AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND PROPOSALS IN EDUCATION FOR SELF-IDENTIFICATION: A STUDY OF STRATEGY AND SUBSTANCE IN RADICAL EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

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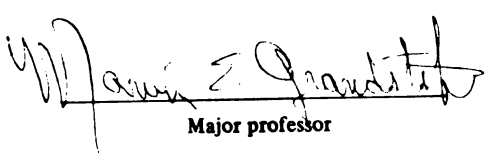

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND PROPOSALS IN EDUCATION FOR SELF-IDENTIFICATION: A STUDY OF STRATEGY AND SUBSTANCE IN RADICAL EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

By

Henry John Prince

Recently, a modern "radical" movement in education has emerged. Numerous writers have exposed the harsh realities of the public school system, and others have suggested reforms that involve a profound re-evaluation of the institutional nature and operation of the public school. A frequent criticism centers on the mutilation of a child's inherent desire for learning and his subsequent substitution of counter-strategies to endure his school years.

The "radical" critics desire to remake American education so that the healthy capabilities of children and adolescents are fostered. However, the "radical" movement is not unitary but consists of several distinct strains. Some critics denounce the compulsory attendance laws, while others question whether a school can possibly educate unique individuals at all. Some deprecate the

demotion of curiosity and ingenuity in classrooms, while others challenge the school as the sole, legitimate means of education. These various criticisms coalesce into a denunciation of the indifference to the needs and feelings of children and adolescents that the school exhibits.

If the modern "radical" position is to become a substantive movement of educational practice rather than of criticism only, a formulation of a coherent alternative theory of education is imperative. A consideration of basic strategies of reform implementation also seems appropriate.

This exploratory study undertook to examine one recurrent aspect of the "radical" criticism--self-identification--from a perspective of organizational theory. This examination was used as a starting point for an analysis of the strategic problem of reform implementation.

A review of literature substantiated the existence of inadequate provision for student self-identification in school settings. The school's relationship to the economic sector and the culture of our society was delineated, and the extent of these segments' influence on school functioning was indicated. The "radical" proposals were differentiated into three categories, and their potential efficacy in creating opportunities for student self-identification was examined.

The "radical" critics were differentiated into three categories: Type I, who seek to change the means for attaining the goals of the school; Type II, who seek to alter the goals of the public school; and Type III, who seek to change the goals and values of the entire societal environment. Correspondingly different strategies were identified.

Type II proposals such as those offered by Holt, Dennison, and others were analyzed as the most acceptable, effective suggestions. Type I proposals of Silberman and Bruner were rejected as inadequate and unproductive of significant opportunities for self-identification. Type III proposals of Illich and Goodman were rejected as being incapable of attracting political support.

The investigator recommended a study of the degree of acceptance of the school as the only culturally certified means of education. He also recommended a study of the characteristics of behavior exhibited by students in Type I and Type II schools to determine whether certain environments are more conducive to particular types of students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the last half-century much rhetoric has been expended on criticisms of the public school establishment in the United States. Some criticism has been directed toward problems of school organization; various proposals have suggested apparently ideal organizational patterns that have failed. Criticism has also been directed at the internal operations of the school in the hope that educational reform of curricula and methodology would improve the schools and increase the educational achievement of students. Yet, even with the implementation of new programs in the sciences and with the beginnings of new curricula in the humanities, the public school remains a center of controversy. The most recent target of critics has been teacher accountability: whether guarantees can be formulated to insure that students do succeed academically in schools.

Common to much of the expressed criticism and proposed reforms has been a neglect of adequate explanations for the noted deficiencies. Frequently, reform suggestions omit a careful scrutiny of probable causes of

identified inadequacies. Seemingly, some reformers assumed that the school operated in a societal void and had little contact with or response to other societal institutions. However, when the school is given a social mandate, it is usually charged with the awesome responsibility of remedying ills that "plague other sectors of the society."[1] The school's position in the institutional matrix of our technological society has apparently been ignored.

In the past fifteen years, a modern "radical" or progressive movement has emerged. Numerous books and essays have exposed the terrible realities of public education, and some writers have suggested remediation measures.[2] Men such as Friedenberg, Henry, Dennison, Holt, Goodman, and others have questioned the institutional nature and operation of schools. Many recognize the mutilation of a child's spirit that often occurs in schools, especially urban schools. Others admit that students employ counter-strategies in classrooms to live through their school years; their energies are spent in

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[1]Marvin Grandstaff, "Schooling, Education, and the Social Crisis," East Lansing, 1971, p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

[2]Examples of recent critiques are Herbert Kohl's Thirty-six Children, George Dennison's The Lives of Children, and John Holt's The Underachieving School. Also, the New York Review of Books and This Magazine Is About Schools have published many articles of "radical" criticism.

beating the system rather than in learning what they truly wish to know.

These "radical" critics have a profound confidence in the healthy capabilities of children and seek to minimize school interference. Many denounce the compulsory attendance laws that force some youngsters to remain in a detrimental environment. Others wonder whether a school in its present form or in any form can educate unique individuals. Some critics denounce the promotion of order and simplicity and the demotion of curiosity and ingenuity that occurs in many classrooms. Others question acceptance of the school as the sole, legitimate means of education; they call for culturally approved alternatives, such as the "free schools" that have sprung up in Canada and across our country. Many of these schools base their programs on the ideas of the aforementioned critics, while others are seeking their own solutions to their particular situations. In general, it can be said that all or nearly all "radical" critics denounce the indifference to the needs and feelings of the individual that they find in the public schools. In view of the number of books and essays written and the number of "free schools" in operation, it must be admitted that a "radical" criticism movement is now well-established.

Need for the Study

If the modern "radical" position is to become a substantive movement of educational practice rather than of criticism or illusory procedures only, an examination of some pertinent issues that have, heretofore, been largely overlooked is imperative. One obvious necessity is the formulation of a coherent alternative theory of education. Recognition of similarities and differences among various "radical" proposals will certainly contribute to theory building. Also, a need exists for a consideration of basic questions of strategy in the implementation of an alternative theory of education. Reform efforts will not be wasted if informed strategies are employed.

Purpose

This exploratory study undertakes to examine one recurrent aspect of the radical criticism--that of self-identification--from a perspective of organizational theory. Furthermore, this examination will be used as a starting point for an analysis of the strategic problem of selecting a reform vehicle that will maximize the opportunities for self-identification by youngsters.

Nature of the Study

To perform the indicated analysis, it will be necessary (1) to substantiate the existence of a "radical"

critique, (2) to indicate the reasons for lack of opportunities for self-identification as they are exposed by a consideration of the functional relationships between the school, the economic sector, and the culture, and (3) given a hypothesized explanation for the lack of self-identification, to examine whether or to what extent the school can be an adequate reform vehicle.

A review of pertinent literature will be undertaken in Chapter II to illustrate and substantiate the "radical" criticism of the school's provision for student self-identification. In Chapters III and IV a hypothesized explanation of the school's relationship with the economic sector and the culture will be formulated. Emphasis will be on the non-educational functions that the school is expected to fulfill in its role in the institutional matrix of our society, and on the attitudes that the school is expected to promote.

At this point it must be pointed out that I assume that the institutional nature of the school rather than activities of individual persons in the school determines school practice. Persons in authority in schools are viewed as role players who perform according to institutional expectations. Furthermore, the school is perceived as a "formalized set of abstract functions."[3] These

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[3]Grandstaff, "Schooling, Education, and the Social Crisis," p. 2.

functions are not only educational and are frequently determined by extra-school institutions.

In Chapters V and VI, some "radical" proposals are first distinguished into three basic types of educational reform and then their potential efficacy in creating opportunities for self-identification and self-realization is evaluated. Those general conclusions emerging from the study will be considered in the final chapter, as will implications for educational practice and for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Extensive research efforts would be required to conclusively prove that the school as a major American institution is detrimental to the majority of children and adolescents that it serves. A review of recent research publications indicates few previous investigations of the school's effect on self-identification and self-realization of its clientele. It seems that few scholars have considered this area ripe for systematic investigation and analysis. However, during the past decade essayists of all types have presented their views. Though frequently lacking in scientifically objective data, these writings do contribute to an understanding of a child's or adolescent's struggle for self-identification. In this review of significant writings on the issue in question, essays and a meager list of investigations will be considered, to substantiate the existence of the difficulty of achieving a unique self-identity in our technologically advanced society.

Paul Goodman views the problem of school dropouts as an indication of the difficulty that students have in

achieving an identity not pre-determined by the economy or the culture. Dropouts are escapees from the system, and Goodman questions the campaigns aimed at luring them back to the school. "What are the dropouts from? Is the schooling really good for them, or much good for anybody?"[1] Yet we see advertisements calling for young people to return to school, the machine of mobility in our society. Goodman very clearly considers the standard response to dropouts as a verification of the disrespect with which youth are treated by societal institutions. The dropouts are "a nuisance and a threat and can't be socialized by the existing machinery."[2]

Jacques Ellul views the process of socialization as central to the problem of self-identification.

> One of the most important factors in the child's education therefore is social adaptation. This means that--despite all the pretentious talk about the aims of education--it is not the child in and for himself who is being educated, but the child in and for society.[3]

Both Goodman and Ellul recognize the school as a suppressive mechanism, encouraging and/or forcing socially adaptive thought and behavior and discouraging behavior

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[1]Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), p. 20.

[2]Ibid., p. 29.

[3]Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), p. 348.

that may be socially maladaptive but individually functional for self-identification. "Children are educated to become precisely what society expects of them."[4]

Goodman delineates the notion of societal adaptation that students encounter by indicating how functional the school is for society.

> It is in the schools . . . that the mass of our citizens . . . learn that life is inevitably routine, depersonalized, venally graded; that it is best to toe the mark and shut up; that there is no place for spontaneity, open sexuality, free spirit.[5]

Though Goodman manifests concern for the students who drop out and for their self-realization, he seems to have more concern for those who do conform to schooling as it exists. Those who drop out internally waste their days, yet are too terrified "to jeopardize the only pattern of life" they know.[6]

Goodman further indicts the school for its neglect of the "humanness" of each pupil. In most schools there is very little personal contact between teacher and pupil, between student and student. "One must be 'deviant' to be attended to as a human being."[7] This is especially true of junior and senior high schools; adolescents are "insulated by not being taken seriously."

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, p. 23.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 66.

> The social machine does not require or desire its youth to find identity or vocation; it is only interested in aptitude. It does not want new initiative, but conformity.[8]

Edgar Friedenberg investigated the influence of mass society on adolescents, and he discovered the depth of insecurity that adolescents feel because of their vague position in our society. Most attempts at self-realization through work or schooling meet with failure, because the adolescent usually finds no "real affirmative support in the culture for the kind of person he wishes to become."[9] "Identifying, as the weak must, with the more powerful and frustrating of the forces that impinge upon them, they accept the school as the way life is and close their minds against the anxiety of perceiving alternatives.[10]

In his research interviews with secondary school students, Friedenberg discovered that many were wary of others who possessed a strong self-identity. "Our subjects lacked . . . awareness that the inner self could be a source of stability. Self-directed people seem to them on the verge of chaos or revolt."[11] When he inquired about what they value in a human being, he found that

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[8] Ibid., p. 68.

[9] Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America (New York: Random House, Inc., 1965), p. 23.

[10] Ibid., p. 48.

[11] Ibid., p. 67.

adolescents considered "external judgment as more important than self-approval and internal coherence."[12] It seems that self-identification[13] as a process of creating and manifesting a unique identity depends upon a willingness to reject society's values in deference to one's own values.

In another instance Friedenberg realized that his subjects were persuaded to cooperate with the society in its endeavors. They disliked individuals who resisted group demands on their time and energy. Such concern for the group rather than for self undoubtedly leads to suppression of possible manifestations of identity. Adolescents thus perform, perhaps unknowingly, the task of socialization.

Friedenberg asserted that adolescents apparently realize that their development must satisfy societal expectations rather than individual desires. "The school is not there to help John find himself or be himself; its purpose is to help youngsters 'make something <u>out</u> of themselves.'"[14] Through consideration of others' research, Friedenberg noticed that in most cases those students who consistently trouble the school appear to possess a factor of

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[12] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 72.

[13] An existential forging of self through interaction with an environment. A more detailed discussion of optimal conditions for self-identification occurs in Chapter VI.

[14] Friedenberg, <u>Coming of Age in America</u>, p. 187.

"subjectivity": "the capacity to attend to and respond to one's inner life and feelings, to the uniquely personal in experience, to personal relationships."[15] This factor of inwardness indicates a strong self-identity, one that has not succumbed to the manipulative techniques of the school. These youngsters assert themselves on the basis of their self-identification and usually meet with harsh consequences.

> They want to discover who they are; the school wants to help them "make something out of themselves." They want to know where they are; the school wants to help them get somewhere. They want to learn how to live with themselves; the school wants to teach them how to get along with others. They want to learn how to tell what is right for them; the school wants to teach them to give the responses that will earn them rewards in the classroom and in social situations.[16]

In another analysis of adolescents, Friedenberg asserted that the school is not the only institution of our technological society that attempts to channel thought and energy away from a "subjective" encounter with society. "All the contemporary institutions that bear on the young, diverse as they may seem to be, are united in their insistence on cultivating sensitivity and pliability to the demands and expectations of other persons."[17] As one of the social processes of the school, the process of learning

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[15] Ibid., p. 211.

[16] Ibid., p. 212.

