are included to comply with this scholarly canon and may even be of some benefit to the reader:

(1) The study is not concerned with the common usage of "deschooling society." As this is written, "deschooling society" is a term which is not widely used, though for good or ill, stands a good chance of becoming widely used/misused/abused. Therefore, in this study the term "deschooling society"

will be considered for the purposes of analysis primarily a general educational term as used by Ivan Illich in a single source (the book Deschooling Society).

(2) The study is not concerned with the task of evaluating the alternatives to schooling which Illich presents in his book.

(3) The study is not concerned with affirming or denying the empirical claims made by Illich in Deschooling Society. The data Illich uses are are assumed to be correct for the purposes of this exposition.

(4) The study is not concerned with making connections between or pointing out discrepancies between Illich's theories and the practices employed in any of the programs under Illich's direction at the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. CIDOC need not be made accountable for putting Illich's ideas into practice or providing working models for examination. In the words of a CIDOC spokesman, "We are

concerned principally with intellection here, with examining ideas. We choose to leave the responsibility for carrying out these ideas to others."[3]

It goes without saying that the study is not concerned with many other things and that this list is not exhaustive but merely suggestive.

What the study is concerned with is the careful and scholarly delineation of some distinctions about the use of a piece of language for the purpose of determining whether the container "deschooling" has any cognitive content and if so what the nature of the content is.

A good hard examination of Illich's use or uses of the term "deschooling society" unavoidably involves the analysis of several related terms. It is necessary to include in this study a look at Illich's concept of "schooling" and "society."

It may be altogether too much to expect that very many people will agree that clear thinking about a linguistic entity will be of any lasting benefit to the intelligent discussion of issues related to and associated

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[3]Jack Fields, rev. of Everett Reimer, School Is Dead (Doubleday), Saturday Review, January 15, 1972, p. 64.

with that linguistic entity. Messing about with how one uses words has never been popularly regarded as germane to the "real" issues. Consequently, the potential uses of this study are limited in the sense that few educators are likely to value the activities under discussion. In another sense the analytical activities employed are not only useful in the case of this specific examination of an educational term, but also can clarify any number of other educational terms of current interest. The study is modestly offered to those who share with the writer the perverse notion that linguistic philosophy is capable of revealing real conceptual differences and is not merely an indulgence in semantic polemics.

The Methods Used

The problem is to conduct an examination of the way in which Illich uses key terms in his book by using the tools of contemporary language analysis in an open-ended fashion to find whatever is there to be found. The tactics employed in the analysis of "deschooling society" are primarily those activities suggested by Israel Scheffler in The Language of Education. This analysis

takes place in Chapter 4. It is accompanied by three complementary investigations which place the major concern of this piece in perspective.

A highly selective history of schooling in the United States is offered as background to the study. The intention of Chapter 2 is to discuss the origins of "school" as Illich uses the term in the American experience. This historical sketch contains no new insights about institutional mythology or the diffusion of the values necessary for the popular acceptance of schooling as a goal. The reader already familiar with American educational history may choose to skip it since it merely traces the chronological development of specific aspects of an institution.

Chapter 3 offers a brief history of the published use of the locution "deschooling society" and is presented as additional background information. Many of the ideas concerning the difficulties of the compulsory nature of schooling have been around for some time. In the past few years John Holt, Ivan Illich, and others have begun to suggest the abolition of certain practices in public schools, but the coinage of the term "deschooling" for

the disestablishment of many aspects of school practices is less than three years old. A look at the escalation of the rhetoric in educational criticism in scholarly journals and the popular press is of considerable interest to the analysis of "deschooling society."

The need for an analysis of the type done in Chapter 4 is most effectively established by attending to an examination of selected reviews of Deschooling Society which reflect different reactions to Illich's main points. The final chapter presents comments made in critical reviews and shows that at least a few normally rational men have difficulty dealing with Illich's book in a normally rational way.

The problems are set. Embedded in the tedium of scholarly research are moments of satisfaction which are the result of discovering something of interest. It is hoped that the reading of this document is an activity free of tedium and abundant in at least some of the satisfaction the writer felt in the course of conducting the investigation.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF FACTORS IN ILLICH'S CONCEPT OF "SCHOOL"

The history of attempts to deschool society must wait on clarification of what things are going to count as such attempts. Perhaps there are justifications for calling Philadelphia's Parkway Program or any of several other educational variations attempts to deschool. Interesting as such speculations might be, it has little to offer as a background to the analysis of the construct "deschooling society" as put forth by Ivan Illich; it is not an acceptable point of initiation.

The antecedents which affected the thinking of Illich and consequently are of importance to this study are involved with schools, not with alternatives to schools. This brief history points to origins in the American experience of the elements which Illich stipulates as his understanding of what "school" is. Illich defines "school" as the "age-specific, teacher-related

process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum."[1]

The selected events are necessarily arbitrary in reference to general historical works. It is foolish to suggest that compulsory schooling absolutely began with the passage of a given Massachusetts law in 1852, for instance; the event merely serves as record of a concern for a need or set of needs at that time. The events selected, while arbitrary, coincide with conventionally accepted landmarks in the development of the institution "school" on American soil.

Age Specificity

The arrangement of sequential studies ranging from the basic to the advanced is one of the standard ways to order a curriculum. The method of proceeding from the easy to the more difficult suggests the age-specific characteristic of schooling as practiced in recent centuries. Age-graded school organization was already a standard

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[1]Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 25-26.

method of operation by the time the Europeans came to colonize the Atlantic coast.

In contrast to segregation by age and courses with prerequisites as presently found in most American schools, schools in medieval Europe permitted a random selection of any and all of the seven liberal arts in no particular sequence.[2] As Ariés' chapter title "Medieval Scholars Young and Old" suggests, boys aged eight to twenty might be engaged in studies together under a master.

> This mingling of the ages surprises us today if it does not actually shock us: but at the time people were so indifferent to it that they did not notice it, as is the way with very familiar things. How could they be expected to notice the mixing of the ages when they were so indifferent to the very fact of age?
>
> As soon as he started going to school, the child immediately entered the world of adults. This confusion, so innocent that it went unnoticed, was one of the most characteristic features of medieval society and one of the most enduring features too. At the end of the Middle Ages, we can make out the first signs of a contrary evolution which would result in our present very conscious differentiation of the ages.[3]

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[2]Philippe Ariés, Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 148-150.

[3]Ariés, p. 54.

The American school has reflected this widespread consciousness of distinct ages throughout its development. The curricular format largely determined the groupings by age, quite roughly at first, becoming increasingly refined in more recent years. For example, a New England youth of the middle seventeenth century would attend a Latin school at a relatively early age.

> Generally, it was the upper-class children from educated families that attended Latin schools as soon as they had learned sufficient rudiments from the dame schools.
>
> Now we can understand why pupils often attended a Latin school at the age of eight or nine. Within a few short years, they had sufficient exposure to the classical languages to meet the simple entrance requirements of the colleges. This accounts for the fact that it was not uncommon for boys of twelve to be enrolled at Harvard and Yale.[4]

Cubberley's Public Education in the United States traces the evolution into graded classes starting with divisions (primary, intermediate, grammar, high, etc.) being primarily determined by local building arrangements. ". . . promotion from one division to another commonly was

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[4]William M. French, America's Educational Tradition: An Interpretive History (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964), p. 25.

based on the passing of formal examinations . . . ."[5] Many schools in the cities were subsequently divided into classes under a master with assistant teachers called "ushers."

> The third and final step in the evolution of the graded system was to build larger schools with smaller classrooms, or to subdivide the larger rooms; change the separate and independent and duplicate school on each floor, which had been the common plan for so long, into parts of one school building organization; sort and grade the pupils, and outline the instruction by years; and the class system was at hand. This process began here and there in the decade of the thirties, and was largely accomplished in the cities by 1860. In the smaller places it came later, but usually was accomplished by or before 1875. In the rural districts class grading was not introduced until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[6]

Horace Mann was highly influential in the spread of an age-grading plan in American schools. His Seventh Annual Report of 1843 contains these remarks:

> The first element of superiority in a Prussian school and one whose influence extends throughout the whole subsequent course of instruction, consists in the proper classification of the scholars. In all places

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[5]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1934), p. 309.

[6]Cubberley, p. 311.

> where the numbers are sufficiently large to allow it the children are divided according to ages and attainments, and a single teacher has charge only of a single class or of as small a number of classes as is practicable.[7]

John D. Philbrick, principal of the Quincy School in Boston, convinced his school board to construct the first American school building designed specifically to accommodate graded classes in 1847.[8]

While there has been a vigorous criticism of age-graded classes during the past decade and some effort to move away from it, the sorting of school children by age is still the predominating class organization.

