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EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY: AN INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY INTO THE  
MEANING AND MESSAGES OF SCHOOLING USING A METAPHOR OF  
ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

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EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY: AN INTERPRETIVE INQUIRY  
INTO THE MEANING AND MESSAGES OF SCHOOLING  
USING A METAPHOR OF ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

by

Ita Kilbride

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1985

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APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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The research, which uses participant observation, interviews, and document analysis, is an interpretive inquiry into the meanings and messages of schooling. Although the data for this study was collected at a small private school in western North Carolina, the issues explored have significance and implications that go beyond this particular setting to schooling in general and society at large.

The purpose of the study is to affirm the living together in justice, equality, and interdependence, while putting forward models of "authentic" and "unauthentic" community. The characteristics considered important in these models of community are humanity, God, freedom, equality, fraternity, work, and love. There is often great disparity between the positive aspects of these issues and the dominant system of values, assumptions, and practices which permeate this, and other, school communities.

The inquiry focuses on the powerful influences of this hidden curriculum of schooling which often creates rigid barriers to a spirit of "authentic" community. These influences, which remain largely tacit, like school rules, expectations, assumptions, and rituals, are examined using a metaphor of ecological community.

The metaphor reinforces a particular vision of schooling which is based on the quest for a liberating "authentic" community on the personal, institutional, and societal levels. It provides a way of highlighting certain aspects of education that are particularly significant. It provides a backdrop for the examination of the actual social arrangements of the students in the study.

The metaphor reinforces a reality which is particularly sensitive to concerns of domination, exploitation, oppression, and inequality. In so doing, it reveals the overwhelming permanence in this, and in other American educational settings, of the dominant ideology of capitalist society-- a belief system which fails to affirm the interdependence of all in the world.

The final chapter examines this failure and questions why we, as a nation, refuse to foster the interrelatedness, stressed by ecologists, in our school systems and in our dealings with the natural world. Although American society downplays the potentiality of this spirit of interdependence, the research provides hope that a new consciousness is emerging.



Dedication

To the many educators in the Fay, McGurk, and  
Kilbride families.

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other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks"  
(Twelfth Night, Act III, Sc. 2).

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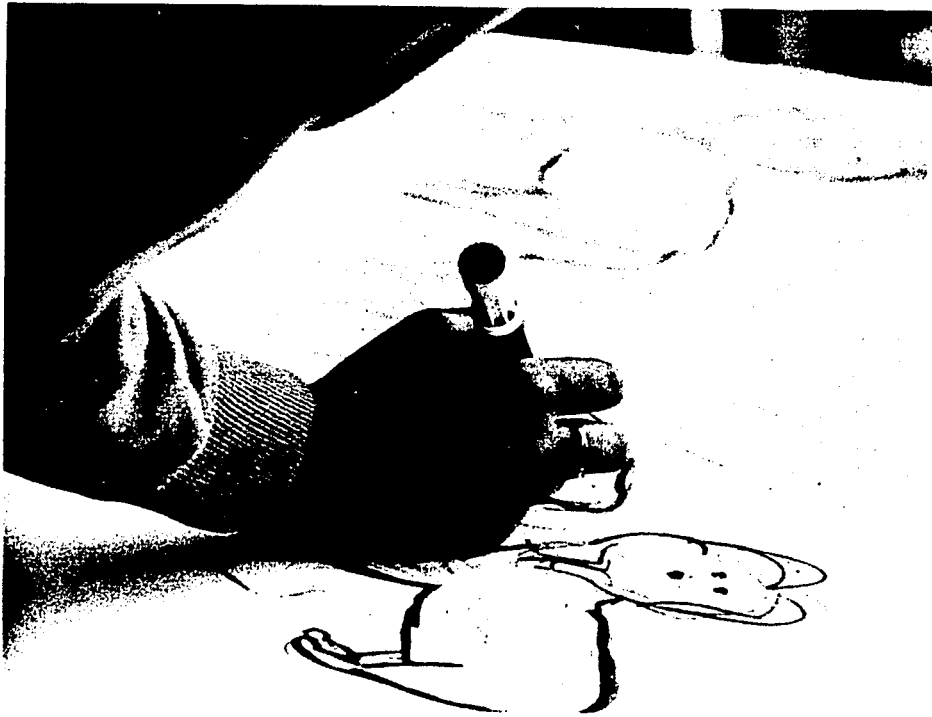
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**CHAPTER I**  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY**

CHAPTER I  
AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY

Throughout my professional life, as a science teacher, I have been convinced of the oppressive nature of the hidden curriculum of schooling. This conviction has been grounded largely in personal experience, especially my early formal education. As a member of the Catholic minority, educated in Northern Ireland in the 1950s and 1960s, I acquired an acute sensitivity to the issues of domination, exploitation, and inequality. Although the concerns in American education appear, on the surface, different, I find the dominant consciousness that negates a spirit of "authentic" community common to both situations.