[17] Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 6.

to be an American is, in actuality, "learning not to let your individuality become a nuisance."[18] Hence, it is in conflict with the adolescent's struggle "to determine what does make sense in terms of one's view of oneself and one's social role."[19] Consequently, an adolescent must renounce those differences from others that he recognizes in himself. "His basic need is to learn enough about what he is really like, and what he really wants and needs, to permit him to make intelligent decisions about how he wants to act. . . . "[20]

In a recent book George Dennison discusses an unconventional school of which he was the director and he clearly emphasizes the need for self-identification by young children and pre-adolescents. The children of this school had absorbed a predetermined identity of failure and weakness during their public school careers. In some cases the effect was so severe that months passed before the child was able to accept himself and to develop positive relationships with other children and adults at the First Street School. The lack of opportunity to do so in a public school apparently caused these children to be reluctant to open themselves to others, even in the positive social setting that the First Street School was.

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[18] Ibid., p. 54.

[19] Ibid., p. 48.

[20] Ibid., p. 83.

> It can be stated axiomatically that the schoolchild's chief expense of energy is self-defense against the environment. When this culminates in impairment of growth--and it almost always does--it is quite hopeless to reverse the trend by teaching phonics instead of Look-Say.[21]

One of the students, Jose Portillo, experienced considerable difficulty in learning to read; though he was thirteen, Jose could not read. He was of normal intelligence and should have been able to read. What was the problem?

> One of them, certainly, is the fact that he cannot read. But this problem is obviously caused by other, more fundamental problems; indeed, his failure to read should not be described as a problem but a symptom. We need only look at Jose to see what his problems are: shame, fear, resentment, rejection of others and of himself, anxiety, self-contempt, loneliness.[22]

It is obvious that Jose would be expected to have difficulty in school. "One would not say that he had been schooled at all, but rather that for five years he had been indoctrinated in the contempt of persons. . . . "[23] During his indoctrination Jose also developed contempt for himself. How could he do otherwise! The evaluative mechanism was external; to measure himself in his own terms was too painful for Jose.

> His passage among persons . . . is blocked and made painful by his sense of his "place," that is, by the

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[21] George Dennison, The Lives of Children (New York: Random House, Inc., 1969), p. 80.

[22] Ibid., p. 79.

[23] Ibid., p. 80.

> measurements through which he must identify himself: that he has failed all subjects, is last in the class, is older than his classmates, and has a reading problem.[24]

The school as an institution would be concerned with Jose's reading difficulty rather than with his negative self-identity. Little attention would be devoted to Jose as a person whose reading difficulties are quite conceivably due to his lack of self-esteem.

> He could not imagine his own identity waiting to meet him in books, as it met him on the streets and in his play with other boys. In fact, he still stumbled over the word "I." . . . There was something self-protective concealed within it, for the identity which did in fact lie in wait for him in the books that do exist--which is to say, in the society which does exist--was precisely that of a second-class citizen, shunned where others are welcomes, needy where others are comfortable, denigrated where others are praised.[25]

In his study of the adolescent's relationship to society, James Coleman identified a key quality that should be encouraged in school: self-responsibility. In becoming self-responsible and not merely responsive to school demands that frequently are antagonistic to self-realization, an adolescent will be able to accept his strengths and his weaknesses and in the process create a viable, positive self-identity. "Yet the school is in its very essence precisely the wrong environment for

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[24]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 96.

[25]Ibid., p. 167.

encouraging self-responsibility."[26] Coleman especially decries the grading system of most high schools as detrimental to development of self-responsibility and to self-identification. By constantly forcing pupils to compete with each other for these "rewards," the school stimulates these adolescents to counter the high-achievers with peer group pressure. Exclusion from social groups is one method of rejection; as a result, some high-achievers are torn between two desires: self-identification or group affiliation. "The present structure of rewards in high schools produces a response on the part of the adolescent social system that effectively impedes the process of education."[27] Any attempt at deviancy from group expectations usually meets with social consequences that negatively affect one's self-identification.

Charles Reich agrees with Coleman concerning the effect of the school upon the "inmate's" self-identification. He asserts that the school in its institutional form demands that pupils act childishly; personal responsibility and self-respect are discouraged and destroyed by the hierarchical nature of authority in the school. The child must submit to school authority; otherwise, he

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[26]James Coleman, Adolescents and the Schools (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), p. 110.

[27]Ibid., p. 87.

may feel the school's wrath academically, physically, or psychologically. "An individual is systematically stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his heritage, his dreams, and his personal uniqueness, in order to fit him to be a productive unit in a mass technological society."[28] It is a rare individual who can overcome these obstacles to personal identification and self-realization.

Charles Brauner and Hobert Burns offer another outlook on the school's negative influence on a youngster's self-identification. They refer to the dropout problem as expressive of the total adolescent identity-formation and societal-adaptation situation. Dropouts are the visible signs of student discontent with the opportunities for self-realization that the school offers them. They find that the adolescent's struggle for self-identification continually meets with opposition by school authorities. In order to remain psychologically alive, the dropout leaves behind his oppressor in school, only to find that the culture also seeks to adjust him to its expectations.

Those who stay in school but mentally drop out have in some ways accepted the inevitability of society's demands for adjustment to cultural norms. Very few are

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[28]Charles Reich, "Reflections," The New Yorker, September 26, 1970, p. 43.

able to resist vehemently enough to prevent societal tampering in their struggle for self-identification. "Neither the academically talented nor the dropout receives much help in forming, for himself, ideals that will shape him into a man."[29]

Bruno Bettelheim agrees with Brauner and Burns that the dropout, if he is to retain some semblance of a positive self-identity, must leave school. He asserts that the school does not meet the needs of most lower class youth. These youngsters are faced with the alternatives of staying in an institution that is detrimental to their self-identification or leaving and moving into a society that does not want them as they are.

> They [our youth] are expected to develop critical judgment, to change and improve things, to form opinions on their own. But then society is down on them if they take these requests seriously, and wants them to accept things pretty much as they are.[30]

In analyzing the adolescent crisis, Bettelheim identifies two problems. The adolescent must find his place in society, and at the same time he must decide whether he will be essentially himself or whether he will sacrifice

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[29]Charles Brauner and Hobert Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 89.

[30]Bruno Bettelheim, Children of the Dream (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 214.

part of his self-identity for others.[31] Though these two problems are not mutually exclusive, the school views them as such and emphasizes the search for a societal position to the exclusion of self-identification and self-realization.

Frequently the justification for limitation of opportunities for self-identification is the immaturity of children and adolescents. How can one expect such immature persons to undertake the enormous task of self-identification? Paul Nash asserts that they are precisely the ones who should have the opportunity for self-definition. "Children must be given a measure of free choice and self-determination before they are fully ready for it. They are never fully ready. . . ."[32] Furthermore, Nash asserts that a considerable amount of damage has been done by the grading system used in schools. Perhaps this external evaluation imposed upon children and adolescents is a critical force. "Children have been compelled to conform to patterns set by others. . . . The setting of rigid, traditional, external, and often irrelevant,

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[31] Ibid., p. 316.

[32] Paul Nash, Authority and Freedom (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 106.

adult standards has produced inhibition, fear, and lack of self-confidence."[33]

Ashley Montagu asserts that perhaps the school is not the place for self-realization; there, an identity is often absorbed rather than asserted. School is considered an institution of instruction rather than a medium of education whereby children and adolescents have opportunities for self-identification. It is not a place of education "in the sense of nourishing and causing to grow the unique potentialities of the individual."[34]

Agreeing with Montagu, Ivan Illich believes that a child's or adolescent's struggle for self-identification will be hindered in a school setting. Illich even wonders if a school is a realistic and reasonable place for instruction. Because school does not distinguish between learning a skill and getting an education, it "does both tasks badly."[35] Traditionally, the school emphasizes the learning of skills and ignores the difficult task of self-identification that young people encounter. Seldom do schools recognize that "education implies a growth of an

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[33]Ibid., p. 331.

[34]Ashley Montagu, On Being Human (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1966), p. 108.

[35]Ivan Illich, "Why We Must Abolish Schooling," New York Review of Books, July 2, 1970, p. 13.

independent sense of life."[36] The school's increasing emphasis on uniformity results in decreasing opportunities for self-identification.

In a study of adolescence, Hans Sebald discovered that a considerable number of dropouts from high schools achieved well enough in academic areas to place at or above the median grade level (C). In fact, 61 per cent achieved C's or better. He concluded that they departed because of a rejection of school activities rather than because of a lack of ability.[37] He also observed that the covert causes of dropping out seemed to occur and intensify in the eighth grade or earlier. Apparently the dropout has endured as much as possible until high school. He then leaves to prevent further destruction of his identity. Yet Sebald recognizes that those who remain "institutionalized" in high schools also seek to defend their identities. "Of the many forms that adolescent rebellion can take, underachievement is probably the most subtle."[38]

George Miller also recognized the school child's ability to subvert the system's intentions, though he

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[36]Ivan Illich, The Celebration of Awareness (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 134.

[37]Hans Sebald, Adolescence: A Sociological Analysis (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), p. 443.

[38]Ibid., p. 445.

does not seem to admit this procedure is necessary or effective for identity protection. "Too often our children's most valuable return for their years in the classroom is a kind of shrewd skill in coping with a large, well-intentioned, but often stultifying social institution."[39]

In two interesting books, Philip Jackson has exposed and explained the struggle for self-identification that school children go through. Jackson warns against a "mechanistic ideology" taking complete control of the school. "The gravest threat to man's well-being, now as in generations past, is not the machine but those persons and institutions that applaud and support a mechanistic approach to human affairs."[40] He contends that schools are guilty of treating students in a mechanical manner, "without giving thought to what is going on inside them."[41] The effect of schooling on a person's uniqueness and self-realization is generally ignored or minimized.

In Life in Classrooms Jackson acknowledges the negative effect a mechanistic approach to children has

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[39]George Miller, "Some Psychological Perspectives on the Year 2000," in Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress, ed. by Daniel Bell (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 257.

[40]Philip Jackson, The Teacher and the Machine (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968), p. 66.

[41]Ibid., p. 69.

upon their lives. They learn to abandon their plans and goals for those of the teacher. However, they often do so reluctantly once they realize that the teacher's goals have no meaning or importance for them. "All students probably learn to employ psychological buffers that protect them from some of the wear and tear of classroom life."[42] Withdrawal is a familiar response, for it allows the individual a mental asylum in which he can be himself without fear of ridicule or punishment.

Jackson affirms that schools resemble total institutions that have complete control over the involuntarily committed clientele, in this case the students.[43] Students are trained to respond in standard fashion and are thereby stripped of opportunities to respond in "subjective," personal ways. If a child or adolescent has sufficient strength to demand recognition as a unique person, and still receives no such response, withdrawal, either physical or mental, is a frequent result. At least self-identity is somewhat preserved.

In a recent report the United States Civil Rights Commission noted that racial isolation adversely affects the achievement and self-worth of isolated students.

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[42]Philip Jackson, Life in Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1968), p. 27.

[43]Erving Goffman presents an excellent analysis of total institutions in Asylums.

Such isolation tends to "restrict their aspirations, and impair their sense of being able to affect their own destiny."[44] It is obvious that the opportunity for self-identification is greatly influenced by the cultural situation in which a child finds himself. Compulsory attendance laws require that the minority child attend school, even if it be a racially isolated school. If his parents lack financial means to send him to a more favorable learning environment, he has no option but to attend a school that destroys his self-identity and prevents his self-realization.

I now turn to two significant studies of youngsters' opportunities for self-realization in school settings. In Culture Against Man, Jules Henry contended that American society judges learning not on its intrinsic merits but on its contribution to income and security. This forces a child to view school as a means to some distant, economic end. "Even if he is able to perceive a goal, a child is often not sure that he wants it, or that his knowledge will, in the long run, ever get him where he wants to go."[45] Consequently, an adolescent is taking a chance that schooling is the means to achieve what he

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[44]U.S., Civil Rights Commission, Racial Isolation in the Public Schools (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1967), p. 114.

[45]Jules Henry, Culture Against Man (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 172.

seeks. Yet he has no other realistic choice and must submit to schooling. We must ask whether the high school allows him to "express the self he wants to be" or demands that he manifest the self the school desires.[46] Is the adolescent autonomous or helpless? Does he have the opportunity to determine his self-identity or to give expression to his humanity? Henry thinks not.

> The function of the high school, then, is not so much to communicate knowledge as to oblige children finally to accept the grading system as a measure of their inner excellence. And a function of the self-destructive process in American children is to make them willing to accept not their own, but a variety of other standards, like a grading system, for measuring themselves.[47]

Henry also suggests that the function of schooling is not to "free the mind and spirit of man, but to bind them." Schooling, since it is a culture-defending process, must train children "to fit the culture as it is."[48] In so doing, schooling forces the surrender of self-definition and self-evaluation, aspects of self-identification.

> The early schooling process is not successful unless it has accomplished in the child an acquiescence in its criteria, unless the child wants to think the way school has taught him to think. He must have accepted alienation as a rule of life.[49] (Italics mine)

School homogenizes its clientele through the imposition of its evaluative criteria and through uniform processing.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., p. 178.

[48] Ibid., p. 287.

[49] Ibid., p. 291.

When the school makes institutional demands, the child must respond in the approved manner. "School metamorphoses the child, giving it the kind of Self the school can manage, and then proceeds to minister to the Self it has made."[50]

The metamorphosis of adolescents was the concept studied by Carl Nordstrom, Edgar Friedenberg, and Hilary Gold in their investigation of secondary school students. They sought to determine whether schools "do something to students, and in the doing, seriously interfere with the development of what used to be called a strong and forceful character."[51] They assumed that ressentiment[52] in schools transforms adolescents, "young people who are seriously concerned with self-understanding and the development of their potentials," into role players or into residuals who express hostility or eccentricity.[53] The result is inauthenticity. These vanishing adolescents would attempt "to establish themselves in a clear

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[50] Ibid., p. 292.

[51] Carl Nordstrom, Edgar Friedenberg, and Hilary Gold, Society's Children (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 10.

[52] A sense of impotence which an angry individual cannot imagine overcoming.