Teacher Relatedness

The element of teacher relatedness in Illich's concept of schooling can be regarded as being reflected in the Massachusetts School Law of 1647, commonly known as the Old Deluder Satan Act. Each township of fifty householders was required to ". . . appoint one within

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[7] Edward A. Krug, Salient Dates in American Education (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 73.

[8] Krug, p. 72.

their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general . . ."[9] The law further required townships of one hundred householders to set up a grammar school. Both of these provisions of the law were enforced by fines, and many towns found it more convenient to pay the fines than to obey the order.

There was a previous enactment in 1642 which made no mention of a teacher being required. This earlier law made education a matter of public policy by requiring parents under penalty of fine to see to the education of their children, ". . . especially of their ability to read & understand the principles of religion & the capitall lawes of this country . . ."[10]

The law of 1647, however, established the requirement to provide a teacher even though the parents were officially the parties responsible for the educating. The experience with the earlier laissez-faire approach showed

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[9]Krug, p. 10.

[10]Carl H. Gross and Charles C. Chandler, The History of American Education Through Readings (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964), p. 5.

that the parents could not be depended upon to do their duty; hence it was deemed necessary to provide for the appointment of a teacher.[11] It should be borne in mind that New England settlers of the period and Americans of later periods as well were adapting forms developed in Europe and not creating a conception of a teaching function ex nihilum.

The role of the teacher as a central part of schooling in America is too familiar to require elaboration.[12]

Requirement of Full-Time Attendance

A person who is a "full-time" student is generally understood to be mainly occupied as a student; going to school is his primary occupation. "Full-time" attendance

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[11] Samuel Eliot Morison, The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 69.

[12] To say that the teacher is part and parcel of American schooling is not to be interpreted as an assertion that there is a concensus concerning the nature of the teacher's role in the school. One aspect is the teacher dominant/student submissive relationship which Illich regards as virtually universal in American practice.

ought not suggest that a student's every waking hour is expended in the enterprise of learning. It means that some substantial amount of time during the day and throughout the year is spent attending school.

A small proportion of young people have been full-time students in this sense since the earliest years of colonization. One of the major complaints which Illich voices is the requirement of one sort or other that virtually all children must for some period of time be engaged as full-time students.

The first law to enforce full-time school attendance is a Massachusetts statute dating from 1852. It states:

> Every person who shall have any child under his control, between the ages of eight and fourteen years, shall send such a child to some public school within the town or city in which he resides, during at least twelve weeks, if the public schools within that town or city shall be so long kept, in each and every year during which such child shall be under his control, six weeks of which shall be consecutive.[13]

Failure to comply held the penalty of $20. It is worth noting that there were alternatives to public school

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[13]Massachusetts, General Laws, chapter 240 (1852).

attendance contained within the law. A parent was not a violator if his child was "otherwise furnished with the means of education for a like period of time" or if he had "already acquired branches of learning which are taught in common schools."[14] Consequently, private schools or home teaching were options, just as they are to a limited degree in various current compulsory school laws.[15]

Twenty-seven states and territories had compulsory school attendance laws by 1890. By 1918 all states had some form of compulsory attendance law, a situation which prevailed until South Carolina repealed its law in 1955.[16]

In addition to affecting the lives of more and more children through the years, these laws also required that greater lengths of time be spent in school by the youngsters. The average length of the school term was 132 days in 1870, 144 days in 1900, and 157 days in

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[14] Krug, pp. 77-78.

[15] A legal provision is far different from a genuine option. Regardless how the attendance laws are written, poor people seldom get the opportunity to make use of private schooling or self-teaching; many Americans past and present are dependent on public schools in order to be within the law.

[16] Krug, p. 78.

1915.[17] The number of years children were required to attend or the minimum school leaving age allowed (depending on the wording of the laws) crept upwards as well. Only a handful of states require school attendance past the age of 16 at present.[18]

Mandatory attendance laws were advocated for a number of reasons. Perkinson asserts that the rise of urbanism following the Civil War was a precipitating factor in the increased legislation requiring school attendance.

The cities not only had to contend with rural influx from America's farmlands but also had to absorb many dislocated farmers from Europe as well. With the disappearance of the unsold farm lands in the 1880's and the low income which farming was then producing, the immigrants had no choice but to locate primarily in the cities.

> More than five sixths of the Russian-born immigrants--mostly Jews--settled in urban communities. Three quarters of the

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[17] Henry J. Perkinson, The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education, 1865-1965 (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 70.

[18] Krug, p. 78.

> immigrants from Italy and Hungary congregated in the cities. There, these "new immigrants" joined and were joined by the Irish, who, as Mawdlyn Jones has noted, "from the earliest had showed a marked aversion to a rural existence in America." By 1890 a fourth of the people of Philadelphia and a third of the Bostonians were of alien birth. In greater New York in 1900 four out of five residents were foreign born, or of foreign parentage. In Chicago, the foreign-born exceeded the city's total population of a decade earlier. By 1910 there were well over nine and one-half million foreign born in American cities, together with over twelve million natives of foreign or mixed parentage.[19]

Compulsory schooling in the cities was seriously pursued to Americanize the foreigners' offspring. The other major justifications have been involved with attempts to protect the children's right to an education, the campaign against child labor, and some form of argument that there is a positive relationship between schooling and the welfare of society or the state.[20] Full-time attendance requirements continue to exert an influence on the characteristics of the schools, either as conceived generally or as defined by Illich.

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[19] Perkinson, p. 64.

[20] Krug, p. 79.

Obligatory Curriculum

The curricular offerings of American schools have exhibited great diversity and have sprung from diverse purposes. A curriculum intended to implement the children's spiritual salvation has reason to emphasize different things than a curriculum designed primarily to implement the children's ultimate acceptance by industrial employers in a society of high technology. Of course, this does not suggest that there would be no common elements in any two curricula regardless of the purposes emphasized. In this example, for instance, a college preparatory curriculum might be deemed appropriate for enhancing a child's worth both in the eyes of a deity and in the eyes of a personnel officer at DuPont. Teaching basic literacy is one example of a standard ingredient for almost any curriculum in elementary schools. Cubberley lists the three R's plus "good behavior" as the major stock of elementary curricula.

> Many of the early school laws enacted by the different States provided for instruction in certain fixed elementary-school subjects. Massachusetts, for example, which had required instruction in reading and writing in the law of 1647, added orthography, good behavior, the English language and grammar, and arithmetic to the required list in 1789,

> geography in 1826, and history of the United States in 1857. New Hampshire and Maine followed the Massachusetts law of 1789. Vermont specified reading, writing, and arithmetic as required subjects in its law of 1797, and added spelling, geography, grammar, United States history, and good behavior in 1827. New England people, moving westward into the Northwest Territory, carried these school requirements and the early textbooks with them, and the early schools set up in Ohio and Michigan were copies of those in the old home.[21]

A school did not and does not have to operate under the force of standardizing laws to be considered a purveyor of an obligatory curriculum, however.

It is neither necessary nor possible to enumerate here the many curricular plans and programs which have been used in American schools. What needs pointing out is that regardless of what kind of curriculum has been employed there has usually been some sense in which it was obligatory. Submitting oneself to a master or matriculating in a school has traditionally involved "doing" a required curriculum. Often the choice has been only that of enrolling or deciding not to enroll.

Increasingly some student choice became available through the elective system which filtered down from

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[21] Cubberley, p. 300.

the free elective program of Charles W. Eliot at Harvard.

> In 1869 Harvard College, under President Eliot, adopted the elective system. In many institutions required courses were almost eliminated. The rapid increase in knowledge made some kind of election both desirable and necessary. Free election was defended on the grounds that the student was the best judge of his own educational needs. Let the student pursue those studies in which he had an interest.[22]

Even with some elective system there is some sense in which there remains an obligatory curriculum; if a student wishes to receive "credit" or receive a diploma he must do the bidding of those teachers whose classes he elects.

It is the combination of obligatory curriculum (even when laced with a generous amount of student selection) in combination with required attendance which so drastically reduces the range of choices for the student.

The history provides a view of the social conditions and the intended purposes of the four elements Illich uses to define "school." But Illich and other advocates of alternatives to schools are not concerned with intentions of the past. The call to "deschool

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[22]Gross and Chandler, p. 205.

society" is presumably based on the belief that schools are dysfunctional at the present, regardless of how well or how poorly schools "worked" in one sense or other in days gone by.

Historical perspective, whether provided by this brief review of events or some other historical essay may or may not be relevant to Illich's definition of "school" and concept of "deschooling." Only by attending to the linguistic analysis of Illich's key terminology is it possible to determine to what extent, if any, history bears on the assertions and proposals Illich makes.