Autobiographical Statement

In my elementary school in Northern Ireland in the 1950s religious and moral beliefs, prejudices, and the related social values of individual cooperation, group membership, community living and National interests in large measure shaped the organization and the type of teaching pursued. These personal and social values were coupled with aesthetic and vocational values and made up the program for Guladuff Primary School. But it was the state-wide Eleven Plus examination, more than any other factor, which moulded



the emphasis of the vocational values of literacy and numeracy in the program.

To understand this program, it is important to describe the environment. Picture a small two-classroom brick building with black slate roof. A small entrance hall, with a cement floor, furnished with 100 coat hooks and entered only by three very high cement steps. There are no bathrooms, or electricity. The school is situated in a Republican area whose people have strong nationalistic tendencies. Schools in Northern Ireland, at that time, and to this day, are either Protestant or Catholic. This one is Catholic. The school is staffed by a husband and wife. Mrs. Fay teaches Baby Infants, High Infants, first and second class, while the principal, Mr. Fay, teaches third, fourth, fifth, and sixth classes. There are no other staff for the 96 pupils.

Inside the classrooms there are four rows of metal and wood desks which each seat two children. Inkwells are usually full to overflowing from a student's lavish filling on the previous evening. The aisles between the desks are narrow. At the top of the classroom is a teacher's table and chair in front of a blackboard. At the top of the classroom, also, is a black wood and coal burning stove, which often, on rainy days, is surrounded by many pairs of wellington boots. The window sills are deep and act as display areas for homemade science apparatus, measuring equipment, globes, tadpoles, sticklebacks, and other living plants and

creatures from the children's environment. I can recall the window sills of my Primary Classrooms most clearly. They probably influenced my Math/Science teaching more than any other part of the elementary program.

"Math and science are the two most important subjects" and "You must learn to think mathematically" were Mr. Fay's favorite phrases. And it was a half truth where the Eleven Plus, that most awesome of all primary school examinations, was concerned. English language was the other very important half; but Her Majesty's English was not held in very high regard! Before this exam those 10- and 11-year-olds who had been chosen to sit the Eleven Plus could be seen practicing previous test papers. They were huddled into the right-hand corner of the classroom and for most of the school day struggled in silence with I.Q. tests, decoding messages, practicing cunning and working out arithmetic word problems by algebraic methods. They never talked or laughed but struggled silently in open competition with their peers while their teacher looked tense and often angry as he glanced at the papers in progress. As a result of this exam, 11-year-olds would be given a chance of Secondary School and College education or condemned to a life of small farming or factory working. It was serious business.

Another serious business was the annual visit of the School Inspector. Each school, theoretically, received an external assessment of its work. This ordeal was accompanied

by a fervor of cleaning activity both inside and outside the school building. Children came to school in their Sunday clothes with well-washed faces. The assumption was that clean children were smart children. As the Inspector entered the room all rose and greeted him. Unlike the answer to the Daily Attendance which was in Irish in the morning, it was important to greet the Inspector in English. He represented Her Majesty's Department of Education for Northern Ireland and would have not looked kindly on Gaelige. Before his arrival children were warned not to answer questions on Irish History, the assumption being that it was preferable to give the impression that knowledge was lacking rather than reveal one's personal political and religious biases. Likewise, it was warned, to use English names like Victor Greer rather than Irish ones like Seamus McBride in all formal writing. What a relief when the Inspector finally left and shirts could be opened and children could breathe freely again.

Physical Education, first thing in the morning before roll call, was another time of comparative freedom. The teacher's attitude to this subject was not that P.E. was important in itself, but that it acted as a method of getting everyone warmed up as the black coal stove was getting into full gear. Children could be seen exercising in the aisles between rows of desks on rainy days, arms waving as they talked and laughed happily with their neighbors about previous

evening's activities. Quiet talking was not encouraged but it was not forbidden either. At this time teacher had an opportunity to distribute National Dried Milk, bottled orange juice, and cod liver oil to the entitled families, while at the same time jokingly reminding the children of the goodness of Mother England and the benefits of Social Service. Teacher's duties were not restricted to content area only.