[53] Nordstrom, et al., Society's Children, p. 23.

relationship with their own feelings as well as with their society."[54] Yet, due to the institutional nature of the school, very few adolescents who seek to assert their identities remain. They have been transformed into manageable objects that the school can process.

Nordstrom's research verified the hypothesis about the diminution in numbers of "adolescents" in high schools. Most students accepted school as a dominating force in their lives and resigned themselves to that adjustor of individuals.

> If we are correct, he cannot be free of the ressentiment-infected, alienating institution. All that he can do is try to the best of his ability to avoid the contaminating influence . . ., and if he succeeds in this it will probably be only at great cost to himself.[55]

Those who choose not to fight for self-identification have apparently accepted their fate and, in the light of what they might lose, resigned themselves to it.

Nordstrom and the others assert that the society in which we live is radically institutionalized. Consequently, the school must be an alienating institution if it is to be society-functional. "We need radically alienated people for our radically alienated world."[56] Adolescent vitality and freedom are to be suppressed or

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[54] Ibid., p. 19.

[55] Ibid., p. 144.

[56] Ibid., p. 133.

eliminated. Dress regulations exemplify the school's meddling in an adolescent's personal life. Standardized curricula and tests are person-negating mechanisms employed to direct youth along the proper path. Those who persist in their attempts at self-identification usually find themselves in an isolated position. "The crisis in alienation represents their efforts to will themselves. . . . But in a world of systems, escape is impossible, and eventually each must make his peace with society."[57]

Summary

This review of pertinent literature substantiates a developing movement of radical criticism of schools. It also illustrates the lack of opportunities for self-identification in school settings. As a result, children and adolescents are prevented from fully developing their unique potentialities. They are denied alternatives to schooling because of compulsory attendance laws, and consequently they must submit themselves to the manipulation of the school. Before we consider some reform proposals intended to provide opportunities for self-identification, the dysfunctional influence of the economic sector of our society will be discussed in Chapter III and the dysfunctional influence of the culture in Chapter IV.

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[57] Ibid., p. 145.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Consideration of possible sources contributing to the inadequate provision for self-identification in school settings requires recognition of the prominent position that the economic sector of our advanced industrial society commands. The economic sector--recently and historically--has been influential in charging the school to perform certain non-educational, economy-supporting functions.[1] In order to perform these functions, changes in traditional school functions necessarily occur. Multiplication of functions results in reduction of time and effort for a particular function. The student is doubly victimized; he receives inadequate job training and is prevented from achieving an education, broadly conceived.

The self-identification of students is greatly influenced by the economic system's demands on the

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[1]See Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, for a discussion of this aspect. Also, see Galbraith, The New Industrial State, for an extensive explanation of the economy of an advanced technological society.

school. To illustrate its influence, several non-educational functions of the school will be discussed. Custodial, consumership, standardization, and fragmentation roles of the school will be delineated and their import on self-identification opportunities of students explained.

Custodial Function

Most states have compulsory attendance laws that require youth to attend school from age six to age sixteen, but with cultural pressures bearing down on them, most adolescents attend school through age eighteen, and 40 per cent of the age group goes on to college. Through advertising campaigns, government and industry persuade adolescents that employment is not available for non-graduates and thereby keep them off the labor market. The notion that dropouts have inadequate skills or are untrainable for the available work is false. Berg's research into the relationship of educational credentials and work satisfaction and performance indicates that in certain manufacturing industries, educational achievement was inversely related to performance. The less schooled individuals were more productive and had lower rates of absenteeism and turnover.[2] Berg also discovered employment personnel who insisted that they hired persons with

[2]Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 87.

more education to maintain worker turnover in clerical positions. If such workers remained with the firm for too long a time, they would become wage problems. Dissatisfaction is expected and apparently encouraged.[3]

In another portion of his research, Berg investigated the performance of military men in technical positions. He discovered that the rate of success in training programs and the subsequent performance of duties were not determined by previous educational success or by possession of credentials. New Standards men, those who were inducted under a program of reduced mental requirements, performed as well as men who possessed high school credentials or who had some college experience. Many New Standards men were dropouts, and yet they performed their duties very capably. In the Army, "when convential screening standards are lowered, even substantially, no dire implications for performance ensue."[4]

A remarkable indication of the economic sector's influence on schooling is the attitude of men responsible for hiring personnel in industry. Perhaps unwittingly, they promote the school's custodial function. "Like college alumni, high-school graduates, by virtue of their staying in school rather than by virtue of their particular learning experiences or skills, were considered

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[3] Ibid., p. 106.

[4] Ibid., p. 158.

simply 'better' and more likely, more able, and more intelligent prospects."[5] In view of such attitudes and the advertising of school attendance benefits, Berg asserts that the school "functions to an important, indeed depressing, extent as a licensing agency."[6]

Drucker has also identified the school as a custodial institution. He contends that there is not much correlation between ability for work performance and ability for school performance. "There is no reason to believe that the diploma certifies too much more than that the holder has sat a long time."[7] He recognizes that, although labor statistics include anyone above the age of fourteen, "no one under eighteen or nineteen in this country is really considered employable."[8] School is the only legitimate place for them.

The diploma, Drucker asserts, has replaced performance as the culturally accepted path to opportunity and promotion. Attendance now substitutes for achievement. As a result, both the individual and the society suffer. The individual, denied an opportunity for experience and performance with adults, succumbs to the economic

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[5] Ibid., p. 79.

[6] Ibid., p. 104.

[7] Peter F. Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 331.

[8] Ibid., p. 329.

pressure and the cultural concern and remains in school. Whether he overcomes this extension of adolescence is uncertain. The society loses the potential productivity of energetic adolescents and gains the social problems of delinquency, hasty marriage and divorce.

Goodman also contends that the custodial functioning of the school has little relation to economic employability of the captive clientele. Large industrial firms can train persons for a skilled position in a matter of weeks or months.[9] "The long schooling is for most a way of keeping the young on ice."[10] By limiting their opportunities for participation in the economic system other than as consumers, the industrial system obstructs the process of maturation.[11] "If there is to be equality of opportunity for all young people from middle adolescence on, job experience is required as an alternative to classroom experience."[12] The school's preoccupation with and performance of its custodial function "educates" its clientele in the reality of its restriction of

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[9]Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, p. 67.

[10]Paul Goodman, Like A Conquered Province (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 14.

[11]George Pettitt, Prisoners of Culture (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 119.

[12]Ibid., p. 131.

opportunities for self-identification. Youth are denied alternatives to the school's custodial care.

Once the school absorbed the custodial function into its repertoire, a means to guarantee its performance of this duty had to be found. Compulsory attendance laws were passed to insure that all youth are processed by the school. A direct consequence was the standardization of operations within the schools. A large mass of students required standard procedures, since the school would have had difficulty in treating them as unique individuals.

The school, through its performance of the custodial function, assists the economy by releasing women from their children-tending duties. These women are then able to work and contribute to the further consumption of manufactured products. Goodman asserts that the "chief purpose of the elementary schools is to relieve the home, to baby-sit."[13] Clearly, the school contributes to the economy's operation, even if we do not consider that the school "has become society's major employer."[14]

Consumership Function

Since a highly industrial and technological economy requires uniformity and consensus for efficient

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[13]Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, p. 44.

[14]Ivan Illich, "Schooling: The Ritual of Progress," New York Review of Books, December 3, 1970, p. 24.

operation, consumers must be persuaded that individualistic, subjective desires are inappropriate and indeed harmful to the well-being of the society. Of course, one must have an income to be able to purchase items that have been promoted as absolutely necessary for existence. By performing the custodial function, the school allows many women to obtain such an income. Yet, by keeping adolescents off the labor market, the school prevents them from satisfying those desires created by companies through advertising. Those who attempt to get a piece of the economic pie by dropping out are discouraged by the lack of employment opportunities.

However, in a subtle way, the economy, through use of advertising techniques, seeks to convince youngsters that they can obtain these desired items of consumption by completing schooling and becoming a producer. "In its efforts to direct youth along the proper path, the school offers its students first, a carrot--future success in the job world--and second, for encouragement, it whacks them with a stick--it keeps a file in which it systematically records their achievements and their failures."[15] The school and the economic sector mutually reinforce each other; the school convinces its clientele that they will not obtain those items of consumption unless they obtain

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[15]Nordstrom, et al., Society's Children, p. 137.

a diploma, and the economy convinces youth that they will be unable to perform well in industry unless they have a diploma.

An effective method of instilling consumership in adolescents involves the dissolution of primary identity and the manufacture of a substitute identity that is dependent upon externals for support. The school effectively eliminates internal solidarity and self-identification through its grading system. Though external verification of one's worth is undoubtedly necessary for mental health, total elimination of internal judgment of success and meaning is detrimental to self-realization. The child or adolescent accepts external evaluation because he has no alternative; his parents and the larger society demand such extrinsic substantiation of worth. "Only one of several mechanisms--the most notable other being the family--the school is especially important for an industrial bureaucratic society."[16] If an adolescent has opportunities for self-identification, there is no guarantee that the economic system will continue to operate on the basis of contrived consumption. The economy cannot accept such a possibility.

> The corresponding educational technique, as a consequence, takes a completely determinate direction.

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[16] Ibid., p. 131.

> Social conformism must be impressed upon the child: he must be adapted to his society; he must not impair its development.[17]

The influence of the school in consumership training is particularly effective in lower-class school settings. The struggle for community control of schools may be in part motivated by the desire for the goods of the "Great Society." School is seen as a vehicle that will transport the poor into the middle-class and give them the opportunity for consumption. Visible worth is the expression of internal worth, according to the society, and so one must become a consumer.

Along with other social institutions, the school defines success in material terms--grades, honors, money, goods--rather than in terms of self-identification. The students are told "what sort of self and world they are to accept for themselves."[18]

Anxiety that an adolescent may experience in his struggle for self-identification in the face of institutional pressures is sometimes relieved by a compulsive buying spree. Such consumption compensates for the anguish that the adolescent endures.[19] It also reduces

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[17]Ellul, The Technological Society, p. 347.

[18]Erving Goffman, Asylums (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 304.

[19]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 119.

the difficulty in specifying who one will be. It is easier to buy items than to involve oneself in a process of self-identification. "The automobile, the television, the gadgets . . . produced in accordance with the requirements of profitable exchange, have become part and parcel of the people's own existence, own 'actualization.'"[20] Frequently an adolescent's identity may be purchased; both the economy and the adolescent are grateful.

Standardization Function

Standardization of knowledge, of outlook, and of response are indispensable to the industrial state. Just as manufacturing plants produce standardized products, schools produce standardized graduates as much as possible. "They want to learn how to tell what is right for them; the school wants to teach them to give the responses that will earn them rewards in the classroom and in social situations."[21] Conformity is emphasized as a means to material success and as a support for contrived needs. "By controlling how you are brought up and what your experiences are," the school can effectively standardize

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[20]Herbert Marcuse, An Essay on Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 12.

[21]Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, p. 212.

aspects of one's identity.[22] Through involvement with an institution that has a fairly standardized ritual wherever it is located, children and adolescents are manipulated; they cannot perceive alternatives to the prevalent form or manner of schooling and education.

In the school system's view, most adolescents and children are similar in outlook and response, and therefore the school can apply efficient, uniform methods of control and instruction. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to standardization. "The process of becoming an American, as it goes on in high school, tends to be a process of renunciation of differences. This conflicts directly, of course, with the adolescent's need for self-definition."[23]

The economy in its industrial form requires workers who are capable of immediate replacement, that is, standardized employees. Idiosyncratic workers could hamper efficiency, an immediate goal of technological production. By suppressing the expression of individuality, the school guarantees that the economic sector will receive packaged workers who are fairly well-rounded, uniform products. "Standardization creates

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[22]Victor Ferkiss, Technological Man: The Myth and the Reality (New York: George Braziller, 1969), p. 22.

[23]Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent, p. 55.

impersonality";[24] "the ends of production are taken as given and the worker is to be 'adjusted' to his job so that the human equation matches the industrial equation."[25] Furthermore, as Friedenberg asserts, "the last thing management needs, at almost any level, is a self-generating enthusiast."[26]

The school has been quite effective in standardizing outlook and response, as Nordstrom and others indicate. Youngsters who were interviewed displayed "hostility to personal autonomy" exhibited by other students. "As most respondents see it, self-directed people are untrustworthy, because they are unpredictable; you can't tell what they are going to do next."[27] Industry can hardly afford large groups of unpredictable workers. Friedenberg explicitly describes the purpose of standardization: "to protect society from "subjectivity"; from people with an excessively personal style or approach to

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[24]Ellul, The Technological Society, p. 12.

[25]Daniel Bell, "Notes on Work," in Anatomies of America, ed. by Amitai Etzioni (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 100.

[26]Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, p. 176.

[27]Nordstrom, et al., Society's Children, p. 94.

situations, who threaten or antagonize their co-workers, fellow citizens, and indeed, in extreme cases, society itself."[28]

Fragmentation Function

Fragmentation of experience is important to the economy, for it increases the probability that these youngsters will be susceptible to consumership promotions. If the adolescent had a unified outlook, if he had an integrated approach to work and school and leisure, he might question the operation of the economic sector and reject attempts to manipulate his consumption patterns. The economy cannot afford groups of consumers purchasing items on the basis of real need only. "Goods that are related only to elementary physical sensation--that merely prevent hunger, protect against cold, provide shelter, suppress pain--have come to comprise a small and diminishing part of all production."[29] By "psychologizing" goods and services--adding psychic value--the economy controls the nature and extent of consumer spending.[30] The school, acting for the economy, attempts to undermine inwardness in adolescents, for such confidence

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[28]Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, p. 177.

[29]John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State (New York: Signet Books, 1967), p. 211.