Chapter 3

ETYMOLOGY OF "DESCHOOLING SOCIETY"

Concepts and Word Usage

Language is a most important tool for thinking. What a man is capable of thinking is in large measure limited by the words available to him. Since a user of the English language is not constrained by a legislature of language such as the Académie française, he is free to mint new words or combine existing words to aid his thinking if he pleases. But unless this hypothetical English-speaking thinker is a hermit, or does not wish to share his thoughts with other English users, he is going to have to be very careful about the manner in which he uses his invention of words. Care in communication is more important in the case of new terminology which uses pre-existing words in a new way than in the case of a pure invention which has no previous denotative or connotative meanings which can confuse the transmission of the concept.

More needs to be said about prior usage as a criterion for criticism of a particular usage of a word, and

Chapter 4 attends to this need. It is enough to say at this point that the term "deschooling society" is a variation and combination of words one encounters daily. The words "schooling" and "society" are rich with connotations as well as fairly specific denotations as one ordinarily uses them. The communication difficulties are many as a review of selected articles on Deschooling Society in Chapter 5 will indicate.

The purpose of the present discussion is to provide some background concerning the origin of the term "deschooling society" and the concepts from which it emanates.

What's in a Name?

Everett Reimer and Ivan Illich share common beliefs about schooling and the flaws of schooling. Discussion with a number of "humanistic" educational critics has served as the catalyst in their thinking. It is impossible to credit or blame either man for the ideas they express in their books which indict schools--the ideas are a result of interaction. In the introduction of Deschooling Society Illich writes:

> I owe my interest in public education to Everett Reimer. Until we first met in Puerto Rico in 1958, I had never questioned the value of extending obligatory schooling to all people. Together we have come to realize that for most men the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school.[1]

Reimer also draws attention to the dialogue which produced the ideas. In the forward to School Is Dead he states:

> This book is the result of a conversation with Ivan Illich that has continued for fifteen years. We have talked of many things, but increasingly about education and school and, eventually, about alternatives to schools.[2]

Hence, it is not surprising that Deschooling Society and School Is Dead have a great deal in common.

Illich defines school as "the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum."[3] Reimer defines schools as "institutions that require the attendance of specific age

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[1]Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. xix.

[2]Everett Reimer, School Is Dead: Alternatives in Education (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1971), p. 9.

[3]Illich, Deschooling Society, pp. 25-26.

groups in teacher-supervised classrooms for the study of graded curriculums."[4]

They both contend that schooling is impossibly expensive. Illich asserts that "Equal obligatory schooling must be recognized as at least economically unfeasible."[5] Reimer in similar fashion proclaims that "No country in the world can afford the education its people want in the form of schooling."[6]

They both announce the existence of a hidden curriculum which is the ritual of schooling. Illich makes the following statements: "My analysis of the hidden curriculum of school should make it evident that public education would profit from the deschooling of society . . . ."[7] "We are rather concerned to call attention to the fact that the ceremonial or ritual of schooling itself constitutes such a hidden curriculum."[8] Reimer offers these remarks about a hidden curriculum: "Schools have a

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[4]Reimer, p. 51.

[5]Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 9.

[6]Reimer, p. 22.

[7]Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 2.

[8]Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 32.

hidden curriculum much more important than the one they purport to teach. The purpose of this hidden curriculum is to propagate the social myths . . . ."[9] "It [school] celebrates the rituals that reconcile the myths and realities of a society that merely pretends to be for all."[10]

What are the myths of the hidden curriculum? Illich enumerates them in this way:

> Everywhere the hidden curriculum of schooling initiates the citizen to the myth that bureaucracies guided by scientific knowledge are efficient and benevolent. Everywhere this same curriculum instills in the pupil the myth that increased production will provide a better life. And everywhere it develops the habit of self-defeating consumption of services and alienating production, and tolerance for institutional rankings. The hidden curriculum of school does all this in spite of contrary efforts undertaken by teachers and no matter what ideology prevails.[11]

Reimer conceives the myths slightly differently as the myth of equal opportunity, the myth of freedom, the myth of progress, and the myth of efficiency:

> There is equal opportunity, according to the myths of modern society, for every

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[9] Reimer, p. 6.

[10] Reimer, p. 85.

[11] Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 74.

> man to achieve whatever his ambitions dictate and his abilities permit.[12]
>
> The ideology of freedom is that all men have certain inalienable rights: the right of assembly, the right of petition for redress of grievances, the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, the right to counsel, the right not to bear witness against themselves--i.e., to be free from torture in the first, second, or third degree. The facts are that all over the world the flickering lights of freedom are going out.[13]
>
> The myth of progress is that our situation is improving and will continue to improve, without any demonstrable limits upon the degree or scope of future improvements.[14]
>
> The myth of efficiency is that modern man has solved his production problems by means of efficient organization, that other men can do likewise, and that most of man's remaining problems can be solved by a similar approach.[15]

Not only do the two books lay out the same descriptions of the pathologies of schooling but their prescriptions are also similar. Illich proposes four networks in his system of learning webs which can serve as true educational tools accessible to all: Reference Services to

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[12] Reimer, pp. 61-62.

[13] Reimer, p. 64.

[14] Reimer, p. 66.

[15] Reimer, p. 68.

Educational Objects, Skill Exchanges, Peer Matching, and Reference Services to Educators-at-Large. Reimer describes identical remedies but refers to the first of Illich's classifications as "networks of things" and lumps the other three categories under "networks of people."

The major difference between Illich's book and Reimer's book is packaging. Deschooling Society suggests "a call for institutional revolution" (the subtitle of Illich's Celebration of Awareness) while School Is Dead seems to be a simple assertion that appears to be very difficult to document. But the packaging resides in more than the titles of the books. It includes the whole style of discourse. By employing the handle "deschooling society" throughout his book, Illich seems to be suggesting a plan while Reimer steadfastly avoids the term "deschooling society" in his presentation and seems to be enumerating random gripes and a few palliatives. It appears that the term "deschooling society" has considerable impact in Illich's presentation.

Consequently, there is bound to be a vast difference in the popularity of the two books. However, this cannot be attributed solely to the effect of the packaging. Other factors are likely causes for Illich's superior

popularity. Timing is one such factor. Deschooling Society was marketed first in May of 1971; School Is Dead was not available until January of 1972. In a culture which places a premium on being first, School Is Dead is dead; it has the appearance of a rehash of someone else's ideas even though it is not.

Another profound influence is the fact that Deschooling Society received vast pre-publication publicity in The New York Review of Books and Saturday Review. Illich published in The New York Review of Books three articles July 2, 1970, December 3, 1970, and January 7, 1971, which became chapters 1, 3, and 6 respectively of Deschooling Society. The June 19, 1971, issue of Saturday Review not only had an article by Illich which is a restatement of the ideas in Deschooling Society but also gave a full cover announcement of it. As a result, a larger number of periodicals have seen fit to publish reviews of Deschooling Society than reviews of School Is Dead.

The point remains: regardless of the differences in the numbers reached by Deschooling Society and School Is Dead, those who read both books will find the impact of the former to be greater than the impact of the latter.

It is the locution "deschooling society," the fancier package, which is a major component of that additional impact. What's in a name? Lots.

Foreshadows of "Deschooling" in Spanish

Seldom does an etymologist have the opportunity to very accurately pinpoint in time the original utterance of a word. It is not possible in the case of "deschooling society" to establish that Ivan Illich is the first man to use the term and that he did so on such-and-such a day under thus-and-so conditions. It is very likely that Illich himself is unaware of his first use of the label in informal conversation or personal writings and it is beyond the realm of possible research to be absolutely sure that Illich is the first to utter the words "deschooling society." However, it is reasonably clear that he is the first to use the expression in the context of contemporary educational criticism. If Illich cannot be credited with the paternity of the locution with absolute certainty, he is nevertheless undeniably willing to be responsible for it.

Actually, Illich came very close to using a form of "deschooling" in Spanish before he did in English. In a graduation address delivered June 6, 1969, at commencement exercises at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras, Illich said the following:

> DESESCOLARIZAR LA EDUCACIÓN
>
> Considero que se está incubando una radical desescolarización de la educación. La necesidad de que ello ocurra proviene de tres fuentes: el Tercer Mundo, los ghettos y las universidades, En el Tercer Mundo, la escolarización de la sociedad discrimina contra las mayorías y desalienta al autodidacta . . . . La desescolarización de la educación y la desmitologización de la escuela hay que entenderlas mediante una analogía con la secularización del cristianismo y la desmitologización de la Iglesia.[16]

The terms "desescolarizar" and "desescolarización" are coinages, not Spanish words which can be found in a lexicon.[17] Again, it is impossible to know whether Illich

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[16]Ivan Illich, "La metamorfosis de la escuela," Convergence, November, 1970, pp. 6-7.

[17]The writer conferred with Ms. Helen Parker, a doctoral candidate in the Romance Language Department at Michigan State University, for clarification of the Spanish version of the speech. Although the Spanish language lends itself to the coining of words from existing forms there are limits to how it can be done. There is no gerund form of "school" in Spanish which is equivalent to the English word "schooling." Hence, the root of

coined these two words for the address or whether he had encountered them at some previous time.