Especially in rural areas, teachers were expected to perform roles other than those restricted to instruction in the three Rs. The school principal was the community leader; the female teacher was expected to organize the local choir and church functions. Because of these expectations, teachers could be seen writing wills, making job applications, interpreting legal documents, filling tax forms, and distributing food ration coupons during recess and lunch hour, and during and after school hours. The school principal was responsible for arranging ballot boxes for local elections and counting votes when the proceedings were done. It was at times when the teachers were involved with these extracurricular activities that the level of pupil misbehavior soared. These were times when hitting, verbal abuse, and even the destruction of property were most obvious. Those of us who had spent most of the school days in academic pursuit of the Eleven Plus exam saw an opportunity to play and seized it.

The art/craft and music programs were other enjoyable features of the schedule. The infant classes always left school at lunch time on Tuesday and Thursdays. This occurrence freed their teachers to teach music to all the children who could be seen doing action songs or singing folk songs on Tuesday afternoons. This was not a time to practice hymns or Irish songs as often the Music Inspector would visit the school unexpectedly. On Thursday afternoons, the girls in these grades did crafts while the boys planted and tended the school garden. The girls were assumed to require the skills of cookery and sewing, while it was assumed that the boys would need gardening skills, if only during the annual potato gathering vacation in autumn.

The art/craft and music programs paled to insignificance in comparison with the preoccupation, on the part of teachers, parents, and students, with the Eleven Plus examination. It is quite remarkable that, in this atmosphere, so many worthwhile personal, social, vocational, and aesthetic values were explored. Some children acquired those fundamental skills and concepts in language and mathematics which were essential to their intellectual and social development. Others put in years of boredom and pain while teachers were faced with the problem of evolving a curriculum, organization, and methods on the assumption that a child's destiny can be determined at 11 years of age.

In many ways, I look on my early schooling as a metaphor for my later educational concerns. I find it appropriate that having experienced first-hand an educational system with so much energy invested in maintaining the status quo, I should lend my voice and energies to an effort to transform an existing order. Such was my intention when, 8 years ago, I became completely absorbed in starting a small elementary school in the area where I live. I envisioned a more liberating community both for my own children, but also for the schoolchildren of this part of Western North Carolina.

I was closely involved in the establishment and day-to-day workings of the school in this study, both as a founding board member, lead teacher, and parent. At this time, I feel the need to re-search, re-appraise, and re-consider. I feel the need to ask, "How do the children in this setting really see their world?" Perhaps on a personal level, I need to ask, "If I were helping to start this school again, what would I change?"

Because of my intimate involvement with the school setting, I do not claim that my analysis is that of the cool, distant observer. Yet, as I stand outside, looking on through different lenses, I sense a state of tension between community concerns, on the one hand, and the whole world of the hidden curriculum on schooling on the other. "As an educator, however, I am acutely aware of the 'Meaning it all has for me, the interpreter-observer-participant'" (Cox, 1973, p. 147).

As a female educator, my consciousness is colored by a reality perceived in terms of sensitivity to community concerns rather than to agentic concerns of separation, isolation, and competition. As a female born and reared as a member of the minority in the North of Ireland, my consciousness is colored by a reality perceived in terms of sensitivity to concerns of domination, exploitation, oppression, and inequality. As a science educator my consciousness is colored by the hidden agenda of scientific knowledge and sensitivity to the dominant technological rationality which is the antithesis of "authentic" community.

This particular community has, many times during my research, been termed "family." It is to this family I go to make sense of how the children see their world. Because of the nature of this small school and my own interest in the field of ecology, I have chosen to use a metaphor of ecological community. I personally resonate with the metaphor but the image is apt for other reasons. Living together in justice, equality, and community speaks to the larger issues of curriculum which were, and are, of profound interest to many curriculum theorists.