[30]Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 196.

in one's view of the world is a threat to manipulation. Separation of curricula, separation and non-integration of studies within curricular tracks, and minimization of integration of thought and feeling ("objectivity") are barriers that allow for psychic control by the school and the economy.[31]

A fragmented school experience culminating in a fragmented identity is useful to the economy in its employment of graduates. Many jobs require a person to mentally evade the job itself if he is to retain some semblance of mental health. "For most people their job was what they had to do rather than what they wanted to do; that taking a job, therefore, meant giving up part of themselves."[32] If the school is to fulfill its consumership function, it must also prepare the adolescent for this seemingly necessary schizophrenia. Otherwise, expecting work to be supportive of the self when it is frequently not, the worker may become rebellious and threatening to the system's continuation in its present form.

Consequently, the school deals with the student in a manner encouraging fragmentation. Certain aspects of

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[31]See Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, Chapter IV.

[32]Henry, Culture Against Man, p. 127.

the child or adolescent are dealt with at seemingly appropriate times, but the person qua person is usually ignored.

Summary

The economic sector of our advanced technological society expects the school to fulfill several non-educational functions: custodial, consumership, standardization, and fragmentation functions. In meeting these obligations, schools limit a child's or adolescent's opportunities for self-identification. Furthermore, these non-educational duties hamper the school's fulfillment of its proper educative functions. In the next chapter the culture's influence on schooling will be explored.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND THE SCHOOL'S CULTURE

Although schools by their very nature are habit-formation institutions, they have extended this process to include the promulgation of a "one-dimensional" outlook on American society.[1] Since persons are very complex beings, and since the schools could not operate in their present form or manner if they attempted to deal with such diversity, the school institutes a simplification procedure: uniquely individual persons are treated as uniform things to be adjusted to society. This process is especially demeaning to the "disadvantaged"; for them, socialization "really means inducing them to abandon their old, developing selves as their price of admission to the opportunities afforded by the dominant social system the schools represent."[2] Acceptance of self would be an inappropriate goal for a school, for it would then foster diversity.

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[1]Cf. Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man.

[2]Edgar Friedenberg, "Sentimental Education," New York Review of Books, November 21, 1968, p. 22.

In this chapter the investigator will analyze the cultural functions which the school intends to fulfill in its attempt at standardization of product. The study will focus on the values or orientations that a school tries to foster in its creation of one-dimensional man. Special consideration will be given the issues of privacy, passivity, docility, role behavior, and individuality.

Privacy

Privacy as an individual right tends to be ignored by the school, for in its custodial functioning the school demands unwarranted sociality. If children and adolescents are alone by choice and are also quiet, adults frequently assume that they are perpetrating some sort of misdeed.[3] In this regard, a school merely mimics parents who hold their children or adolescents in nearly constant surveillance. Even non-school time is so often organized that moments of solitude are infrequent. It seems that adult fear of personal loneliness influences the exclusion of privacy for children.

The school eliminates much concern about children's activities through its enforcement of state attendance laws. Adult fear subsides when children are in a supervised place; whether anything positive occurs there is

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[3]Joanne Reynolds, "Children's Privacy and Compulsory Schooling," Teachers College Record, October, 1968, p. 36.

not immediately important. The children or adolescents are compelled to be together. "Compulsory schooling produces such enforced intimacy, for a body of students is compelled to come together in a designated place for a designated time for purposes established by the adult members of society."[4] A clear example is a typical high school study hall in which the occupants are there not for positive advantage but on account of the surveillance and custodial function of the school.

Another example of the exclusion of physical privacy that the school practices involves use of the school's physical facilities.

> The organization of the school militates against the opportunity being provided for children to get off by themselves for any part of the school day to read, work, think, or just to be alone. Most of the day is spent in one room of a box-like shape and crowded with students.[5]

Another aspect of physical privacy that should be considered is enforcement of school dress regulations. Though they have become more lenient in recent years, many school systems still maintain strict dress requirements, especially on hair style. In the controversy, the student's right to expression of personal taste tends to be ignored. Court cases in Michigan and other states indicate the depth of concern for children and adolescent rights to privacy. Yet schools continue to legislate norms of

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[4] Ibid., p. 35.

[5] Ibid., p. 36.

behavior in this area. If exceptions are made or rights granted, standardization of product--the high school graduate--might be impaired.

> Consider that young people in the fullness of their vitality are also at their most beautiful. With them clothes can readily be an expression of their persons. That is, the clothes they wear can accentuate the beauty that is theirs. In so doing, clothes may also help to make them prideful, idiosyncratic, exciting, selfish, and sexy. Allowed expression, such attitudes can encourage trouble.[6]

By eliminating privacy and personal judgment in these matters, the school widens its scope of control over its clients.

Another area of privacy that bears mention is psychological solitude, the right to choose what behavior and which feelings a person will reveal to others.[7] In other words, it is the right to unobserved, unjudged privacy. Even if behavior is observed, the data collected should be of educational benefit to the student and his parents, should be accessible to them, and should

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[6]Nordstrom, et al., Society's Children, p. 134.

[7]Reynolds, "Children's Privacy and Compulsory Schooling," p. 37.

not be accessible to others, as has been the case recently in Washington.[8]

Many schools ignore this right to unjudged privacy by maintaining dossiers on students; frequently, the state requires a minimal gathering of information but school systems gather a surplus. Not only are grades contained therein, on the supposed basis of assisting colleges in evaluating candidates, but all sorts of information ranging from hearing test results to attendance records and disciplinary actions are also gathered. Much of this data is irrelevant to the educational function of the school, and much of it is gathered without the consent of the child or adolescent.

Of course, there is a parallel in the larger society. Recent revelations of eavesdropping on public and private officials by the U.S. Army indicate that even adults are unable to maintain unobserved privacy. Also, the various psychological tests that companies employ in investigating and evaluating potential employees involve disclosure of information that many men and women would

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[8]The District of Columbia Committee of the House of Representatives had decided to publish confidential school records of students along with the names of their parents. A court order prevented the distribution. This situation illustrates the privacy issue clearly; other aspects are treated by Marvin Grandstaff in "Secrecy, Sanity, and the Schools," School and Society, March 4, 1967, pp. 142-44.

prefer to keep private.[9] Hence, it appears that the school is merely imitating the larger society; it is performing one of its cultural functions. Hence, one might characterize education as totalitarian because "there is no corner of the globe or of inner experience which we are not eager to subject to scrutiny and processing."[10] A student's opportunity for privacy must be minimized, for what is kept private cannot be processed. The prevention of private moments insures that the school will have more time to dispense an appropriate identity to students, an identity that might conflict with a self-determined identity. Self-identification would be enhanced by opportunities for reflection and thought. If the school is to perform its other non-educational functions in a successful manner, it can ill afford students who seek solitude to question what is taught and what they value.

Docility

Docility as a valuable trait induced by the school has been confirmed by Jules Henry. In his research he indicates how dependent children are upon the teacher for

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[9]John Holt, The Underachieving School (New York: Pitman Publishing Co., 1969), p. 133.

[10]H. Marshall McLuhan, Counter Blast (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), p. 134.

survival in the classroom.[11] Since children are indoctrinated from their early years to do exactly what adults-in-authority demand, teachers generally have little difficulty building upon the docility posture already apparent in many youngsters. By fostering vulnerability in children, schools guarantee that the majority of youngsters will be easily persuaded that the school knows best in helping them to assert their created identities.[12] "The student learns to accept the institution as the dominating force in his life and resigns himself to defending it."[13] He realizes that he cannot escape the system, and so he resigns himself to its power over him. In order to avoid psychological or physical punishment, a student sacrifices portions of his potentially viable self for the security of a "socially acceptable facade."[14] The student learns "it is better to live with a self dead within him than not to live at all."[15] To assist the child or adolescent in his adaptation to

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[11]Jules Henry, "Attitude Organization in Elementary School Classrooms," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, January, 1957, 131.

[12]Henry, Culture Against Man, p. 292.

[13]Nordstrom, et al., Society's Children, p. 141.

[14]Jules Henry, Vulnerability in Education (College Park, Md.: University of Maryland Press, 1966), p. 2.

[15]Ibid., p. 14.

the school, counselors and school psychologists are available to offer advice about the reasonableness of such accommodation.[16]

Docility is also promoted by the school's adherence to the dictum that "children should be seen and not heard." By promoting silence, the school apparently feels it is developing self-discipline in children. This preoccupation with silence and order has a profound effect on student and teacher.

> ITEM: A new suburban elementary school is being hailed in architectural circles for its 'open design.' The building has no corridors; the sixteen classrooms open instead onto 'project areas' equipped with work tables, sinks, easels, and the like. What the architects do not know, however, is that in most classrooms the project areas go unused. As the principal explains, 'If some children are in the project area while others are in the regular classroom, the teacher can't watch every child, and some of them might start talking.'[17]

Reputation is more important than self-identification.[18]

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[16]See Friedenberg, Coming of Age in America, pp. 73-95, for a discussion of student attitudes toward psychological intervention.

[17]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 128.

[18]Henry discusses this aspect in Vulnerability in Education. In my personal teaching experience, I have found the same attitude to be prevalent among elementary school teachers. Perhaps the teachers are merely fulfilling the obligation impressed upon them by parents; parents frequently instruct children to "do exactly what the teacher says" and to "not cause trouble." Failure in these two admonitions is likely to lead to difficulty for both parent and child.

Reputation becomes the means whereby children are trained to be docile; this occurs predominantly in suburban schools, for parents there are very concerned with personal and social reputation. "The pupil's sense of personal adequacy, or self-respect, becomes the leverage for sanctioning."[19] The students learn to accept certain principles of conduct as inviolable, even if they are ultimately destructive of the inner self. Pupils realize that they are unable to overcome these forces over which they have no control; the only viable alternative is to become passive and docile. Unfortunately, this mode of conduct that produces the least immediate damage has more profound consequences in the future.

> 'The main thing is not to take it personal, to understand that it's just a system and it treats you the same way it treats everybody else, like an engine or a machine or something mechanical. Our names get fed into it--we get fed into it--when we're five years old, and if we catch on and watch our step, it spits us out when we're seventeen or eighteen, ready for college.'[20]

This high school student indicates that preservation of his present position is more important than fulfillment of his potential. By succumbing to the system and accepting its demand of docility, a student thereby

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[19]Dreeben, On What Is Learned in School, p. 39.

[20]Kathryn Noyes and Gordon McAndrew, "Is This What Schools Are For?" Saturday Review, December 21, 1968, p. 59.

conforms to cultural specifications. He becomes a uniform, processed, and processable entity.

> . . . there are variations of point of view, of appeal of objects, and of mode of attack, from person to person. When these variations are suppressed in the alleged interests of uniformity, and an attempt is made to have a single mold of study and recitation, mental confusion and artificiality inevitably result. Originality is gradually destroyed, confidence in one's own quality of mental operation is undermined, and a docile subjection to the opinion of others is inculcated, . . . [21]

Hence, it can be seen that docility is a very functional trait to possess in our society, especially with its decline in personal authority. The hierarchical structure of our society, similar to the school's structure, demands docility. Yet, such improvident acquiescence to the demands of others is harmful to one's own development.

> . . . his seeming attention, his docility, his memorizings and reproductions, will partake of intellectual servility. Such a condition of intellectual subjection is needed for fitting the masses into a society where the many are not expected to have aims or ideas of their own, but to take orders from the few set in authority. It is not adapted to a society which intends to be democratic.[22]

In many ways, what the teacher in the past did to insure docility--personal disapprobation, physical punishment, and others--has been "civilized"; psychological penalties have all but replaced physical punishments, and the effect on a child's self-identification has been necessarily worsened.

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[21] John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), p. 303.

[22] Ibid., p. 305.

Passivity

Though passivity and docility are closely intertwined, a separate section on passivity seems appropriate because of its profound effect on self-identification. Passivity, in my view, is a mental inertia that results from either lack of opportunity to exercise one's powers or impotency to act due to previous constraining situations. Especially for adolescents, cultural and economic limitations obstruct movement, conduct and employment.

Infrequent opportunities to express oneself or to question and investigate what one is taught in school inevitably influences one's desire to do so. It is "safer" to accept what is taught rather than dare test or disbelieve the material presented. Instead, one relates to it.[23] Also, since schools tend to control rather than respond to pupils, students incline themselves to passive acceptance of this situation or to active removal from the institutional press on them. Compulsory attendance, compulsory attention, predetermined length of attendance, and predetermined content of encounter predispose students to a passive role.[24] "To the adolescent, encounters with hostile and manipulative individuals and social institutions are very personal experiences that

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[23]Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Dignity of Youth and Other Atavisms (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 159.

[24]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 253.

tend toward his disintegration."[25] Avoidance of conflict through passive behavior may be the most prudent response which adolescents can make, but, unfortunately, it prevents personal growth.

> The passiveness of man in industrial society today is one of his most characteristic and pathological features. . . . Being passive, he does not relate himself to the world actively. . . . He feels powerless, lonely, and anxious. He has little sense of integrity or self-identity.[26]

Of course, our society does not wish to have active, integral individuals questioning the consumption and production assumptions of the modern industrial and technological state. The dysfunctionality of school for personal growth and the functionality of school for societal intactness can be clearly seen in this instance. "It is difficult, obviously, to get an education from a school that refuses to educate without requiring that its students submit simultaneously to custodial care, sterile competition, and indoctrination."[27] It seems that the school employs "surplus repression" in controlling children and adolescents, and whatever benefit minimal control

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[25]Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent, p. 134.

[26]Fromm, The Revolution of Hope: Toward A Humanized Technology, p. 39.

[27]Illich, The Celebration of Awareness, p. 133.

of activities produces is lost through excessive restriction and coercion.[28] Advocacy of activity in the sense of functional behavior based on interest is generally ignored on the basis of numbers of students to be processed.[29] Students realize that school usually neglects their preoccupation with identity and wholeness and seeks to deal with students on an impersonal basis.[30] Students frequently respond in an apathetic and passive manner to the school's mode of interaction--treatment, if you wish--in order to preserve intact the inner self.