Two English translations of the address which have been published do not translate either of these words directly and literally as "deschooling." The English translation available by request from Convergence is prepared by CIDOC and is so full of errors (whole paragraphs and parts of sentences are missing throughout) that it fails to inspire confidence. Only part of the second sentence and none of the third sentence quoted are in the CIDOC translation. The address is included in English as one of the essays in Illich's Celebration of Awareness. The heading is eliminated and the three sentences corresponding to the Spanish quotation appear as:

> A divorce of education from schooling is, in my opinion, already on the way, speeded by three forces: the Third World, the ghettos, and the universities. Among the nations of the Third World, schooling discriminates against the majority and disqualifies the self-educated . . . . The divorce of

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"desescolarización" means "scholar" and not "school"; it would literally mean "descholarization" or "descholasticization" rather than "deschooling." "Desescolarización" is not in the most authoritative and recent Spanish dictionaries Helen Parker consulted.

> education from schooling has its model in the demythologizing of the Church.[18]

Many of the themes in the address make an appearance in the book, Deschooling Society. Whatever the reason or reasons, the basic ideas which are in the book are expressed without the banner "deschooling" in the speech Illich delivered in the spring of 1969. "Divorce of education from schooling" is as close as he got to the Spanish expression which appears to say "deschooling of education."

"Deschooling Society" Appears in English

The first mention of "de-schooling" (it was hyphenated prior to the editing at Harper & Row for the book Deschooling Society) is in "Why We Must Abolish Schooling" in the July 2, 1970, issue of The New York Review of Books.[19] The October 17, 1970, issue of Saturday Review

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[18] Ivan Illich, Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1970), pp. 120-121.

[19] Ivan Illich, "Why We Must Abolish Schooling," The New York Review of Books, July 2, 1970, pp. 9-15. There was this brief note on page 2: "The article appearing in this issue was drawn from the Beecher Lectures which he gave at the Yale University Divinity School this spring."

introduces "deschooling of society" to a much larger audience.[20] A few articles in periodicals continue to print a hyphenated "de-schooling" while Illich now uses the non-hyphenated form.[21]

The etymology of "deschooling society" is not nearly as important as the subsequent uses to which the words are put. Illich has chosen to use the term "deschooling society"; it remains to be shown whether or not the term is helpful in communicating the notion or notions which he intends it to represent.

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[20]Ivan Illich, "The False Ideology of Schooling," Saturday Review, October 17, 1970, pp. 58, 68.

[21]Trevor Beeson's article on page 1341 of the November 17, 1971, Christian Century is entitled "Dangers in De-Schooling" and refers to Illich's book in the copy as "De-schooling Society." The typesetter of Edward R. Beauchamp's brief review on page 2080 of the June 15, 1971, edition of Library Journal uses the form "De-Schooling Society." Jack Fields' article "Sour Apples in Eden: Ivan Illich at Work" which was published on pages 107-115 of the September 15, 1971, issue of Teachers College Record uses a hyphenated form of "de-schooling."

Chapter 4

AN ANALYSIS OF ILLICH'S CONSTRUCT "DESCHOOLING SOCIETY"

The major task, that of analyzing the key terms in Deschooling Society, remains to be accomplished. The procedure is simply to examine the elements of "deschooling society" as separate terms and then to look at "deschooling society" as a unit. Specifically, the terms "schooling," "deschooling," "society," and "deschooling society" will now undergo the scrutiny called for in the first chapter.

Schooling

The analysis of the construct "deschooling" is in large part dependent upon the term "schooling." Anyone who advocates "deschooling" certainly ought to have a more or less clear notion of what he means by schooling. Illich does. He spells out clearly what he intends by the term "schooling" in Chapter 2 of Deschooling Society. He

wants to make a distinction between education and schooling and does so by offering the following definition of schooling: "For this purpose I shall define 'school' as the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum."[1]

The general strategies of analysis employed by Israel Scheffler in The Language of Education are most useful here. First it can be established that Illich's definition of "school" is a general definition as opposed to a technical or scientific definition. That is, it is presented not as an example of "technical statements interwoven with special scientific research and for theoretical purposes, but rather as general communications in a practical context."[2] Even if one were to argue that Illich's definition of "school" ought to be regarded as a technical definition for whatever reason, the context in which it is used would, according to Scheffler, require it to be reclassified as a general definition.

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[1]Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 25-26.

[2]Israel Scheffler, The Language of Education (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1960), p. 12.

> When such definitions are taken out of the context of professional research activity, however, and embodied in statements addressed to the public or to teachers or professionals of another sort, often in an institutional setting, they must be judged in this role as other definitions are judged in the same capacity. To say more exactly how various sorts of definition in this capacity are appropriately judged forms our present problem. We shall refer to them as "general definitions."[3]

Scheffler categorizes general definitions into three types, descriptive, stipulative, and programmatic. Briefly, descriptive definitions purport to explain terms by providing an account of their prior usage, while stipulative definitions intend merely to facilitate discourse.[4] A stipulative definition is simply a statement of the type "When I say such and such for the duration of this book, speech, or whatever, I mean . . . ." A stipulative definition is employed for consistency and convenience of communication. A descriptive definition attempts to explain by referring to how a term is commonly used. A descriptive definition is a statement of the type "When I say such and such for the duration of this book, speech,

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[3]Scheffler, p. 13.

[4]Scheffler, p. 18.

or whatever, I mean it the way most people use the term, which is . . . ."

Far more difficult to express succinctly is Scheffler's category of programmatic definitions. A programmatic definition has a moral component and suggests that certain elements of the thing defined ought or ought not to be as defined. The following example of the term "profession" makes this easier to understand:

> Roughly speaking, some terms (e.g., the term "profession") single out things toward which social practice is oriented in a certain way. (This orientation may be supposed expressible by a general principle of action: Example: "All professions ought to receive privileged treatment.") To propose a definition that now assigns such a term to some new thing may in context be a way of conveying that this new thing ought to be accorded the sort of practical treatment given to things hitherto referred to by the term in question. (E.g., to define "profession" so as to apply to a new occupation may be a way of conveying that this new occupation ought to be accorded privileged treatment.) Similarly, to propose a definition that withholds such a term from an object to which it has hitherto applied may be a way of conveying that the object in question ought no longer to be treated as the things referred to by the given term have been treated. Even if a definition is proposed that assigns the term just exactly to the objects to which it has hitherto applied and to no others, the point at stake may be to defend the propriety of the current practical orientation to such objects and to no others, rather than (or as well as) to mirror predefinitional usage.

> Where a definition purports to do either of these three things, it is acting as an expression of a practical program and we shall call it "programmatic."[5]

It should be noted here that the differences between descriptive, stipulative, and programmatic definitions are not formal but contextual. For instance, the same utterance could be stipulative in one circumstance and programmatic in another circumstance.[6] This very rough sketch is adequate as a review of Scheffler's treatment of definitions but may be entirely too rough and sketchy for those who are not familiar with Scheffler's work, in which case a reading of "Definitions in Education" in The Language of Education is recommended.

While on the face of it such labeling of labels appears to be a compounding of pedantic distinctions or an example of definitional overkill, it is in fact quite useful in critically appraising what issues are at stake.

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[5] Scheffler, p. 19.

[6] A strong argument can be made that all stipulative definitions are programmatic since to stipulate one set of features rather than others involves making a choice based on something. For the present discussion the conflict is of no importance. Illich's definition of "school" will be seen to be both stipulative and programmatic; it is of little consequence whether or not all stipulative definitions are necessarily programmatic.

Without this taxonomic aid one is tempted to do Illich's definition of "schooling" an injustice. One can evaluate Illich's definition by comparing it with model cases, contrary cases, related cases, and borderline cases, an analytic device suggested by John Wilson in Thinking with Concepts.[7] In such a comparison one discoveres all sorts of entities commonly called "schools" which are lacking one or more of the elements Illich enumerates. Colleges are not age-specific, correspondence schools do not require full-time attendance, etc. In other words, objection to the definition can be made because it doesn't include a number of types of "schools" and therefore is faulty because it is not comprehensive. But according to Scheffler's schema, the definition need not appeal to common usage and as such is not required to be comprehensive in scope. It can be classified as simply a stipulative definition of the non-inventive variety.[8]

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[7]John Wilson, Thinking with Concepts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 28-31.

[8]As an operational procedure Illich's stipulation is accepted without being subjected to critical evaluation; Illich's definition of "school" is regarded as one of the given fixed points in the discussion. This does not mean that the writer necessarily condones Illich's definition. Illich's "school" is open to critical examination. An attempt to assess the warrant for Illich's stipulation is an enterprise worthy of a separate study.