#### Metaphor of Ecological Community

The sensitive issues involved in this dissertation call for a poetic rather than a literal interpretation. It is my contention that a metaphor, from one's personal, social, or

cultural life, contributes greatly to this task. The effective use of metaphor allows for the consideration of many complex issues about which we cannot speak directly or literally. Nisbet (1969) agrees. In Social Change and History he defines metaphor as

Much more than a simple grammatical construction or figure of speech. Metaphor is a way of knowing--one of the oldest, most deeply embedded, even indispensable ways of knowing in the history of human consciousness. It is, at its simplest, a way of proceeding from the known to the unknown. It is a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious, flash of insight to some other thing that is, by remoteness or complexity, unknown to us. (p. 4)

This interpretation is supported by Sir Herbert Read who sees this art form as the "synthesis of several complex units into one commanding image; it is the expression of a complex idea, not by analysis, not by direct statement, but by sudden perception of an objective relation" (Nisbet, 1969, p. 4). Nisbet contends that many tacit dimensions of experience can best be expressed, insofar as they are expressible at all, by "effecting instantaneous fusion of two separated realms of experience into one illuminating ionic, encapsulating image" (p. 4). This permits the use of the familiar to get to the essence of the not-so-familiar.

Because of my familiarity with nature since an early age, it seemed relevant to go to nature in search of an appropriate metaphor. In my youth my parents, who were also my elementary school teachers, openly celebrated the



arrival of the frog spawn. They planted trees, reared pheasants, and welcomed the wood anemones in the spring as they would have old friends. Not only was I actively encouraged in the past to respect nature, but the "why" questions of nature's hidden agenda were posed. Thomas (1954) in "A Child's Christmas in Wales" tells of a young boy's Christmas gifts. They included "books that told me everything about the wasp, except why" (p. 25). My particular work explores "why" questions with nature's help.

Fromm (1969) sees man in nature as an antidote to alienation, isolation, and anxiety. Not only is the relationship of man and nature enchanting, but it is also "a relationship that connects the individual with the world without eliminating his individuality" (p. 46).

It is not unusual to go to nature for answers. In the latter part of the 19th century, Henry David Thoreau wrote:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. (Bode, 1980, p. 343)

Even in the 20th century the tactic of returning to nature for answers is still valid. Organic metaphors have been used, with great effect, as ways of illuminating the diverse topics of education. It is common, especially in

progressive education, to dwell on the sequential stages of ordered development of children. In schools organic metaphors of growth, development, and nature have played a large part in educational theory. These metaphors have provided powerful analogies for examining wholistically<sup>1</sup> schooling and life in general.

Macdonald (1978) recognizes the importance of viewing the world wholistically. His transcendental developmental idea of curriculum "does not operate upon the romantic notion of the natural unfolding of the child" (p. 123). Instead, centering is at the heart of this model of curriculum. He compares centering to ecology.

Ecology is an emerging social concern that has a corollary in the centering process. It takes a unitary view of the world. Thus, the inner unity of the centering process has an outer reality in the concern for a unitary world built upon an understanding of ecology. It appears that any sane attempt to educate the young must deal substantively with the impact of man and technology on his own living environment, and there appears to be little hope that we can simply solve our ecological problems with the next generation of technological developments. Ecological problem solutions call for the same value search and commitment growing from the inner knowledge of what we are and what we can be. There is a need to transcend the linear and technical problem-solving approaches of the past if we are to survive our ecological crisis. Thus, a global view of the interrelationships of human structures and activities must be a central aspect of any curriculum which purports to have a transcendent development view. (Macdonald, 1978, p. 116)

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<sup>1</sup>"Wholistic" is used as an alternative spelling of "holistic" in order to emphasize the concept of "wholeness." The word "holistic" is, however, the more common spelling in ecological literature.

In the writings of Macdonald, and in my personal dealings with him as chairman of my doctoral program, I was acutely aware of his consciousness that recognized the interrelatedness of all in the world. I remember the obvious pleasure he expressed at my choice of ecology as a part of my course of study. He recognized that "among academic subjects, ecology stands out as being one of the few dedicated to holism" (Odum, 1977, p. 1291). Ecologists ask worthwhile questions. They get to the "why" of issues while always remembering that the old adage about "the forest being more than just a collection of trees" has much relevance today. They stress interrelatedness and the true meaning of progress, so it was to the field of ecology I went to search for a metaphor appropriate for my professional work.

I thought hard about this particular setting, first as a "population," but this idea seemed too taken up with notions of life tables, actuary concerns, and insurance risks. I discarded "ecosystem" as it sounded too involved with positivism, forcing functions, and feedback loops, parallel to Tylerian concerns of curriculum. I resonated with the use of a metaphor of ecological community because it reinforces a particular vision of schooling which I value. This vision is based on the quest for a liberating "authentic" community on the personal, institutional, and societal levels. The metaphor provides a way of highlighting certain aspects of education that I, and hopefully others,

find particularly significant. It provides a backdrop for the examination of the actual social arrangements of the students in the study.