Active scrutiny of what one is taught often leads to rejection on the basis of deception and/or falsity. To prevent such rejection, schools reduce the importance of personal authority. A student must refer to some authority for verification and usually the "authority" or "expert" is the teacher; what one might feel or think must be compared with standard interpretations. Hence, passivity is often a protective barrier shielding one from dissection because of beliefs or ideas. "It appears that the majority of young people are, in fact, all too needy for, trusting in, and conforming to present

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[28]Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 32.

[29]Jean Piaget, Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child (New York: Orion Press, 1970), p. 163.

[30]See Henry, Culture Against Man.

institutions, organizations, parties, industrial complexes, super-machineries--and this because true personal authority is waning."[31]

The school as a culture-functional institution attempts to inculcate these characteristics of behavior--sociality, docility, and passivity--and usually succeeds. In interaction with each other, these traits, as expressed in adolescent behavior particularly, contribute to a manufactured school role, a manner of conduct that is functional for survival in school and society but which is dysfunctional for authentic self-identification. Uniqueness of person is ignored, so adolescents express their eccentricity outside of school hours. However, such display is usually expressive of an incidental aspect of the person rather than a flowering of true identity.

Role Behavior

The manufacturing process whereby a youngster is fitted with a socially viable role involves an initial period of confinement (grades K-2 usually) during which Self is subordinated to group. A mechanistic approach guarantees that all students are to be treated equally throughout their school career. External behavior is

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[31]Erik Erikson, "Memorandum on Youth," Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress, p. 229.

evaluated constantly, "without giving thought to what is going on inside them."[32] Likewise, our culture tends to reward and censure on the basis of observed behavior; whether the role performance is a result of psychic manipulation is ignored. A socially acceptable facade is mandatory for the operation of our society as it is, and, hence, many students and adults sacrifice inner selves for the security of an appearance.[33] "Instead of functioning actively as an autonomous personality, man will become a passive, purposeless, machine-conditioned animal whose proper functions, as technicians now interpret man's role, will either be fed into the machines or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit of de-personalized, collective organizations."[34] Through its operating procedures, the school tends to influence students to "self-direct themselves in a manageable way."[35] Because of its compulsory nature and ritual procedures, the school effectively communicates to its inmates the role behavior that will be considered appropriate. Furthermore, the school

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[32]Jackson, The Teacher and the Machine, p. 69.

[33]Henry, Vulnerability in Education, p. 13.

[34]Lewis Mumford, The Myth of the Machine (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966), p. 3.

[35]Goffman, Asylums, p. 87.

as an institution tends to tell its charges "what sort of self and world they are to accept for themselves."[36]

By eliminating alternative viewpoints of the world and varied expressions of self, the school stimulates, perhaps inadvertantly, a counter-culture phenomenon that focuses on alternatives in life-style. Whether the school and the culture permit counter-cultures and youth cultures to exist as palliatives to a threat of significant social and educational reform is disputable. Perhaps "free schools" can be considered as sanctioned alternatives, for they generally do not have much sustained influence on the traditional school and its operation. It may be that they are functional for the continued, static, uniform operation of public schools.

Schools tend to teach children that, since they are not adults (and are not-yet-persons, therefore), they are unable to make meaningful decisions with any clarity of judgment. Orderliness and compliance are emphasized; only after these responses are learned may students express themselves as individuals.[37] Yet, whether our culture values authentic individuals or whether students will have the readiness and capability to assert

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[36] Ibid., p. 304.

[37] Robert Coles, "The Measure of Man--I," New Yorker, November 7, 1970, p. 76.

themselves authentically is questionable in view of the tight fit which contemporary institutions maintain in order to assure uniformity. "A child with authoritarian parents or with frequent meaningful contact with other authority figures is likely to develop a personality which can be described as conformist."[38] Since young children tend to see little of their fathers during their elementary school years, and assuming that the father is the central figure of most homes, teachers in elementary schools assume much more influence upon students than they perhaps realize. Because the school is a compulsory institution that relies a great deal on authoritarian procedures, the child, by virtue of his presence and ignoring his accomplishments in school, is likely to become conformist. The proper performance of a role is then one step away. "All the contemporary institutions that bear on the young, diverse as they may seem to be, are united in their insistence on cultivating sensitivity and pliability to the demands and expectations of other persons."[39] A "proper" relationship of the individual to society is encouraged in order that society might

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[38]Edward L. Walker and Roger W. Heyns, An Anatomy for Conformity (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 90.

[39]Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent, p. 6.

continue in its present form. Individualistic responses to society might prove destructive of the status quo and are to be avoided.

It may be argued that role behavior is essential in our culture because of the extent of physical and job mobilities. In order to avoid domestic culture shock, standardized manners of behavior are promoted, most frequently through the communications media. Unfortunately, such systematization suppresses expressions of uniqueness and individuality. Dreeben asserts that schools should teach children and adolescents to manifest maximally adaptive qualities which will guarantee acceptance by our culture. "If schooling forms the linkage between the family life of children and the public life of adults, it must provide experiences conducive to learning the principles of conduct and patterns of behavior appropriate to adulthood."[40] By teaching the norms of achievement, independence, universality, and specificity, schools prepare students for social roles. However, Campbell argues that most middle-class and middle-class-aspiring families teach these norms within the home. Hence, schools may not be necessary for this function of standardization of role behavior.[41]

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[40]Dreeben, On What Is Learned in School, p. 4.

[41]"Review Symposium," Sociology of Education, Spring, 1970, p. 207.

Furthermore, Ellul argues that deliberate attempts to instill certain norms undoubtedly will affect the provision for self-differentiation that is essential to personal growth. "Education will no longer be an unpredictable and exciting adventure in human enlightenment, but an exercise in conformity and an apprenticeship to whatever gadgetry is useful in a technical world."[42] Social conformism is cultivated in the child; "he must be adapted to his society; he must not impair its development."[43] Social adaptation is promoted as a necessary function of the school. "Despite all the pretentious talk about the aims of education--it is not the child in and for himself who is being educated but the child in and for society."[44]

Summary

The school as a societal institution tends to promote ideas and behavior that are adaptive to other institutions. Culture, as an amalgam of norms, expects the school to insure acceptance of these norms as the standard of existence. Consequently, children and adolescents are required to recognize the right of schools to process them. Any alternative to such recognition carries harsh penalties, either physical or psychological.

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[42]Ellul, The Technological Society, p. 349.

[43]Ibid., p. 347.

[44]Ibid., p. 348.

In its non-educational, cultural functioning, the school employs a standardized processing program that impinges upon the student's inner being. Passivity, docility, sociality, and role behavior are demanded as a price for credentialization. By his acquiescence to such demands, the student negates himself and renounces his right to self-differentiation and self-identification.

CHAPTER V

"RADICAL" REFORM PROPOSALS

In order to properly evaluate suggested changes in the role and operation of the school, several types of "radical" reform proposals will be identified and explained, and the relationship of these reform proposals to the self-identification and self-realization of children and adolescents will be delineated. After making this necessary digression, the investigator will address himself to the form and thrust of these suggestions, for short-term and long-term effects must be considered in a sound critique. A consideration of the major specific issues involved in a student's quest for self-identification will comprise the next chapter.

Type I

The initial category of reform proposals involves the suggestions of critics and experts who consider curricular and methodological changes sufficient alterations to permit student self-identification in school settings. The school's position in the institutional framework of an advanced industrial and technological society is

usually not questioned. At the present time, the chief spokesman is Charles E. Silberman, Fortune editor and occasional educational critic. His massive study of American education has caused considerable debate among teachers, administrators, and college faculty.

Crisis in the Classroom[1] is a study of the shortcomings of the American school system and also a proposal for certain changes in school operation. In the initial segment of the book, he decries the same problems that other writers such as Paul Goodman, John Holt, George Dennison, and James Herndon have discussed in previous works. "Because adolescents are harder to 'control' than younger children, secondary schools tend to be even more authoritarian and repressive than elementary schools; the values they transmit are the values of docility, passivity, conformity and lack of trust."[2] Certainly Silberman is at one with other educational critics when he writes of the desolation in secondary schools. Yet, he charts his own course in viewing the societal role of the school. "The raison d'être of the school--society's ultimate justification for creating a separate, formal, educational institution, and for making prolonged exposure to it compulsory--is the conviction (the faith, if you will), that, as

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[1]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970).

[2]Ibid., p. 324.

Bruner also puts it, 'The conduct of life is not independent of what it is one knows' nor 'of how it is that one has learned what one knows.'"[3] Clearly this indicates that credentialization is one of the purposes of the school, for other means of attaining the same proficiency in skills and knowledge are ignored.

Silberman argues that, despite the recent publicity, freedom is not an area of contention; "freedom" and "restraint" are not in conflict.[4] The major difficulty is the concurrence of individuals, that is, teachers and students, in the judgment of what is most worth knowing. "The conflict need not be resolved: it is not essential that teachers and students share the same educational goals, only that they have educational goals--goals that can be articulated into some coherent structure."[5] Whether teachers and students with dissimilar educational goals can have positive, constructive relationships is open to question.

Throughout his book Silberman seems concerned with the creation and maintenance of a humane society. He appears to view the school as the institution that will produce the kind of society he desires. By ignoring the institutional matrix in which the school exists, Silberman

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[3] Ibid., p. 325.

[4] Ibid., p. 334.

[5] Ibid., p. 335.

assumes that the school can negate the influences of other institutions and create the Great Society.

In order to develop this humane society, children are to learn what they need to learn in a humane manner. After consideration of various educational reforms, Silberman chooses the new English primary school as a model to be adapted to the educational system in the United States.[6] This informal education method resembles progressive education as it existed in the 1930's, yet Silberman insists that they are not identical. The contemporary informal schools affirm the teacher's central role in schooling.[7]

> 'It means regarding them as our responsibility.' And that responsibility means educating them: transmitting, creating, and evoking the skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge that will help them grow into mature, creative, and happy adults.[8]

In the process of educating children, British informal schools frequently arrange a special environment for the children. "The 'formality' of the informal classroom grows out of the fact that the teacher creates a highly structured environment, organized around a space rather than a time framework, and then manages it so that it

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[6]See Children and Their Primary Schools for a detailed explanation of the intent of the new schools.

[7]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 209.

[8]Ibid., p. 210.

changes in response to children's interests, activities, and needs."[9] Whether a tightly structured environment leaves room for individual explorations in other areas is open to debate. It seems inconceivable that a school could accommodate very many dissimilar interests.

Silberman also seems to be wary of the possible flabbiness which the informal approach might bring to American schools. By concentrating on the affective realm, which American informal schools tend to do according to Silberman, social objectives of education may be slighted. "Finding the right balance is never easy; there will always be a certain tension between two groups of educational objectives--those concerned with individual growth and fulfillment, and those concerned with the transmission of specific skills, intellectual disciplines, and bodies of knowledge--and finding the 'right' balance is neither easy nor obvious."[10] It appears that Silberman assumes that skills and knowledge are separate from individual growth, that they are in opposition. The child or adolescent apparently must sacrifice a little of each area in his education. Yet, individual growth and fulfillment seems to necessitate success in skill development and knowledge acquisition.

Silberman's approach to educational reform through informal classrooms indicates that he assumes that schools

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[9] Ibid., p. 238.

[10] Ibid., p. 322.

are necessary and also that schools are to be a significant humanizing force in changing society.

> Our most pressing educational problem, in short, is not how to increase the efficiency of the schools; it is how to create and maintain a humane society. A society whose schools are inhumane is not likely to be humane itself.[11]

Yet, the informal education approach seconded by Silberman, Albert Shanker, and others promotes learning through more efficient means. What teachers previously did through discipline and a harsh grading system can now be done, apparently, through humane classrooms. In the rush for classroom reform, the ills of society and the child's life outside the classroom seem to be ignored.

Another major spokesman for Type I change is Jerome Bruner, director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Harvard. Through many articles and books, most notable of which is The Process of Education, Bruner has promoted the belief that children can learn anything if it is in an acceptable form for the child's stage of development. His major concern has been the arrangement of school environments so as to maximize learning according to various criteria.[12] Recently he has been

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[11] Ibid., p. 203.

[12] Jerome Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1966), p. 37.

conducting experiments with infants to determine how "learners' own goals can be used as a prime mover for their self-education."[13]

Like Silberman, Bruner is concerned with societal changes. He recognizes that the school is in an institutional matrix, and he questions the relationship of the school to other components of that matrix. "Educational reform confined only to the schools and not to the society at large is doomed for eventual triviality."[14] Through programs such as MACOS,[15] Bruner tries to relate educational change to the culture. He realizes that educational reform has political implications and feels that proposals for educational change must be cognizant of these implications. "A theory of instruction is a political theory in the proper sense that it derives from consensus concerning the distribution of power within the society--who shall be educated and to fulfill what roles?"[16] Through his concern for self-motivation of learners and through his extensive efforts at curricular

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[13]Maya Pines, "Infants are Smarter Than Anybody Thinks," New York Times Magazine, November 29, 1970, p. 32.

[14]Jerome Bruner, "Culture, Politics, and Pedagogy," Saturday Review, May 18, 1968, p. 69.

[15]Man, A Course of Study.

[16]Bruner, "Culture, Politics, and Pedagogy," p. 69.

reform, Bruner seems to attempt detailed manipulation of school program so that it accords with the desires and interests of most youngsters. It seems to fit well with the informal school approach promoted by Silberman. "What the school imposes often fails to enlist the natural energies that sustain spontaneous learning--curiosity, a desire for competence, aspiration to emulate a model, and a deep-sensed commitment to the web of social reciprocity."[17] Bruner and other Type I reformers propose educational reforms that involve stimulation of children's interest in what should be learned by them in school. They assume that manipulation of the school environment and curriculum to make it more palatable for children is more productive than reorganizing the school around the interests of children, which is the program proposed by Type II reformers.