However, if Illich's definition of "school" is regarded as a stipulative definition, the remarks Illich makes about schools always ought to refer to a process which is age-specific, teacher-related, and requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum. Careful reading of Deschooling Society indicates that Illich has met this requirement. Those who wish to find fault with Illich's notion of "deschooling society" have to bear the burden of always keeping in mind his stated understanding of what "school" is. For a reader to inadvertently smuggle in other conceptions of school is to be unfair. There are indeed problems with the concept "deschooling society" but they cannot be properly understood by carping about Illich's definition of "school."

A digression is in order here. The purpose of this part of the analysis is to illuminate Illich's concept of "schooling" and the tactic selected is that of accepting the definition as offered and observing how the definition functions. Since there is no way the readers of Deschooling Society can be forced to always regard "schooling" as Illich intends, problems of communication are nearly assured. Consequently, a different tactic, that of taking issue with Illich's definition, has some potential for

aiding one's understanding of Illich's intended meaning. In a sense, carping about Illich's definition of "school" could have the net effect of clarifying Illich's use of "school."

But to return to the original argument, it can be seen that by examining the use to which the term "schooling" is put, Illich's definition of "schooling" could also be regarded as a form of programmatic definition. The whole point of Illich's book is to say that education ought not be age-specific, teacher-related, obligatory, and so on. According to Illich, a good education is the antithesis of each and all of the elements with which he identifies "schooling." Very well, doesn't this allow one to call his definition anti-programmatic or counter-programmtic or something of the sort? Instead of providing a positive educational definition, Illich offers us a negative one. His definition of "school" combines a number of aspects of education which he dislikes/takes issue with/regards as detrimental. To be aware that "schooling" as used by Illich is a pejorative term and the subject of an anti-programmatic definition is to make a major move toward removing the threatening aspects of "deschooling." To "deschool," as suggested by this

interpretation of the use of a definition, is to simply propose that a good education must eliminate age-specificity, teacher-relatedness, full-time attendance, and obligatory curricula. Conversely, to "deschool" does not necessarily mean elimination of publicly supported education, destruction of school facilities, and the firing of all school personnel.

Deschooling

The job of analyzing "deschooling" is already complete if one infers that "deschooling" is defined as the opposite of "schooling." "Deschooling" as used by Illich can be seen by implication to be the following programmatic definition: "Deschooling" is the reduction or elimination of educational practices which are wholly or primarily age-specific and teacher-related and which require full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum. If Illich intends to be true to his definition of "schooling" then "deschooling" which he does not explicitly define must be understood to be no more than the definition which is here offered as the opposite of "schooling." However, Illich is including a great deal more than this definition permits

in his usage of "deschooling," about which more remains to be said.

A dual evaluation is in order since the worthiness of an intended program is a consideration separate from the accuracy of the definition which suggests the program. Scheffler is careful to point out that it is not enough that the descriptive elements of a definition which is programmatic in character be accurate; also required is that the consequences for educational practice conveyed by the program be morally and practically evaluated. Indeed, he further suggests that this evaluation should precede rather than follow the adoption of the definition in question. There are an indefinite number of alternative definitions that could be applied to "deschooling." Intelligent selection of an appropriate definition can only come after one considers the consequences of adopting any of these various definitions. "Inspection of meanings cannot substitute for such an evaluation."[9]

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[9]Scheffler, p. 34.

Society

While Illich takes great pains to explain what it is that he means by "school," he does not explain anywhere in his book what he means by "society." No definition of "society" is offered because Illich apparently has no intention of using the word in a definitive way. Throughout the book "society" is used in a number of different ways. In assorted contexts "society" can be interpreted as being used as a synonym for "humanity," "polity," "people as community," "people as aggregation," "individual writ large," "Western civilization," "nation state," "consensus grouping," "culture," and "'the system.'" In various passages the term "society" is qualified as being "traditional," "American," "modern," "educated," "schooled," "'hooked,'" "good," "consumer," "tolerable," "non-inventive," "our" "authoritarian," "rational," and "their." "Society," then, has a number of different meanings throughout Deschooling Society, albeit meanings with which one is commonly familiar.

In various places the word "social" precedes and modifies the following: "Area," "reformer," "events," "options," "relationship," "force," "claims," "control,"

"control by the many," "life," "unfeasibility," "polarization," "roles," "myth," "rank," "devisiveness," "values," "action," "ritual," "reality," "decision," "principles," "effects," "organization," "consequence," "agencies," "institutions," and "addiction." With the exception of "social addiction," which Illich briefly explains, all of these social "things" are familiar to the reader and roughly understandable at least in context. Unless it can be assumed that all of these uses of "society" and "social" are presented simply for stylish writing one can only conclude that Illich is extremely concerned with "the social," in its host of meanings, and not as a precisely defined term.

Hence, it is not practical to infer from the multitudinous statements in the book a definition or set of definitions for "society." Indeed, it does not appear to be a particularly productive activity since conflicting conceptions are apparent even in passing as can be seen in Illich's use of "society" as the entity which translates once basic needs into demands for scientifically

produced commodities[10] and a few pages later Illich's use of "society" as a synonym for humanity world wide.[11]

It would be going a bit far to suggest that Illich is being deliberately ambiguous in his use of "society." However, it is not unfair to say that he is not overly concerned about being precise in his frequent references to "society" and "social" phenomena. It really makes little difference whether or not "society" is used loosely intentionally or inadvertently; certain consequences result in either case, and these consequences must be confronted.

Some Difficulties with the Definitional Categories

Some major problems seem to be set now that "schooling," "deschooling," and "society" have received some initial probing. First, if "deschooling" is to be considered no more than the opposite of the anti-programmatic definition offered for "schooling," what are the justifications for conceiving "deschooling" as

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[10] Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 3.

[11] Illich, Deschooling Society, p. 8.

the first step in the de-institutionalizing of values which Illich suggests? Conversely, if "deschooling" encompasses more than the opposite of "schooling" as defined, is not Illich guilty of a bit of "sleight of mind" in offering his definition of "schooling" in the first place? The second issue concerns how one is to treat "deschooling society" if it is regarded as being compounded from a fixed, logically precise component ("deschooling" as the opposite of Illich's definition of "schooling") and a totally nebulous and imprecise component ("society" as used in Illich's book). On the one hand Illich appears to be presenting a serious educational proposal; on the other hand, acceptance or rejection of the proposal is rendered senseless because there is no literal possibility to "deschool society" if there is no such entity as "society" which has any fixed cognitive significance. It is, however, possible to "deschool schools" if "deschool" is used in the limited sense that Illich's definition of "schools" implies and if "schools" is used in the way one commonly uses the term; that is to say "schools" are more than institutions which engage in teacher-related processes which demand full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum.

Deschooling Society

It is suggested that one suspend judgment at this time concerning whether or not Illich's term "deschooling society" has a fixed definition which can be contextually constructed. Scheffler offers two classifications in addition to educational definitions, either of which might be more appropriate than educational definitions for clarifying "deschooling society." Perhaps the reason a definition is so difficult to attach to "deschooling society" is that Illich does not intend that it be regarded as a definable term.

There is some justification for assuming that Illich means that "deschooling society" be understood as an educational metaphor rather than as a concept capable of definition. Anyone familiar with the writing of Illich will have noticed that he has a marked tendency to use analogies to express his ideas. The following examples illustrate the point:

(1) The schoolteacher is analogous to an evangelical missionary seeking to save lost souls. "More than elsewhere, in Latin America the teacher as

missionary for the school-gospel has found adherents at the grassroots."[12]

(2) Education as schooling is analogous to the concept of transportation as private car. "For some generations, education has been based on massive schooling, just as security was based on massive retaliation and, at least in the United States, transportation on the family car."[13]

(3) Social salvation through schooling is analogous to the divine right of kings. "Today it is as dangerous in Latin America to question the myth of social salvation through schooling as it was dangerous 300 years ago to question the divine rights of Catholic kings."[14]

(4) Compulsive schooling is analogous to compulsive gambling. "Introduction into this gambling ritual

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[12]Ivan Illich, "The Futility of Schooling in Latin America," Saturday Review, April 20, 1968, p. 20.

[13]Illich, "The Futility of Schooling," p. 20.

[14]Illich, "The Futility of Schooling," p. 75.

is much more important than what or how something is taught. It is the game itself that gets into the blood and becomes a habit; token participation in the ritual is made compulsory and compulsive everywhere."[15]

(5) Credit hours of instruction are analogous to coin in a money system. "Imperceptibly all countries, east and west, have adopted a system of knowledge-capitalism. Wealth is redefined in terms of hours of instruction purchased with public funds and poverty is explained and measured by the failure of a man to consume."[16]

(6) Universal education is analogous to a secular religion. "The religion of universal and compulsory education turns out to be a corruption of the Reformation, and it is for us to understand this and to point it out."[17] The title of the piece

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[15]Ivan Illich, "The Roots of Human Liberation," The [London] Times Educational Supplement, July 16, 1971, p. 4.