#### Description of the Study

The research is an interpretive inquiry into the meanings and messages of community. The data used in the study are from a small private school in Western North Carolina. The setting is an approved, elementary school where 56 students are presently enrolled in Grades Kindergarten through 6. The school brochure summarizes the school's philosophy. "We attempt to keep tuition as low as possible so that as many children as possible from various backgrounds can attend and we believe that all children can learn if given a positive self-concept and an interesting environment with many resources." The school claims as its central philosophies, individualized instruction, experienced-based education, and parental involvement. Although the data were collected at this institution, the issues explored have significance and implications that go far beyond this particular setting to schooling in general, and society at large.

Of great importance to this study is the everydayness, the taken-for-grantedness, of the daily routine of school experiences. In particular, the inquiry focuses on the powerful influence of the hidden curriculum of schooling that often creates rigid barriers to a spirit of "authentic" community. These influences, like school rules, expectations,

assumptions, and rituals, are many times at variance with a spirit of "authentic" community. Although they remain largely tacit, we can recognize their overwhelming permanence in American education.

In the process of exploring these tacit assumptions, certain moral questions surface and have to be addressed in this dissertation.

What type of community exists here?

What community values should we hold?

Is there a model of "authentic" community?

Is there a model of "unauthentic" community?

What are the barriers to "authentic" community?

What are the bridges to "authentic" community?

What should be changed?

There is often great disparity between these issues and the dominant system of values, assumptions, and practices which permeate our schools.

The ideology of capitalist society is often the overwhelming permanence in American educational settings. I have chosen to add my voice to the, thankfully, increasing numbers writing about the connection of this prevalent belief system to the hidden curriculum of schooling. I do this to raise questions not only about this particular educational community, but about educational communities in general. The primary aim, however, is to affirm the living together in justice, equality, and interdependence.

The ecological consciousness that affirms the interdependence of all in the world is examined at the conclusion of the study. The final chapter examines this interdependence and questions why we, as a nation, fail to foster this interrelatedness, stressed by ecologists, in our school systems and in our dealings with the natural world. The writing of De Chardin (1964) gives hope for the emergence of new meanings and possibilities of living lives of interdependence and "authentic" community.

#### Methodology

In seeking an appropriate methodology for examining this school community, I became acutely aware that every study begins with a judgment on the part of the researcher. As my purpose was to gain a better understanding of the children's experiences in this school community, I choose an interpretive-qualitative mode rather than the traditional empirico-quantitative research mode. I believe that this approach to inquiry allows me to express the shared experiences of the students in a more understandable way than the dominant scientific approach. It provides me with an opportunity to take "account of the essential humanness of behavior, action, learning and experience" (Suransky, 1980, p. 163) so that I can learn from these arrangements.

In the research I am focusing on the immediate events of the community rather than past times when I was involved in the day-to-day workings of the school, or even future

directions. I do this, not because history or possibility are unimportant but because my interest is in this community as an end in itself rather than as a stage in the progression to some more distant community.

By the process of critical reflection many tacit assumptions, many taken-for-granted givens, of this school situation attain meaning. This interpretive-qualitative approach provides deep insight into the day-to-day lived experience and the larger issues that are used, in this dissertation, to characterize "authentic" and "unauthentic" community.

Interpretive research design is predicated on an entirely different set of assumptions than the experimental or quasi-experimental methodologies. The former is dedicated to wholism, the latter to reductionism. The wholism of qualitative research seeks an understanding of phenomena, people, and society as a whole. It does not claim to know

about human behavior through fracturing it into small, atomistic components that are then subjected to intensive scrutiny (as if teacher-pupil interactions and the internal structure of DNA can both be approached using the same logic of inquiry. (Rist, 1982, p. 440)

Qualitative research is based on an epistemology that emphasizes experience, empathy, and involvement, rather than manipulation, treatment, and the measurement of outcomes.

Rist (1982) describes the nature of this research.

The qualitative approach would contend that to understand the current conditions of education, one must describe and analyze in an ecologically valid manner the values, behaviors, settings, and interactions of participants in educational settings. An additional strength of the qualitative approach comes in the

emphasis on teaching longitudinally these values, behaviors, and interactions. Asking the question, "what is going on here?" is at once disarmingly simple and incredibly complex. It is to the answer of this question that qualitative research addresses itself. (p. 440)

The answer many times integrates material, elucidates the "unifying characteristics of a setting" (Rist, 1982, p. 441), and presents a comprehensive understanding of the particular situation or program.