Type II

Undoubtedly the major position from which Type II critics thrust their barbs is the uniqueness of the individual. Numerous research findings indicate the vast array of convergent and divergent skills which a child or adolescent might possess.[18] In addition to these

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[17]Bruner, Toward a Theory of Instruction, p. 127.

[18]See the research findings of Torrance, Getzels, and Jackson.

skills and styles, individual children may be further distinguished by the variety of environments which they encounter prior to school matriculation. Yet, in the typical elementary classroom and up through the system, pupils encounter near uniformity of treatment. A colleague suggested that perhaps the educational system's approach to children and adolescents has been inverted: pupils of diverse abilities and interests are narrowed in their outlook and expression as they progress through the system. Rather, school environments should foster further divergence and development of these unique abilities and interests. Type II critics suggest reforms that will stimulate such variation.

A second assumption involves the child's view of experience or learning. Some critics assume that an individual has no innate desire to learn. In fact, the child may not seek to learn what pedagogues may demand he learn. Type II critics such as George Dennison, A. S. Neill, and John Holt believe that children learn through interaction with their immediate environment. "I believe in children learning with our assistance and encouragement the things they want to learn, when they want to learn them, how they want to learn them, why they want to learn them."[19] By considering the child to be lazy, averse to new experiences, and lacking motivation, teachers often invoke

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[19]Holt, The Underachieving School, p. 180.

the need for disciplinary action so that the child will get to work and learn.

Type II critics generally denounce the neglect of a child's special interest in his immediate environment. Disregard for a child's interests has a telling effect on his self-identification and subsequent self-realization. In view of the school's utilization of extrinsic rewards to coerce students into approved interests and proper behavior, it seems that children will recognize that the school emphasizes performance and not "being" or humanness. Type II reformers assert that emphasis should fall upon the uniqueness of each child. "A person's identity is made up of those things--qualities, tastes, beliefs--that are uniquely his, that he found and chose and took for himself, that cannot be lost or taken from him, that do not depend on his position or his success or other people's opinion of him."[20] These reformers suggest that if schools were to concentrate on furthering a child's or adolescent's self-identification and self-realization, not only would children and adolescents develop uniquely but school problems such as motivation and discipline would also virtually disappear.

Another assumption accepted by most Type II critics is that schools frequently have a negative influence on a child's or adolescent's total growth.

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[20] Ibid., p. 39.

For years, parents and educators have assumed that schools by their very nature are instruments of positive effect upon their clients. Yet, as the experiences of many children in both inner-city and suburban schools testify, schools can destroy self-concept, interest, and initiative: keys to self-realization.

> What we do in the school (never mind what nice things we preach) says in effect to young children, "Your experience, your concern, your hopes, your fears, your desires, your interests, they count for nothing. What counts is what we are interested in, what we care about, and what we have decided you are to learn."[21]

As already indicated, John Holt is one of several Type II critics who have proposed schools that begin with children's interests and expand them, schools in which compulsory attendance rules do not exist, and schools which place great emphasis on relationships between children and adults.

Another reformer of this breed is A. S. Neill, headmaster of Summerhill, the controversial English boarding school. Neill emphasizes the affective domain of a child's learning and views the school's role as necessarily providing an environment conducive to learning and giving the learner free rein of his interests. He considers the child to be "innately wise and realistic." A key idea of Neill's philosophy of education is

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[21] Ibid., p. 200.

the allowance of individual freedom for students. "No one can have social freedom, for the rights of others must be respected. But everyone should have individual freedom."[22] Neill does not advocate absolute freedom, but instead he allows individual freedom to be taken at will by children. "He [the child] is allowed to do as he pleases only in things that affect him--and only him."[23] Neill asserts that the child is innately good, an individual who has a deep inclination to learn. However, he does see a school as a necessary environment, since occasionally a child or adolescent needs guidance and assistance in reaching his own goals. Freedom of thought and movement is encouraged, so that a child may fully develop a well-integrated personality. Coercion can only have a negative effect on a person's self-identification and self-realization. Clearly, the emphasis is on "being" rather than on "doing."

Another Type II critic that has had substantial publicity in the past few years is George Dennison. He agrees with Holt and Neill that teachers should recognize the humanity and uniqueness of each child. He adamantly defends the child's right to not attend classes; this lack of compulsion and coercion is the essence of

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[22]A. S. Neill, Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1960), p. 356.

[23]Ibid., p. 348.

Dennison's educational posture. By helping several disadvantaged children to love themselves, he made it possible for them to learn, an accomplishment which the public schools had deemed an impossibility for these children. Dennison and the other teachers at the First Street School treated the twenty-three students as "whole children," rather than ministering to segments of their total selves. "We conceived of ourselves as an environment for growth, and accepted the relationships between the children and ourselves as being the very heart of the school."[24] Dennison clearly delineates the Type II reform proposals when he describes the role of a school: "The business of a school is not, or should not be, mere instruction, but the life of the child."[25] Once a school concentrates on the life of the child, it must come to terms with the notion of authority in the school. Dennison asserts that children will develop positive relationships with adults who are more experienced and knowledgeable than they are. From these relationships a natural, organic structuring of the school will occur, with children seeking out experienced, knowledgeable adults who can assist them in attaining their own goals.

> How much better it is to meander a bit--or a good bit--letting the free play of minds, adult and child,

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[24]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 28.

[25]Ibid., p. 27.

> takes its own very lively course! . . . The children will feel closer to the adults, more secure, more assured of concern and individual care. Too, their own self-interest will lead them into positive relations with the natural authority of adults, and this is much to be desired, for natural authority is a far cry from authority that is merely arbitrary. . . . When all this takes on a positive instead of a merely negative character, the children see the adults as protectors and as sources of certitude, approval, novelty, skills.[26]

In his search for identity, the child finds the adult as an ally and a model who can assist him in his self-realization.

Dennison asserts that schools have operated as responses to various myths, the most damaging of which is that learning is a result of teaching. He denies that the progress of a child bears "a direct relation to methods of instruction and internal relationships of curriculum."[27] Type II critics can be distinguished from Type I critics on this point; the latter apparently accept the myth.

> Nothing could be farther from the truth. Naturally we want good teachers. Naturally we want a coherent curriculum (we need not impose it in standardized forms). But to cite these as the effective causes of learning is wrong. The causes are in the child. When we consider the powers of mind of a healthy eight-year-old--the avidity of the senses, the finesse and energy of observation, the effortless concentration, the vivacious memory--we realize immediately that these powers possess true magnitude in the general scale of things.[28]

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[26] Ibid., p. 24.

[27] Ibid., p. 73.

[28] Ibid.

Dennison centered on the relationships between children and between adults and children, for he believed that by doing so, learning will naturally occur. By creating a positive environment--one that is accepting, active, with definite but flexible demands--Dennison feels that the formative powers of children and adolescents will be liberated. In many ways Dennison is Goodmanesque in his approach to learning, for the First Street School was an expression of Paul Goodman's mini-school concept. I will now turn to Type III critics, men who generally reject the legitimacy of the school as the only culturally certified means for obtaining an education.

Type III

While Type I critics propose reforms in curricula and methods, and Type II reformers suggest revisions that emphasize expression of pupil interests, Type III critics support societal alternatives to schooling. They reject schooling as the necessary means of becoming a useful, social being.[29] By considering Paul Goodman's proposals, we can recognize the major suggestions of Type III reformers.

Goodman proposes a reconstruction of society that will permit maximal individual growth with a minimum of constraints. He criticizes the modern industrial society

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[29]Illich, The Celebration of Awareness, p. 123.

and its educational establishment for its demands upon people. Irrational conformity to our institutions and culture is rejected on the grounds that such action is detrimental to the growth of the individual and the society.[30]

He argues that instead of pouring more money into the present school establishment, alternatives to schooling should be considered.

> Fundamentally, there is no right education except growing up into a worthwhile world. Indeed, our excessive concern with problems of education at present simply means that the grown-ups do not have such a world. The poor youth of America will not become equal by rising through the middle class, going to middle-class schools. . . . But also the middle-class youth will not escape their increasing exploitation and anomie in such schools.[31]

Goodman asserts that a society inevitably instructs its youth and consequently we should concentrate our efforts on preservation of its power to educate rather than isolating youngsters in schools.

> My own bias, however, is that education is going on spontaneously anyway; it is itself part of the kaleidoscope of society. Youngsters are imitating and identifying, aspiring to grow up, asking why,

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[30]Jack Hruska, "An Analysis of Paul Goodman's Conception of the Nature of Man As a Perspective on His Educational Proposals" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1969).

[31]Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, pp. 59-60.

> demanding show me how. Adults are demonstrative, helpful, ideal, or seeking to mold, exploit, or get a following.[32]

He proposes that formal schooling may be "a deliberate intervention" upon the incidental learning which occurs in society. Hence, he recommends abolition of the present school establishment.[33]

> The physical environment and social culture force themselves on us, and the young are bound to grow up to them well or badly. They always fundamentally determine the curriculum in formal schooling; but even if there is no schooling at all, they are the focus of children's attention and interest; they are what is there.[34]

Goodman recognizes that schooling has cloaked itself with various non-educational functions, and he sees the dissolution of the school system as a means of making the entire society educational once again. As long as society is deluded into thinking that learning and education occur only in schools, enormous sums will be misspent on a system "so fundamentally out of touch that it has ceased to educate at all."[35]

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[32]Goodman, The Community of Scholars, p. 211.

[33]Paul Goodman, "The Present Moment in Education," New York Review of Books, April 10, 1969, pp. 19-20.

[34]Ibid., p. 21.

[35]Paul Goodman, People or Personnel (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 51.

Even though he has proposed mini-schools on the order of Dennison's First Street School, Goodman views them as alternatives which can be used by children and adolescents if they wish, rather than being the standard form for learning. He views these schools as opportunities for youth to develop their "human powers to learn and cope."[36] However, he constantly speaks of the reconstruction of society into a humane community as most productive for education.

> My own thinking is that
> (1) Incidental education, taking part in the on-going activities of society, should be the chief means of learning.
> (2) Most high schools should be eliminated, with other kinds of communities of youth taking over their sociable functions.
> (3) College training should generally follow, not precede, entry into the professions.
> (4) The chief task of educators is to see that the activities of society provide incidental education, if necessary inventing new useful activities offering new educational opportunities.
> (5) The purpose of elementary pedagogy, through age twelve, is to protect children's free growth, since our community and families both pressure them too much and do not attend to them enough.[37]

Goodman's suggestions for educational and societal reform involve significant modifications of modern institutions, so that they are responsive to the needs of all. His

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[36]Goodman, "The Present Moment in Education," p. 19.

[37]Ibid.

convictions are evident in his judgment of a society: it is bad if it is not educational.[38]

I shall now turn to another Type III reformer, Ivan Illich, the director of CIDOC[39] in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and an outspoken critic of modern industrial society. Illich also denounces the myth that most learning results from teaching. He asserts that most learning happens casually and suggests that incidental education in the Goodmanesque manner is most fruitful. Illich's desire for de-schooling society develops from his observation that alternatives to formal schooling do not exist in industrial societies. He condemns schooling as a rite of passage which all must follow; the ancient rites of initiation have been transformed into a rite of passage, one that is continuous rather than momentary as in primitive cultures. He views schooling as an "enforced stay in the company of teachers, which pays off in the doubtful privilege of more such company."[40]

Realistically, Illich recognizes the need for skills in a highly industrialized society. Through his

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[38]Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 83.

[39]Center for Intercultural Documentation.

[40]Ivan Illich, "Why We Must Abolish Schooling," New York Review of Books, July 2, 1970, p. 13.

reforms he envisions more opportunities for skill development and incidental education.

> A radical alternative to a schooled society requires not only new formal mechanisms for the formal acquisition of skills and their educational use. A deschooled society implies a new approach to incidental or informal education.[41]

As a partial replacement for schools, Illich recommends a matching of student and a highly skilled person as a means for helping the student learn a skill in which he desires proficiency.

Illich states that "neither individual learning nor social equality can be enhanced by the ritual of schooling."[42] By discrediting self-education, the school insures that it will have clients seeking to progress through its barriers for the credentials necessary for acceptance in society. "In school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates."[43] Once this myth is accepted, states Illich, the individual allows himself

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[41] Ibid., p. 14.

[42] Illich, "Schooling: The Ritual of Progress," p. 21.

[43] Ibid.

to be measured in numerous ways. He conforms to all manner of ranking, especially the consumer index.

> But personal growth is not a measurable entity. It is growth in disciplined dissidence, which cannot be measured against any rod, or any curriculum, nor compared to someone else's achievement. In such learning one can emulate others only in imaginative endeavor, and follow in their footsteps rather than mimic their gait. The learning I prize is immeasurable re-creation.[44]

Like Goodman, Illich proposes that the "educational quality of all institutions must increase again."[45] In this manner, the paralyzing control that the school has upon the legitimate, certified path to learning will be broken, and the entire institutional matrix will be responsible for providing opportunities for learning. "There is no intrinsic reason why the education that schools are now failing to provide could not be acquired more successfully in the setting of the family, of work and communal activity, in new kinds of libraries and other centers that would provide the means of learning."[46]

Summary

Proposals for educational reform can be separated into three categories. Type I reforms, advocated by

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[44] Ibid., p. 22.

[45] Illich, "Why We Must Abolish Schooling," p. 14.

[46] Illich, The Celebration of Awareness, p. 134.