[16]Ivan Illich, "Education as an Idol," Religious Education, November, 1971, p. 414.

[17]Ivan Illich, "Education: A Consumer Commodity and a Pseudo-Religion," The Christian Century, December 15, 1971, p. 1464.

from which this quotation is extracted contains two of Illich's favorite analogs for education: "Education: A Consumer Commodity and a Pseudo-Religion."

Since a metaphor can be likened to an implied analogy and Illich has a demonstrated propensity to employ analogies in his arguments, it seems worthwhile to undertake further investigation of the concept "deschooling society" in order to determine whether or not Illich intends it as a metaphorical utterance.

Scheffler elaborates the following observations about educational metaphors:

> Metaphors are not normally intended to express the meanings of terms used, either in standard or in stipulated ways. Rather, they point to what are conceived to be significant parallels, analogies, similarities within the subject-matter of the discourse itself. Metaphorical statements often express significant and surprising truths, unlike stipulations which express no truths at all, and unlike descriptive definitions, which normally fail to surprise. Though frequently, like programmatic definitions, conveying programs, metaphors do so always by suggesting some objective analogy, purporting to state truths discovered in the phenomena before us . . . . They cannot generally be considered as mere fragments crystallizing the key attitudes of some social movement, or symbolizing explicit parent doctrines. Rather, they figure in serious

> theoretical statements themselves, as fundamental components.[18]

Scheffler continues by saying even in the case of scientific utterances it is not all that easy to differentiate a clear line between serious theory and metaphor, using atomic theory as a case in point. Similarly in education, metaphorical statements are found within key theoretical contexts. The following remarks set the problem and suggest the moves to make in the evaluation of "deschooling society" as a metaphor:

> Generally, we may regard the metaphorical statement as indicating that there is an important analogy between two things, without saying explicitly in what the analogy consists. Now, every two things are analogous in some respect, but not every such respect is important. Still, the notion of importance varies with the situation: what is important in science may not be important in politics or art, for example. If a given metaphorical statement is to be judged worthwhile or apt, the analogy suggested must be important with respect to criteria relevant to the context of its utterance.
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> Further, the metaphorical statement does not actually state the analogy, even where a relevantly important one exists. It is rather in the nature of an invitation to search for one, and is in part judged by how well such a search is rewarded. Again, the pattern is similar to that of a theory or, if you like, a theoretical hunch. It

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[18] Scheffler, p. 47.

is no wonder, then, that metaphors have often been said to organize reflection and explanation in scientific and philosophical contexts. In practical contexts too, metaphors often serve, analogously to programmatic definition, as ways of channelling action, though always by purporting to indicate that some important analogy may be found within the relevant subject-matter.

Aside from independent evaluation of programs that may be conveyed by particular metaphorical assertions, metaphors may be criticized in roughly two ways. First, we may reach the conclusion that a given metaphor is trivial or sterile, indicating analogies that are, in context, unimportant. Second, we may determine the limitations of a given metaphor, the points at which the analogies it indicates break down. Every metaphor is limited in this way, giving only a certain perspective on its subject, which may be supplemented by other perspectives. Such limitation is no more reason to reject a metaphor completely than is the fact that alternative theories always exist in itself a reason to reject any given theory in science. Nevertheless, a comparison of alternative metaphors may be as illuminating as a comparison of alternative theories, in indicating the many-faceted character of the subject. Such a comparison may also provide a fresh sense of the uniqueness of the subject, for to know in what ways something is like many different things is to know a good deal about what makes it distinctive, different from each. Lastly, where a particular metaphor is dominant, comparison helps in determining its limitations, and in opening up fresh possibilities of thought and action.[19]

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[19] Scheffler, pp. 48-49.

If "deschooling society" is to be regarded as being used by Illich metaphorically, it is necessary to explicate the elliptical analogy which is contained within. But it seems to be impossible to construct one simple analogy which could successfully portray what "deschooling society" is like. In various places "deschooling society" is said to be like dethroning a monarch and establishing a people's government or like removing the priest as an intermediary to God, or like eliminating a capitalistic monopoly, or like destroying production machinery that turns out weapons, or like declaring a currency of exchange worthless, or like exposing advertising claims as fraudulent, and so on. A single metaphorical assertion does not present itself for analysis by making judgments about its contextual importance or by pointing out where the analogy breaks down.

While it is possible to treat each metaphor in Deschooling Society in the manner Scheffler suggests, such a move would not make any contribution to understanding "deschooling society" as a metaphor. To establish the significance or triviality of the several metaphors and to point out their limitations produces no insight about the channeling of action implicit in "deschooling

society." Consequently, "deschooling society" is not regarded by the writer as most appropriately categorized as a metaphor.

It is now time to reconsider "deschooling society" as a defining and/or definable concept with the help of a third linguistic category.

Scheffler provides one remaining tool with which to hack away at the verbal thicket. Consider the following remarks about the category he calls educational slogans.

> Educational slogans are clearly unlike definitions in a number of ways. They are altogether unsystematic, less solemn in manner, more popular, to be repeated warmly or reassuringly rather than pondered gravely. They do not figure importantly in the exposition of educational theories. They have no standard form and they make no claim either to facilitate discourse or to explain the meanings of terms. We speak of definitions as clarifying, but not of slogans; slogans may be rousing, but not definitions.
>
> Slogans in education provide rallying symbols of the key ideas and attitudes of educational movements. They both express and foster community of spirit, attracting new adherents and providing reassurance and strength to veterans. They are thus analogous to religious and political slogans and, like these, products of the party spirit. Since slogans make no claim to facilitate communication or to reflect meanings, some of the main points of the last chapter are here irrelevant. No one defends his favorite slogan as a helpful

stipulation or as an accurate reflection of the meanings of its constituent terms. It is thus idle to criticize a slogan for formal inadequacy or for inaccuracy in the transcription of usage.

There is, nevertheless, an important analogy with definitions, that needs to be discussed. Slogans, we have said, provide rallying symbols of the key ideas and attitudes of movements, ideas, and attitudes that may be more fully and literally expressed elsewhere. With the passage of time, however, slogans are often increasingly interpreted more literally both by adherents and by critics of the movements they represent. They are taken more and more as literal doctrines or arguments, rather than merely as rallying symbols. When this happens in a given case, it becomes important to evaluate the slogan both as a straightforward assertion and as a symbol of a practical social movement, without, moreover, confusing the one with the other. In the need for this dual evaluation lies the analogy mentioned between slogans and definitions.

In education, such dual evaluation is perhaps even more important than in the case of political and religious slogans, for, at least in Western countries, educators are not subject to the discipline of an official doctrine and are not organized in creedal units as are religious and political groups. Educational ideas formulated in careful, and often difficult, writings soon become influential among teachers in popularized versions. No official discipline or leadership preserves the initial doctrines or some elaboration of them, seeing to it that they take precedence over popular versions at critical junctures, as is familiar in religion and politics. Educational slogans often evolve into operational doctrines in their own right, inviting and deserving criticism as such. It is

> important to remember, at this point, that though such criticism is fully warranted, it needs to be supplemented by independent criticism of the practical movements giving birth to the slogans in question, as well as of their parent doctrines. We may summarize by saying that what is required is a critique both of the literal and the practical purport of slogans; parent doctrines must, furthermore, be independently evaluated.[20]

Be it here suggested that "deschooling society" as used by Illich is most appropriately classified as an educational slogan. The objection that "deschooling society" cannot be a slogan since it is not in sentence form is answered by the suggestion that "deschooling society" is an elliptical statement of the imperative "The deschooling of society ought to be accomplished." "Deschooling society" can be interpreted as a rallying symbol of a movement to eliminate a number of consequences of compulsory education. "Deschooling society" as uttered by Illich in his book can be regarded as expressing the attitudes and key ideas articulated in the entire book. "Deschooling society" can be called a shorthand term for the attitude that compulsory schooling is detrimental because students come to the belief that anything learned outside of school is unimportant and because social and

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[20]Scheffler, pp. 36-37.

material rewards go to those who have spent the most money for their schooling and because schooling perpetuates a consumerism which is unattainable by millions of people and so on. Clearly there is good justification for labeling "deschooling society" a slogan.

What are the consequences of doing so? First, as Scheffler suggests, criticism for formal inadequcies is inappropriate. Hence, the difficulties encountered in an attempt to get at a definitional meaning of "deschooling society" are no longer of any concern. "Deschooling society" is "off the hook" for providing the unanswered logical puzzles discussed. However, it is "off the hook" at no small cost. If "deschooling society" is to be considered an educational slogan it cannot at the same time be considered a literal educational doctrine.