As modern educational situations are dominated by technical values and technical rationality, I felt the need to employ a method that was not obsessed by scientific objectivity. Suransky (1980) describes this dominant logic.

The "mechanistic imperative" has become so pervasive in the USA owing to the highly developed nature of its capitalist technocracy, that the reduction of human beings to mere integers is barely questioned. University graduate programs in Psychology, Education and Sociology rarely require their students, their potential researchers, to examine critically the mire into which [they] have sunk. (p. 232)

To describe these implications in an "ecologically valid manner" I chose a stance that celebrates the subjective involvement of the participant observer and interviewer but also employs the reflectiveness of a distanced critic. Sociologists Becker and Geer (1978) describe this method.

By participant observation we mean that method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people over some length of time. (p. 76)

When participant observation is combined with interview and document analysis, the researcher can focus attention upon what has happened in the classroom situation and what the



person interviewed says about what has happened. This combination of methods increases the possibility of making fresh discoveries and suggests explanations that, otherwise, may remain dormant. When gathering data in such social contexts, the participant observer is more aware

of cues and information of all kinds. Because he sees and hears the people he studies in many situations of the kind that normally occur for them, . . . he builds an evergrowing fund of impressions, many of them at the subliminal level, which give him an extensive base for the interpretation and analytic use of any particular datum. This wealth of information and impression sensitizes him to subtleties which might pass unnoticed . . . and forces him to raise continually new and different questions, which he brings to and tries to answer in succeeding observations. (Becker & Geer, 1978, p. 82)

The participant observer attempts to understand the subjective nature of reality and to examine the processes whereby this reality is created and shaped. In so doing, he or she follows a rich tradition of philosophical phenomenologists which included Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre.

Kneller (1984) describes how the philosophy of phenomenology seeks to describe accurately what a situation means to the persons involved. He compares this study to analysis.

Like analysis, phenomenology seeks to describe our basic concepts, but uses another method and other data. Whereas analysis turns to language considered as the repository of concepts, phenomenology goes to the stream of individual experience--to the process of perceiving, thinking, feeling, deciding, remembering, and other mental acts. This stream is our access to all that exists. To understand the world and ourselves, says the phenomenologist, we must look clearly and directly--without presuppositions--at these basic data of our experience, at what actually is there in our minds. (p. 27)

To make sense of the emergent structures of reality of the social actors involved, the researcher must set aside all

presuppositions that could distort the situation. In a teaching situation "you bracket all your ideas of teaching, all pedagogical, psychological, sociological theories, all notions of authority and responsibility" (Kneller, 1984, pp. 28, 29). In essence, you become an unprejudiced observer. Kneller advocates the mental isolation of the essential features of the concept under examination. He advocates also a comparison of the researchers' results "with those of other investigators, together you will describe the basic concepts that are common to members of your society". (p. 29). By so doing, the observer moves from a situation of vagueness to one of clarity. This approach to inquiry encourages a concentration on major concepts through which the social actors structure their life experiences.

Goffman (1959) has drawn an analogy between constructing reality and playing a theatrical role. In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life he describes how people investigate several roles before settling for the one that is "just right" for the situation. He interprets behavior as a willed presentation of the self based on the situation parameters and the reactions of the other individuals in the dramatic situation. Although, according to Goffman, an individual brings to a situation his/her own unique baggage, background, history, consciousness or desires, he or she is expected to conceal his or her "own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged

to give lip service" (Goffman, 1959, p. 9). Each situation has its particular expectations. It prescribes a course of action for people who, for the most part, comply with the social and cultural expectations of the collectivity.

To the degree that a performance highlights the common official values of the society in which it occurs, we may look upon it . . . as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community. (Goffman, 1959, p. 35)

An examination of the actor's performance will reveal much about the requirements of the particular social situation for "the object of a performer is to sustain a particular definition of the situation, this representing, as it were, his claim as to what reality is" (Goffman, 1959, p. 85). Goffman's theories of social interaction encourage the participant observer to reflect upon the reality construction of the student and the ways that reality affects the presentation of self in the classroom situation. It contributes greatly to the theoretical underpinnings of the social and cultural consensus of the community in the study.