Bruner and Silberman, involve curricular and method revisions so that school material will be more easily learned and the school climate will be more positive. Type II reforms, proposed by Neill, Dennison, and Holt, encompass efforts at developing relationships between children and adults so that adults may facilitate learning. Children's interests determine the scope of learning. Type III reforms, suggested by Goodman and Illich, involve profound changes in society's role in educating youth. They recommend dismantling of the present school establishment and the creation of various alternatives that would assist youth in their maturation.

CHAPTER VI

CRITIQUE OF REFORM PROPOSALS

In the previous chapter several "radical" reform proposals were discussed, and the general thrust of each educational reform was considered. The reforms were categorized into three types, even though some overlapping was noticeable. In this chapter, the investigator intends to assess these clusters of reforms as to efficacy in creating an environment in which student self-identification and self-differentiation is possible. The major issues to be considered, if the individual's opportunity for self-identification is to increase, are the notions of activity, privacy, wholeness of being, and individuality of response.[1]

Issue I

The first major issue is the individual's right to an active relationship with learning, knowledge, and scholarship, and with other people. Although there are

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[1]See Chapters III and IV for a discussion of these particular issues as they relate to economic and cultural functioning of the school.

moments when a passive response is helpful, it is the position of this analysis that unless one is intensely involved in a learning situation, the knowledge gained will be merely fleeting and have a miniscule influence on one's continuous relationship with an ever-changing environment and with others. Furthermore, a passive relationship with others, as so often occurs in role situations that dominate the interaction between school personnel and students, contributes little to the maturation and self-identification of those involved.

Bruner clearly envisions the difficulty of demanding excellence in academic endeavors and at the same time honoring "the diversity of talents we must educate."[2] As a Type I reformer, he seeks to maintain a classroom level of attention that is neither apathy nor exhuberant fascination or agitation.[3] "Frenzied activity fostered by the competitive project may leave no pause for reflection, for evaluation, for generalization, while excessive orderliness, with each student waiting passively for his turn, produces boredom and ultimate apathy."[4] As a remedy for this situational problem, Bruner advocates an approach that will stimulate all children to be interested in learning, specifically learning what Bruner wishes. He

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[2]Jerome Bruner, The Process of Education (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 70.

[3]Ibid., p. 72.

[4]Ibid.

admits that "interest in the material to be learned is the best stimulus to learning, rather than such external goals as grades or later competitive advantage."[5] However, he rejects self-selected learning objectives as impractical. Instead, he seeks to find means to stimulate designated information transferral. Bruner seems to accept the notion of social engineering as a basis for his curricular efforts. In other words, students should be manipulated to entertain interest in subjects deemed beneficial to them. The passivity issue seems to be ignored.

Silberman, another Type I reformer, promotes the informal education approach of English infant schools as a means for allowing children to take an active role in their learning. However, once the student is in a later elementary school, Silberman's approach seems to match Bruner's social engineering manner. Though he avidly asserts the right of students to have educational goals that differ from teacher's goals, he also seems to prescribe goals that all students should achieve. Whether forcing knowledge and skills upon a student makes them "second nature" to him or causes him to revile such efforts and thereby close himself off from whatever benefits might accrue from possessing those skills or that knowledge is open to question. In essence, the

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[5] Ibid., p. 14.

activity issue involves the degree of manipulation that one will permit in attempting to educate children and adolescents. Type I critics opt for a high degree of social engineering, because they apparently feel social chaos would result if all youngsters did not have the cultural absolutes taught to them. Such an approach seems to lead to a continuation of the degree of passivity existent in our schools today.

Type II reformers argue that student selection of learning interests insures greater activity on the part of each student and also decreases the amount of boredom that high schoolers frequently experience in school.[6]

> Schools should be a place where children learn what they most want to know, instead of what we think they ought to know. The child who wants to know something remembers it and uses it once he has it; the child who learns something to please or appease someone else forgets it when the need for pleasing or the danger of not appeasing is past.[7]

An active experience in a learning situation of one's choice certainly will assist in the development of one's identity and will make the knowledge or skills gained that much more meaningful. An analogy might be made to the doctoral dissertation; a self-selected problem is

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[6]During a discussion, some high school students estimated that many students were bored over half the school day in Linden.

[7]John Holt, How Children Fail (New York: Pitman Publishing Co., 1964), p. 175.

chosen, and the student receives appropriate guidance in the resolution of the problem. Coercion and passivity are kept to a minimum. Significant learning occurs in such a situation. Of course, one might argue that such independent work is dependent upon background knowledge and that children would not have necessary knowledge. However, it seems that children learn much prior to school entry, and therefore they have sufficient background to begin inquiries into their interests.

Holt contends that the school, as it is typically constituted, creates an environment of passivity that is difficult to escape. "School feels like this to children: it is a place where they make you go and where they tell you to do things and where they try to make your life unpleasant if you don't do them or don't do them right."[8] In an environment that emphasizes acceptance of others' demands rather than self-selection of objectives, an aura of passivity seems inevitable.

Dennison also asserts the right of self-selection of activities by children and adolescents. He argues that teachers as role figures in schools can "retard his child learning and complicate his growth."[9] They can "apply physical coercion to his freedom to move, to

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[8] Ibid., p. 24.

[9] Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 95.

express his feelings, to act upon his doubts, to give or refuse his attention--all of which will convince him that learning is an act of disembodied will or of passive attention, neither of which he can find within himself."[10] Not only is a child's inherent curiosity checked, but his appetite for learning is unsatisfied. To eliminate as much as possible such a passive relationship to learning and to foster an active self-realization, Dennison proposes small schools that enable children to delve into their interests and to develop profound relationships with others. The child's active quest for knowledge will only be limited by the lack of resourcefulness of the teacher-counselors with whom he comes into contact and by any environmental constrictions that may be present.

Type III critics suggest that the notion of a school in itself limits the child or adolescent in his self-realization, for the school seeks to decrease rather than expand the level of differences that exist between children or adolescents. Consequently, they propose a program of individualized learning in which a student would select an interest to be explored with the assistance of a counselor or master in that area. Apprenticeships or internships for adolescents would insure that they had an active relationship in their learning. By

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[10] Ibid., p. 96.

demanding that the entire society be educational, Type III critics seek to expand the opportunities for self-realization.

Such critics as Goodman and Illich assert that the school has had to develop many manipulative techniques merely to capture the interest of students. If their suggestions for competitive, pluralistic opportunities of learning are accepted, social engineering methods would no longer need be employed. Energy expended on the passive control of a captive clientele could then be diverted to expansion of opportunities for learning. It seems that both teachers and students would then have increased opportunities for self-realization.

Issue II

The second issue is the degree of psychological and physical privacy afforded students by the school. Recent revelations about military surveillance of civilians indicate the extent of prying into people's lives that occurs. The current controversy concerning socio-economic questionnaires administered to school-age children in Michigan points out the degree to which the school has insinuated itself into the lives and thoughts of children. Besides the aforementioned psychological infringements, physical privacy is almost non-existent in schools.

Silberman skirts this issue almost entirely. He does not indicate his attitude toward compulsory attendance

rules, a means of eliminating opportunities for physical privacy during the day. In most schools, even in many informal schools, provision for physical solitude is non-existent. Children and adolescents generally spent their days in close proximity to others; the only alternatives in Silberman's scheme of educational reform would seem to be skipping school or being ill.

A Type I critic, Silberman suggests that testing and evaluation of students is absolutely necessary in order to insure that students do learn in school. However, he does admit that testing is usually not a diagnostic tool but a rating procedure.[11] "What is wrong with the present system is not the use of grades per se, but the fact that the awarding of a grade has been divorced from the larger function of evaluation, thereby preventing it from fulfilling its proper educational purpose."[12] Evaluation is important because it enables a teacher to determine if he is achieving his objective. Yet, he also admits that teachers and students may not have the same educational objectives. Apparently, the teacher's objectives take precedence over student objectives, to prevent an anarchical situation. It seems that Silberman views students as not-yet-persons whose self-evaluations are

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[11]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 138.

[12]Ibid., p. 347.

not meaningful and whose mental states are constantly open to school investigation.

It is uncertain what position Type I critics would take concerning information storage about students in dossiers. It seems that they would continue present school policies regarding such data collection and storage.

Type II critics generally reject the notion of compulsory school attendance. A. S. Neill maintains that children should have the opportunity to attend or stay away from classes.

> No pupil is compelled to attend lessons. But if Jimmy comes to English on Monday and does not make an appearance again until Friday of the following week, the others quite rightly object that he is holding back the work, and they may throw him out for impeding progress.[13]

Dennison also rejects the requirement of compulsory attendance. He asserts that the attention focused on compulsory attendance--the limitation of physical privacy--neglects the basic issue of relationships with the young. He believes that children and adolescents would not abandon their "acquisition of skills and knowledge and the participation in large-scale social life with their peers."[14] Yet he recognizes that at times they do need assistance and direction. Adults would be there to assist them in

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[13]Neill, Summerhill, p. 13.

[14]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 110.

their self-realization, for "teaching is one of the few natural functions of adults."[15] However, the children could reject the demands of adults.

> Nevertheless, all of the children could refuse. They needed a good reason to do it, and they had to stand up to the adults. But they discovered that good reasons were respected. Boredom, for instance, is a good reason. The beautiful days of spring are good reasons. An ardent desire for something else is a good reason. Anxiety is a good reason. So is a headache or a toothache. And there are many things which if they arise during the course of a lesson, deserve and must be given full precedence, such things as considerations of justice, self-respect, friendship. . . . The essential thing was the absence of compulsion.[16]

Type II critics denounce the frequent testing and evaluation that occurs in most schools. Children are not permitted moments of physical and psychological privacy; they are constantly judged on their behavior and achievement. Teachers are generally observed and evaluated only two or three times a year; children and adolescents are under constant observation and evaluation. Such conditions would produce anxiety in any person. Hence, many Type II critics suggest a significant increase in the opportunities for physical and psychological privacy within the school setting.

Physical and psychological privacy would reach its acme if the suggestions of Type III critics are accepted. Goodman and Illich recommend free access to learning opportunities that have been self-selected. Psychological

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., p. 114.

privacy would occur because children and adolescents would be free to withdraw at any time from their chosen center of learning.

Illich divides learning into two areas: skill development and education. The former involves a program aimed at a specific skill that a student seeks to master; the latter involves learning for learning's sake. The former can be stimulated through specific arrangements with teachers who are masters of a skill (swimming, drafting, and computer programming are examples of such skills). The latter would occur through the matching of people who wish to discuss a film or a recent book (Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man or Reich's Greening of America are examples). In this manner, a person's physical whereabouts are his responsibility, as is his psychological state. Evaluation would occur with regards to skill development so that the individual would know if he was competent in a particular skill.

Illich believes that the poor would benefit most from such reforms. They would be able to choose the skills they wish to develop without subjecting themselves to the compulsory nature of the school, and they would probably eliminate "psychological impotence" as an obstacle to overcome in their self-identification.[17] If they have opportunities for unobserved, unevaluated

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[17]Illich, "Why We Must Abolish Schooling," p. 9.

moments, poor children may more readily accept the evaluations that might occur in their skill development situations. Whether such reforms are possible is uncertain.

Issue III

The third issue that must be considered is the degree to which individuality of response is tolerated and irrational conformity reduced. The advanced industrial state generally supports standardization of behavior and thought, even though educational policy statements consistently promote "doing your own thing" within the system.

Bruner and Silberman give lip service to individuality but concentrate on attainment of accepted competence--which in most cases means a standard that all must attain.

> Ideally, schools should allow students to go ahead in different subjects as rapidly as they can. But the administrative problems that are raised when one makes such an arrangement possible are almost inevitably beyond the resources that schools have available for dealing with them.[18]

Instead of suggesting means that would permit such individualization of learning, Bruner asserts that the schools are not able to permit these responses. Hence, the students must conform to the system's inadequacies: they are to play the role of measured-pace learner.

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[18]Bruner, The Process of Education, p. 11.

Silberman suggests that learning will probably be more effective if it develops from a learner's interests. Yet, in his promotion of the informal education approach, he asserts the central role of the teacher. "And that responsibility means educating them: transmitting, creating, and evoking the skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge that will help them grow into mature, creative, and happy adults."[19] However, what occurs when the teacher's goals are not the self-selected goals of students? Silberman maintains that "there can be, and indeed are, schools in which students have considerable freedom to set their own goals and follow their own interests, without the teachers in any way surrendering their responsibility to set external goals of their own."[20] It seems inconsistent to maintain that a learner may have goals that differ from a teacher's goals without any conflict occurring. It seems quite logical to assume that a student will maximize his learning if he and his teacher perceive the same goals as objectives of the learning situation. Otherwise, either the teacher will assert authoritarian control or the learner will relinquish his goal or both.

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[19]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 210.

[20]Ibid., p. 199.

Type II critics emphasize that individuality of response and reduction of standard role behavior are best accomplished or stimulated in an environment that encourages "reality of encounter" and a "continuum of experience."[21] Most children and adolescents encounter something quite different in their school life:

> We adults destroy most of the intellectual and creative capacity of children by the things we do to them or make them do. We destroy this capacity above all by making them afraid, afraid of not doing what other people want, of not pleasing, of making mistakes, of failing, of being wrong.[22]

To succeed in school a student usually has one path available to him: high academic achievement, that is, high grades that frequently result from acceptance of teachers' goals to the exclusion of one's own goals.

Type II reformers propose small schools that will enable students to develop relationships with teachers and other learners to such a degree that they will feel free to express their feelings without fear.

> No teacher is just a teacher, no student just a student. The life meaning which joins them is the sine qua non for the process of education, yet precisely this is destroyed in the public schools because everything is standardized and the persons are made to vanish into their roles.[23]

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[21]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 97.

[22]Holt, How Children Fail, p. 167.

[23]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 113.