Conditions for Evaluation of the Slogan "Deschooling Society" as a Straightforward Assertion

It is possible to perform this evaluation if "deschooling society" is rendered in an assertive form such as "society ought to be deschooled." The acceptance or rejection of this assertion can only be made rationally

after consideration of a number of questions, some of which have already been asked and given tentative answers. Reformulating the statement once more suggests certain additional moves. The interrogative form "Should society be deschooled?" has a single question mark but asks a set of questions according to John Wilson.[21] There are questions of fact (What effects do schools have on people who have graduated from them, people who are currently in them, people who have been refused entrance in them, people who have been eliminated from further participation in them, people who have never had any experience whatever with them, people who work in them, etc.?); there are questions of concept (which have been under consideration in this chapter); and there are questions of value (Why is a deschooled society to be thought of as superior to what now exists, etc.?).

The important thing here is not merely to point out that questions of fact, questions of concept, and questions of value are all distinct and require separate treatment, but that questions of value cannot be effectively entertained until the other two types of questions produce answers with which disputants can live. There is

[21]Wilson, p. 24.

little hope for a meaningful discourse on value differences if there are no fixed points.

Conditions for Evaluation of the Slogan "Deschooling Society" as a Symbol of a Practical Social Movement

To perform this evaluation one must be reminded that to take the slogan literally is to miss the point. The context in which Illich felt the need to produce the slogan is all important to an evaluation of this type. At the very least Illich is attempting to point out that going through the processes of formal schooling used to be one kind of experience with which one might improve his life chances; presently, however, schooling has become the only kind of experience which has any validity for full-fledged membership in the human race. Put another way, schooling has become the only kind of valid education and is therefore guilty of the evils inherent in monopolistic enterprises. Beyond advocating a bit of educational trust busting, Illich can be interpreted as condemning high consumption, service oriented, bureaucratically institutionalized, contemporary industrial

culture. He can even be interpreted as providing a blueprint for bringing into existence a utopia.

The possibility of such a vast latitude in interpretation of what the slogan symbolizes for a practical social movement points to a major danger in sloganeering. Since the purpose of a slogan is not to lead to insight but to incite, one naturally needs to know to what one is being incited!

It is not possible to know at this time if a practical social movement will come about which employs the slogan "deschooling society." Nor is it possible to know what form such a movement might take. And it is not inconceivable that several movements, perhaps at odds with each other, may all wish to use the banner of "deschooling society" to rally members to their causes. Illich, the sloganmith, is safe from censure in the event that any of these causes fall into disrepute (he can claim misinterpretation--this is not his cause). Conversely, if any of these movements eventuate in a positive improvement for mankind or a small portion of mankind he can claim the credit as intellectual instigator.[22] There is the

[22]There is reason to presume that Illich is prepared to hammer out a new slogan for public consumption

third possibility that the slogan "deschooling society" will pass into oblivion, having failed to rouse anyone other than a few reviewers for educational periodicals. In any case, a complete evaluation of "deschooling society" as a symbol of practical social movements awaits the fulfillment of the condition that such movements have at least a brief history.

To have classified "deschooling society" as a slogan is not to condemn it or to denigrate it. To point out that "deschooling society" is a slogan is to have made a modest contribution to the commencement of a reasonable evaluation and discussion of the issues which Illich raises.

The final chapter will illustrate the usefulness of this analysis by attending to problems encountered in selected reviews of Deschooling Society.

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very soon. Illich has prepared a 53 page draft for CIDOC seminar A142 for July and August 1972 in which he discusses pollution, health care, convivial economics, overprogramming, social polarization, law, bureaucracy, public research, etc. The title is "Re-tooling Society!"

Chapter 5

SELECTED CRITICISMS OF DESCHOOLING SOCIETY

Review of the Reviews

The brief examination of selected critical reviews is included in this study for the purpose of indicating the importance of analysis of the locution "deschooling society" as a preliminary activity to adequate understanding of Illich's book. Reviews which appear in Best Sellers and Library Journal and a number of other periodicals are intended as brief descriptions and contain little if any evaluative commentary. Reviews of this variety are not particularly fruitful as objects of examination because of their brevity and the requisite level of generality with which they treat the book. This is of little consequence as there is a sufficient number of reviews available which contain illustrative confusions in interpretation with which to make the point.

It may appear presumptuous to refer to certain reviewer's remarks as errors, but as was shown in Chapter 4 it is perfectly appropriate. The problems in

interpretation considered below serve to indicate how easy it is for readers of Deschooling Society to be confused by the language Illich chooses as a title for his proposals.

The Error of Slipping into a Common Usage Notion of "Schooling"

In Chapter 2 of Deschooling Society Illich stipulates what he means by "school." It is "the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum."[1] To criticize "deschooling" fairly requires that the critic understand that "deschooling" means the abolition of only those attributes Illich selected in his definition of "school." To use any other concept of "school" makes a muddle of things. Ronald Gross falls into this error when he asserts that there are indeed schools in which people learn and by implication Illich can't condemn them all.

> One thinks of real schools, seen or read about--schools like George Dennison's First Street School; or Rabbit Mountain, the school-within-a-school described by Herndon; or classrooms in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. These were unique, frail, ultimately doomed

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[1]Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 25-26.

> enterprises--but they were schools, and they did liberate kids and teachers. Illich never mentions specific schools, and he has recently put down the whole Free School movement as counter-revolutionary because the proponents and practitioners still believe in schools at all--and schools are, prima facie, evil.[2]

Colin Greer has obviously abandoned Illich's definition when he states, "That schools will change to accommodate new demands is really not in doubt."[3] Greer cannot mean schools as Illich defines them in Chapter 2 of Deschooling Society unless Greer is only considering superficial kinds of changes. To make any significant changes to a Chapter 2 type school, such as to eliminate the full-time and compulsory aspects of the process, is to have begun "deschooling," not merely to accommodate new demands.

Illich appears to be faithful to his stipulated definition of "school" throughout the book. At least it is very difficult to make a clear cut case that the definition of "school" offered in Chapter 2 does not fit into

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[2]Ronald Gross, "Putting Man Back at the Center of Things," rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), Book World, June 6, 1971, p. 9.

[3]Colin Greer, "All Schooled Up," rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), Saturday Review, October 16, 1971, p. 89.

the contexts in which the word "school" appears in the remainder of Deschooling Society. However, Illich should be aware that many of his readers are going to smuggle in any number of conventionally used conceptions of "school" as they read the book. If Illich is not guilty of misleading his readers, he at least stands accused of not continually reminding his readers of the stipulation to prevent the readers from slipping from one concept of "school" to another.

Some of the reviewers avoid this slippage by refusing to grant validity to Illich's stipulative definition. Trevor Beeson says the following:

> Within the British educational system there is much complacence, but a significant number of prophetic voices can also be heard, and the results of efforts thus stimulated over the years can now be seen in a good deal of creative work in infants' schools and in an increasing number of schools concerned with the education of children of wide-ranging ability and social background. Illich was evidently unaware of this. Though this is not a valid excuse for any British smugness over a number of modest achievements, there is at least a hint here that schools need not necessarily occupy a place in society approximating that of the wartime concentration camp.[4]

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[4]Trevor Beeson, "Dangers in De-Schooling." The Christian Century, November 17, 1971, p. 1341.

This is an understated way of saying, "Surely you're not describing our schools!" and can be regarded as invalidating Illich's definition in certain cases. A far more assertive denial is voiced by Peter Spackman:

> But a moment's thought will make you realize that this isn't a definition at all--try using it in the sentence above about social reality--but rather an identification of the school system's four well-known salient problems. Moreover, by restricting the meaning of school to only those aspects of school currently under hottest attack, Mr. Illich has built his conclusions into his starting point. There is a very great deal wrong with our schools, of course, and it is now past argument that age-grouping, teacher-centered instruction, credentialling and compulsion are bad for young and old alike.[5]

Nevertheless, simply denying acceptance of Illich's definition of "school" does not necessarily mean that the reviewers who do so are immune to slipping from one implicit definitional orientation to another or several others. "Definitional slippage" is a major and common linguistic flaw in educational writing; reviewers of educational writing can often be seen to be guilty of the error even when the author of the piece being reviewed is not.

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[5]Peter Spackman, rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), The New York Times Book Review, July 11, 1971, p. 23.

The Error of Regarding "Deschooling Society" as a Literal Educational Doctrine

There is some question as to whether this error is a separate type or a variation of the error discussed above. It makes little difference at this point how the error is classified except to acknowledge that it is linguistic in nature. Since "deschooling society" has been shown to function as a slogan it cannot at the same time function as a literal doctrine. Miriam Wasserman makes this mistake in her review of Deschooling Society and Celebration of Awareness.