#### Modes of Data Collection

1. Participant observation in the classroom, at school board meetings, and at functions held after school hours.
2. Interviews: formal and informal.
3. Document analysis: newspaper articles, the journal articles of children, minutes of board meetings, and written and art work displayed on bulletin boards.

These three data collecting strategies are central to qualitative research methodology but Rist (1982) stresses that

the ethnographic approach is not simply the sum total of various research strategies. It is, as well, a process of inquiry grounded in certain assumptions about knowledge and respect for the order and logic of each research setting. (p. 443)

### Participant Observation

The data for the research were collected during two school semesters. I became involved, sometimes as an active member, and on other occasions as a detached observer, in this school community for over 100 hours. I kept detailed notes of personal interactions, conversations witnessed, and information shared.

As a school board member, I attended meetings, often on a weekly basis, and other school functions. At the beginning of the academic year, I participated in an orientation workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to meet and acquaint the newly-appointed and existing teachers and staff and the school board members. At the workshop, which was held at the Outward Bound School, Tablerock, North Carolina, the agenda included the history, philosophy, and goals of the community. I tape-recorded the workshop and later transcribed it for analysis.

### Interviews

I interviewed 13 of the 56 students after receiving verbal permission from their parents. The parents drove

the students to my home on a Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and collected them later at 3:00 p.m. Although the parents did not remain during the interview, I assured them that they were welcome to stay. The interview, which was tape-recorded and later transcribed, concentrated on the school philosophies and related community issues. In the interview, which explored many facets of concern, I treated subjects as they came up in the conversation, pursued leads, and allowed the students to develop new ideas and directions. The children were frank and extremely vocal. I had, however, prepared a list of questions which I periodically checked to make sure that I had a clear picture of their notions of community.

Experienced-based education.

What do you learn?

How do you work, separately, in a group?

How do you know if you have done well?

Are there grades?

Individualized instruction.

Are there class leaders?

What is a "good" student?

What is a "bad" student?

What makes you angry, afraid, sad, glad, etc.?

Parental involvement.

How do you feel about having parents in the classroom?

Why do your parents want you to come to school?

Why do you want to come to school?

### Document Analysis

I researched for accounts of the school's formation and history at the local newspaper. As I want the school and its participants to remain anonymous, I have not included the name of the newspaper in this dissertation. I have also changed the names of the parents, teachers, and schoolchildren. I examined the children's journal articles, poetry, written and art work, and minutes of the school board meetings.

These three data-collecting strategies provide "important insights into both public (front stage) and private (back stage) perceptions, rules, guidelines and images" (Rist, 1982, p. 444) of the larger issues of community discussed in the chapters of this dissertation, which have been arranged in the following manner.

Chapter II looks closely at the particular interrelated community and describes its history, governance, teaching and student populations, and philosophy. It then situates this school in the larger context of progressive education. Chapter III describes the climate of social interaction which exists during the school day. It reflects on the meanings attributed to this social interaction by the children. Chapter IV examines the meanings and messages of community and puts forward a model of "authentic" and "unauthentic" community. The characteristics considered important are humanity, God, freedom, equality, fraternity, work, and love.

Chapter V analyzes the data collected using the models of "authentic" and "unauthentic" community. The chapter continues with an examination of change on the individual, organizational, and societal levels.

Chapter VI examines the dominant rationality that pervades this school and American society in general. It questions the consciousness that refuses to recognize the potentiality of a spirit of interdependence. Fortunately, it provides hope that a new consciousness is emerging.



**CHAPTER II**  
**THE SCHOOL AS AN**  
**INTERRELATED COMMUNITY**



CHAPTER II  
THE SCHOOL AS AN INTERRELATED COMMUNITY

A meaningful study of schooling entails an understanding of the community values. To get to these belief systems, I find it appropriate to consider the school setting using a metaphor of interrelated community. Not only does the metaphor imply the responsibility of the participants in the act of sharing a common vision, but also the strength, hope, and consensus present in this cooperative relationship. "Community," Dennison (1968) remarks, "is a much-abused word and often a vague one" (p. 280). However, ecologists attempt to remove this vagueness. Odum (1983) defines community in the ecological sense as "all the populations occupying a given area" (p. 4). The definition does not explicitly speak to the many interrelationships implicit in such a community, but interrelatedness and interdependence are key words in ecology as in any cooperative relationship. Schooling is no exception. Bredemeier and Bredemeier (1978) describe such an undertaking in Social Forces in Education.