Critics like Holt and Dennison link standardized response and role behavior with privacy and docility. If a student has no private moments and is expected to conform to the requirements of the school, the most logical response is role behavior. It minimizes the chance of conflict, for schools generally are unable to deal with uniquely active students.

> It destroys most of their sense of their own worth, if they have any; if they don't, it makes it almost impossible for them to get any. It convinces them that they, and certainly almost everyone else, are not fit for responsibility or worthy of respect and trust. By denying them the chance to have, and use, and enjoy, and value their own freedom, it persuades them, or makes them easy to persuade, that true personal freedom is at least valueless and at most dangerous.[24]

Limitation of uniqueness of response and the cultivation of role behavior represent two methods of restriction of student self-realization. Schools offered as substitutes by Type II critics seem to stimulate self-identification through provision for individualistic responses to learning and unique goals.

Type III critics agree with Holt and Dennison that children and adolescents are limited in the types of behavior and responses that they may manifest in school, but they insist that mini-schools cannot provide enough opportunities for self-realization. They suggest that only by opening students to the cultural situation and

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[24]Holt, The Underachieving School, p. 137.

freely allowing them to make use of the society as an educational environment can self-realization for all occur.

Goodman criticizes Type I critics for their attempts at social manipulation of students.

> Social engineering is uneducational in principle. It pre-structures behavior and can become discriminating, graceful, and energetic only if the organism creates its own structures as it goes along.[25]

Illich further expounds the theme of alternative structures for educational endeavors, most notably a matching of people who seek to discuss a book or an article. Role behavior would generally be eliminated; learners would not be inhibited in their responses, for they would have chosen their objectives. "There is no intrinsic reason why the education that schools are now failing to provide could not be acquired more successfully in the setting of the family, of work and communal activity, in new kinds of libraries and other centers that would provide the means of learning."[26]

Goodman accepts the reforms of Type II critics who propose mini-schools in which a reality of encounter could occur, but he seems to feel that they may not have enough impact or not be diverse enough to satisfy the various interests of children and adolescents. By opting for a cultural revolution in which societal institutions

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[25]Goodman, "The Present Moment in Education," p. 16.

[26]Illich, The Celebration of Awareness, p. 134.

would reclaim their educational functions, Goodman seeks to promote continuous self-identification through one's life. Though they seem politically unthinkable, these reform proposals would be educationally effective, for they would eliminate the destructive aspects of the compulsory school while diffusing the positive aspects throughout the society.

> If we set up a structure that strictly channels energy, directs attention, and regulates movement (which are "good things"), we may temporarily inhibit impulse, wishing, daydreaming, and randomness (which are "bad things"); but we also thereby jeopardize initiative, intrinsic motivation, imagination, invention, self-reliance, freedom from inhibition, and finally even health and common sense.[27]

Issue IV

The fourth and final issue to be considered is the degree of fragmentation of experience that would result from the implementation of the aforementioned reform proposals. Not only must the proposals be considered for their negative effect of fragmentation but also for their possible positive effect of engendering wholeness of being.

Type I critics concentrate upon curricular and methodological reform *in vacuo*. Bruner has concentrated his efforts on the development of educational materials that are epistemologically sound and that can be taught in a scholarly manner even to youngsters. His MACOS

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[27]Goodman, "The Present Moment in Education," p. 16.

project intends to stimulate inquiry into human existence by means of a special program in social studies. Yet, he does not seem to be concerned with the integration of knowledge from different curricular areas. History is history, and mathematics is mathematics, and never the twain shall meet. Silberman likewise ignores the issue; he discusses modern advances in physics, mathematics, and the social sciences without examining the possibilities of combination or union of different disciplines. Ignoring the relationships between segments of the curriculum is similar to neglecting the relationships between various societal institutions as to their educational potential. By assuming that knowledge can be compartmentalized into separate and distinct disciplines, one rejects the unity of environment in which one lives. Consequently, one expects life to be fragmented and partitionable; what one does at work need not have any resemblance to or influence on one's home life. Children in informal schools would seem to continue this fragmentation of experience, and hence this approach should be rejected on these grounds.

Type II critics assert that their proposals for educational reform take account of this fragmentation and attempt to remedy the situation. Dennison focuses on separateness when he writes:

> The experience of learning is an experience of wholeness. The child feels the unity of his own

> powers and the continuum of persons. His parents, his friends, his teachers, and the vague human shapes of his future form one world for him, and he feels the adequacy and reality of his powers within this world. Anything short of this wholeness is not true learning.[28]

Dennison attacks the notion of fragmentation as it is usually manifested by a disparate set of subjects that children must learn. "Now what is so precious about a curriculum (which no one assimilates anyway), or a schedule of classes (which piles boredom upon failure and failure upon boredom) that these things should supersede the actual needs of the child?"[29] Clearly Dennison feels that the focus of a school should be the uniqueness and wholeness of each child. His rejection of the pigeonholing of children and of knowledge which occurs in most schools does not leave a void; he asserts that a natural order arises, based on certain facts of the human condition:

> that the mind does not function separately from the emotions, but thought partakes of feeling and feeling of thought; that there is no such thing as knowledge per se, knowledge in a vacuum, but rather all knowledge is possessed and must be expressed by individuals; that the human voices preserved in books belong to the real features of the world, and that children are so powerfully attracted to this world that the very motion of their curiosity comes through to us as a form of love; that an active

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[28]Dennison, The Lives of Children, p. 75.

[29]Ibid., p. 17.

> moral life cannot be evolved except where people are free to express their feelings and act upon the insights of conscience.[30]

Type II critics such as Dennison certainly stress the interrelationship of feeling and thinking; in this manner they are reacting to the fragmentation of feeling and thinking that is commonplace in public schools. Their proposals seem to counteract the separation of a child's or adolescent's thought processes from his emotional outlook on life that generally occurs in school. Concern for cognitive achievement obliterates concern for emotional development in most schools, and Type II critics present proposals that seem to minimize fragmentation of experience.

Type III reformers seem to assume that fragmentation of experience and dissection of being occur as an inevitable result of a school's existence. To them, the very nature of the school as an institution demands a fragmented outlook by its students for their success and survival. Goodman and Illich agree with Type II critics that the contemporary school seriously and negatively affects a student's natural unity of being, feeling, and thinking, but they do not accept a humanized school as a viable alternative, especially for adolescents. They assert that a cultural revolution in

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[30] Ibid., p. 9.

which societal institutions reclaim their educative functions will eliminate the need for fragmentation that the school promotes.

> Fundamentally, there is no right education except growing up into a worthwhile world. Indeed, our excessive concern with problems of education at present simply means that the grown-ups do not have such a world.[31]

They propose a reordering and a revitalization of the culture and society to make them conducive to the maturation and development of integrated, self-realizing individuals.

Illich suggests that his proposals will eliminate many of the ills of schooling--especially the fragmentation process that occurs--by dismantling the center of such power, the school.

> School makes alienation preparatory to life, thus depriving education of reality and work of creativity. School prepares for the alienating institutionalization of life by teaching the need to be taught. Once this lesson is learned, people lose their incentive to grow in independence; . . . School either keeps men and women for life or makes sure that they will be kept by some institution.[32]

Illich and Goodman assert that the manipulative power of institutions such as the school is so great that alternatives to them are difficult to envision. "So persuasive is the power of the institutions we have created that they shape not only our preferences, but actually

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[31]Goodman, Compulsory Mis-education, p. 59.

[32]Illich, "Schooling: The Ritual of Progress," p. 24.

our sense of possibilities."[33] They quickly reject the Type I reforms as mere tinkering with the school establishment, but Goodman at least accepts some Type II proposals, such as the small school for a limited number of students, as possible reforms in view of the political nature of the school.

Type III suggestions are generally so profound changes that they involve a significant rupture from existing institutions. Such reforms are politically unthinkable, even though they seem potentially most effective in creating opportunities for self-identification and self-realization.

Summary

An analysis of the three categories of "radical" educational reforms indicates that Type II proposals are realistically the most effective. The pluralistic school system that would ensue implementation of these reforms offers the maximal opportunities for self-identification. These proposals are both politically feasible and educationally effective.

Type I suggestions are inadequate and unproductive of opportunities for self-identification. Silberman, Bruner and others concentrate on information transferral; they intend to educate youngsters in humane

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[33]Illich, The Celebration of Awareness, p. 160.

ways, which is admirable, but they do not give youth much control in their educational endeavors.

Type III proposals are politically unthinkable. Such reforms seem educationally efficacious, for they allow for maximal self-determination of learning environments. However, since the school is a societal institution, educational reform of this nature would necessarily require a transformation of other societal institutions, an unlikely event, given present and immediately foreseeable conditions. It is, of course, conceivable that the future course of events may present a more favorable political climate for Type III reforms--one in which problems are perceived as sufficiently severe to warrant sweeping educational reform measures.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this exploratory study, a survey of pertinent literature has substantiated a developing movement of "radical" educational criticism. Men with divergent views of education and its potentiality for reform are in general agreement that the public school has failed and is failing many students. Most critics recognize the lack of opportunities for self-identification in school settings, and they suggest remedies that they feel will allow the full development of children and adolescents.

Prior to a differentiation of these critics into three distinct types, the investigator discussed the influence of the economy and the culture upon school functioning. The economic sector was shown to expect schools to fulfill non-educational functions such as custodial care, standardization and fragmentation of school experiences, and consumership indoctrination. In meeting these obligations the school limits a child's or adolescent's opportunity for self-identification. Since the school is situated in an institutional matrix, it promotes and demands behavior that is adaptive to other

societal institutions. Our culture expects schools to produce individuals who exhibit such socially adaptive behavior. Those who deviate from these norms of behavior can expect physical or psychological penalties.

"Radical" reform proposals were then distinguished into three distinct types. Type I reforms concentrate attention upon the needs of society for trained manpower and seek to minimize the harsh effects of external demands upon the individual. Type II proposals emphasize the mutuality of individual and societal development, and they seek to provide multiple learning environments so that students will have available options. Type III suggestions challenge the notion that learning must take place in a school. They recommend societal reform as the means to educational reform, and some Type III critics even suggest abolition of schooling.

Conclusions

An initial inference of this study is the diagnosis of separate and distinct elements within the "radical" education movement. All three Types of reformers recognize the critical situation of American education today and call for significant revamping of the institution. However, there is considerable disagreement as to the strategies to be employed.

Secondly, in view of the institutional matrix in which the school is an element, and in view of the

political nature of the school as the only legitimate rite of passage to adulthood, Type II proposals are the most effective and most acceptable suggestions. They recognize that children, adolescents, and adults do have individual rights and unique interests, while at the same time realizing that individuals exist in a society and have obligations to it. They respect the worth of each person in his separateness and uniqueness, and they attempt to develop autonomy and to encourage curiosity and authenticity in individuals. Furthermore, these reformers seek to relate learning to the environment of the child or adolescent, whether that environment be local, neighborhood, home, or world society.

Such proposals have been implemented in various cities and rural areas in the United States and Canada. Examples are George Dennison's First Street School, the Children's Community in Ann Arbor, and numerous "free schools" that emphasize reality of encounter and a continuum of experience. These schools seek to eliminate external reinforcements for thinking and acting and to develop cooperative relationships among individuals. The intent and operation of these schools is conducive to student self-identification and eventual self-realization.

Thirdly, Type I suggestions are inadequate and unproductive of significant opportunities for

self-identification. They are ineffective even though they are a means of creating a less harsh, more enjoyable school environment. Silberman, Bruner, and others continue to expect schools to concentrate on information transferral and skill development; they continue to support the centrality of the teacher in the classroom by advocating reforms that do not alter the teacher's role in the classroom. Though suggested Type I practices are certainly an improvement over current conduct, they are not sufficient if the school is to honor the individual student's right to and attempt at self-identification.

Type I proposals have been accepted by various groups as a most efficacious means of renewal of American education. However, if one recognizes the status quo stance of groups, such as the New York City teachers union, that have endorsed Silberman's suggestions, it can be admitted that many Type I reforms are merely tinkerings with the present system.

Bruner's interests are symbolic of other Type I reformers. He is concerned with improvement of the schools rather than with ways to educate our youth. Consequently, his suggestions presume the continuation of the monopolistic system of public education that exists.

Though they seem to have possible maximum long-term benefits for the education of individuals, Type III

proposals are politically untenable in our present society. They presume a previous transformation of other contemporary institutions. Illich recognizes this necessity, for he identifies himself as a cultural revolutionary who believes reality is the artificial by-product of present institutions. These institutions ignore individual desires and pursue their own short-term ends. To guarantee individual autonomy and self-identification he proposes an extensive reordering of priorities and supplanting of institutions. There is little likelihood that an abrupt change of contemporary institutions is about to occur, and hence Type III proposals are utopian and politically unrealistic.

Recommendations

In view of the school's role in our society, a study of the degree to which the public school is accepted as the only culturally approved means of achieving adulthood by different groups is recommended. Such a study may indicate the amount of support "radical" educational reforms would receive and the crucial publics that must be influenced or persuaded if such reforms are to occur.

Second, school reform involves renewal of a political institution. It is recommended that pertinent research findings regarding political reform be

analyzed for potential transferability to the implementation of school reforms.

Third, since self-identification and self-realization of individuals is important for societal development, a study of psychological and physical environments conducive to self-identification is imperative. Model programs should be then implemented to evaluate their efficacy and viability.

Fourth, a study of students attending Type I and Type II schools is recommended. It would determine whether certain characteristics of student behavior predominate in either Type school. A possible result is the identification of school environments conducive to students who exhibit certain behavioral patterns.

Finally, a study of the values inherent in each type of "radical" reform proposal is suggested. It seems apparent that these critics have different value systems, and it is also possible that critics of a certain category may differ with others of that same category. Such a study would be helpful in understanding each category's position and suggestions for educational reform.

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