> There's a man going 'round advising schoolteachers to walk out of their schools and never go back. He says their giving up schoolteaching would be beneficial to themselves and their students. He isn't a disruptive union agitator or a dangerous black liberationist or an underground revolutionary subversive. He is a respectable member of the educational reform community . . . . The writer is Ivan Illich and his doctrine "deschooling society" is the title of the better-known of the two books being reviewed here.[6]

Ms. Wasserman goes on to say that Illich is not nearly radical enough, which is amusing, but the

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[6]Miriam Wasserman, "Respectable Revolutions," rev. of Ivan Illich, Celebration of Awareness (Doubleday) and Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), The Teacher Paper, February, 1972, p. 25.

important thing to consider here is her interpretation that Illich is suggesting a revolution of workers walking away from their machines and leaving the factory. Does Illich really say that? Perhaps and perhaps not.

Another writer who wishes to take Illich literally assumes the message is not for the teacher as oppressed worker but the teacher as vested-interest power wielder. In an editorial aptly entitled "What is Ivan Illich Talking About?" Sam Snyder suggests that school men are not going to voluntarily fold up their institutions for whatever good reasons.

> . . . there is no historical evidence to indicate that any group in power has ever willingly given up the reigns of control simply because the activities in which they were engaged were inhumane, retrogressive, or destructive of human potential. Therefore it would be folly to suppose that teachers and teachers of teachers are going to evict themselves from positions of power. If this is the case, then the most that can be done is to point out to educators what will be some of the probable consequences of their continued promulgation of the contemporary school mythology.[7]

It is not that issue is being taken with either of these characterizations of teachers by the writers. What

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[7]Sam R. Snyder, "What Is Ivan Illich Talking About?," Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1972, p. 516.

is being questioned is the assumption that "deschooling society" is a literal doctrine for revolution. Illich writes as if "deschooling society" is such a doctrine and thus misleads his readers.

Selected Derived Confusions

There is a second order of difficulties which may or may not be linguistic. These difficulties probably ought not be regarded as errors in the same sense that the problems discussed above are standard kinds of errors.

One confusion involves an apparent conflict between those who are hostile toward utopian thinking and those who think that utopian planning is appropriate even if it does not provide enough answers. An animal fable illustrates the essence of this argument.

Once upon a time there was a fox in the forest who was having a very difficult time finding enough food to survive the winter. He had gone so long since eating that he no longer could keep up with his prey and became weaker and weaker. He decided to visit the Wise Old Owl to seek his advice.

"Wise Old Owl," said the fox, "this has been a bad winter for me and I fear that I am going to starve. Do you have any suggestions about how I might obtain some food?"

The owl replied, "Why, yes. Have you ever noticed that the friendly little chipmunks never lack something to eat? They are so well liked by all the other animals in the forest that the other animals share their winter stores willingly with the cheerful little creatures. I recommend that you become a chipmunk."

"Say, that's a wonderful idea!" said the grateful fox. "How do I go about becoming a chipmunk?"

"Oh," said the Wise Old Owl, "I only make top level policy. You'll have to work out the petty details yourself."

A criticism of Deschooling Society which often appears in the literature takes the form of an indignant complaint of a starving fox to an impractical owl. Illich is purported to be guilty of not advising how to go about the actual business. Time magazine says it this way: "Though Illich has started a vital debate, he has not shown that a country can survive by abolishing academic

sticks in favor of carrots alone."[8] The writer of the Time article is requesting more details.

M. Ann Petrie in an article in The Nation expresses the same concern.

> Illich's vision is enormously appealing, but, as is often the case with angry writers, his prose tends to be more passionate than thoughtful. Many important questions go unanswered. How do we make the transition from our present society to the new one he envisages? How do we motivate students to attend "skill centers" and professionals to teach in them? How can we see to it that these universally accessible centers remain noninstitutionalized?[9]

While discussing Illich in "Public Education Reconsidered," John H. Fischer questions a specific missing detail:

> One looks in vain among Illich's proposals for any responsible calculation of the risks entailed in leaving children to learn from their own experience with no regular institutional protection.[10]

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[8]"Should Schools Be Abolished?," Time, June 7, 1971, p. 34.

[9]M. Ann Petrie, "Education Without Schools," rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row) and Jerome Bruner, The Relevance of Education (W. W. Norton & Co.), The Nation, November 15, 1971, p. 505.

[10]John H. Fischer, "Public Education Reconsidered," Today's Education, May, 1972, p. 24.

Theodore A. McConnell objects in this fashion:

> In the final analysis Illich's rhetoric runs away with him, providing inadequate and often faulty starting points and never getting down to the hard, detailed, concrete necessities and solutions so essential to change and improve matters . . . . What is needed now is the concrete working out of the problems and not further commentary on their anatomy and physiology.[11]

All of these authors are complaining that Illich has not provided enough answers. But opposing them is a group who suggest that we need imaginative thinkers like Illich and that his contribution ought not be denigrated simply because everything is not worked out. In essence, they are saying that Illich's role as Owl is a valid one. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick says it this way:

> Like all Illich's work, this is a provocative book and must be taken seriously. It seeks to shock men into an awareness of the problem; it offers no blueprint for alternatives. These must emerge from creative experiment.[12]

Similarly, Harry Wagschal justifies Illich's utopian posture by writing, "Illich has pointed the way

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[11]Theodore A. McConnell, "Ivan Illich's Assault on Education," Religious Education, January/February, 1972, pp. 47-48.

[12]Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, "Catechetics: The Case for and Against," rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), America, July 24, 1971, p. 42.

towards greater personal and social freedom. It is up to others to show us how and where and when."[13]

Whether or not a given reviewer values Owl-like pronouncements is an issue external to the material Illich presents. The reviewers cited here would be on much firmer ground if they would attend to an analysis of the relationship between Illich's concept of "schooling," his concept of "deschooling," and the specific recommendations he makes to provide alternatives to "schooling."

Although some reviewers are engaging in "definitional slip" regarding "schooling," Illich is not guilty of the same error. However, as the analysis in Chapter 4 has shown, Illich does not consistently regard "deschooling" as the opposite of his stipulated meaning of "schooling." If the reviewers were to focus on Illich's lack of consistency in the use of "deschooling" they would have a basis for evaluating Illich's proposals.

A whole host of questions might be addressed, the answers to which could be of real value in a review of the book. Is it possible to conceive of alternative learning environments which are the opposite of Illich's stipulated

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[13]Harry Wagschal, rev. of Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (Harper & Row), Educational Studies, Fall/Winter, 1971, p. 92.

definition of "schooling" which are unlike the Illich proposals? Do some of these already exist, perhaps? Is Illich complaining that "schools" as he defines them are "bad" because they don't work or because they work too well? What are the consequences of a universal acceptance of the assertion that "deschooling society" is an educational slogan? What are the consequences of widespread ignoring of the fact that "deschooling society" functions as an educational slogan? These questions have far greater potential for evaluating Illich's proposals than the reviewers' question concerning the value of utopian thinking (the answer to which lies outside what Illich discusses in any case).

There is another derived confusion which several of Illich's reviewers exhibit. By ignoring the need to provide a separate evaluation for purpose as well as an evaluation of programs they leave half the task undone while giving the appearance of having made a valid criticism. They are saying in effect, "Your proposals no matter how elaborately detailed still can't work." They object because they do not regard the proposals as instrumental to the goals Illich intends to achieve for various reasons. One such reason offered is that it is

against "human nature." Illich is said to have a romantically flawed picture of man.

Time says:

> It is one thing to lambaste the tyranny of diplomaism, but quite another to expect nations to function without high standards of excellence. Illich rightly condemns excessive meritocracy, which makes learning painful rather than satisfying. He bets on natural human curiosity as the best incentive for intellectual achievement. But a society without formal schooling might face mediocrity.[14]

John Fischer says it is unreasonable to expect a deschooled society to function equitably because of basic human selfishness.

> If the world were populated by human beings totally unselfish in respect to their goals and in their aspirations for children, if the available resources for learning and teaching were sufficient to meet all demands and if the distribution of these resources corresponded exactly to the pattern of demand for them, unrestricted freedom of access would assure equality of opportunity. But in the only world in which Illich's "learning webs" can be created, their existence would by no means assure their actual availability on anything like an equal basis to all children.[15]

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[14]"Should Schools Be Abolished?," p. 34.

[15]Fischer, p. 23.

Any number of reasons are given by others in an attempt to prove that "It'll never fly." But a program can have a worthwhile purpose even if it is not instrumental to achieving that purpose. Analysis shows the need for separating evaluation of purposes and evaluation of programs. Illich's program may or may not lead to his goals; what still requires attention is the evaluation of Illich's goals.

The errors and confusions of these selected reviews are illustrative of the ease with which one can be "bewitched" by unexamined usages of key pieces of language in Deschooling Society. The analytical activities of this study are performed so that it can be seen that it is possible to overcome the spell of "deschooling society."

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