In a cooperative relationship the parties have a collective goal; they understand the nature of their interdependence for achieving it; they are motivated to understand the facts about one another, and they are motivated to provide whatever the others need to carry out their parts in the undertaking. (p. 56)

An ecological community has no such shared goals. However, using a metaphor from nature is apt for other reasons. Dubos (1972), in A Theology of the Earth, sees living organisms as "more changeable, more unpredictable than inanimate matter" (p. 29). The nature of this change in an organism is of profound importance to the study.

Change in institutions is so tied up with underlying values, beliefs, and systems of meaning that it is appropriate to get to the essence of these foundations. The research explores how these hidden agendas impact on the lives of school children in this educational community.

The school in question has at times been called progressive, child-centered, and alternative. It follows a long line of liberal educational institutions that sprang up and flourished over the years in the United States. Liberal educators believe that they really have changed education.

Focused primarily on the present and the immediate future, the educational liberal emphasizes change and techniques for dealing with change. He advocates gradual, small-scale reforms within the framework of the existing political system in order to further individual freedom and to maximize the fullest realization of human potential. Generally favoring rational and evolutionary change within the existing social order over sudden and wholesale changes of the entire system, the liberal believes that schools should cooperate with other social institutions in bringing about necessary social reforms. (O'Neill, 1981, pp. 364-365)

Does liberal education in this setting really "further individual freedom" and bring about these reforms? Does it

foster a sense of community while retaining a concern for the uniqueness and diversity of the individual? This is what my qualitative work sets out to examine. In order to make this journey, it is both necessary and useful to gain a working knowledge of the school's history, philosophy, governance, and school populations. In so doing, many underlying values, beliefs, and meanings will emerge.

Much of the data used in the chapter were collected from the school brochure, newspaper articles about the school, personal interviews, and a tape-recorded orientation workshop held at the beginning of the academic year. The purpose of the workshop was to acquaint the newly-appointed and existing teachers, staff, and school board members. The workshop was held at the Outward Bound School, Tablerock, North Carolina, and the agenda included:

1. History of the school
2. Philosophy and teaching methodology
3. Organization and by-laws of the school and the parent organization
4. School finances
5. Relationships of
  - a. Teacher and student
  - b. Teacher and parent
  - c. Teacher and teacher
  - d. Student and student

6. Reporting of goals--class and individual--to board and parents.
7. Other policies and responsibilities, e.g., meetings, social events, field trips, fundraising, snacks, playground, and absences.

### History of the School

In June, 1978, a local newspaper recalls the history. "Five couples have joined together to start a school." The parents were described "as simply wanting the best possible education for our children." The article continues:

The idea for the school came from discussions among the parents of their educational philosophies. They first approached the school system to explore the possibility of starting an alternative school within the public school system.

and as a founding parent explains,

The system was interested in the idea and understanding of the philosophy. He added that it is "just not practical for the local system to uniformly adopt this approach right now" and geographically unfeasible to start an alternative school in the system. "I don't in any way feel the public school officials feel threatened by our little school," he continued.

The founder sees the private school complementing the public school system

because it gives those favoring different types of educational philosophies a choice. There is no way the public schools can satisfy all the different philosophies. The school system will be watching the private school to see how well the method actually works.

He says the school will test pupils and be accountable because "we want to make sure this method works ourselves."

Four of the mothers involved are former teachers and will assist with the operation of the schools on a semi-volunteer basis.

He adds that

the parents hope to enroll a "good cross-section of the community" and that no child would be excluded because of race, color, or creed.

That was still the hope at the orientation workshop in August 1984 when a founding parent and teacher recalled the diverse backgrounds of those involved in starting the school.

The starting parents came from all over, Syria, Palestine, the British system of schooling, Ireland, and the United States. Each brought different assumptions with them about the nature of education and the learning process. Each brought something special but they had, in common, an interest in their own children's education and a desire to play a large part in that education. They wanted to volunteer time, build furniture, clean up the building and the grounds, and be involved. They wanted a caring atmosphere of give and take, an atmosphere of two-way open communication. They wanted to foster parental involvement in schooling. They saw that some form of change was necessary. This change was accompanied by fear, frustration, and a certain degree of risk-taking.

A founder recalls:

We tried to go through the school system. We went to a tremendous amount of effort to support the public school system, to get an alternative school. We came from various backgrounds. Some of us were delighted with our public schools kindergarten experience and we wanted more of the same. Some were very dissatisfied with the existing school system. We went to the school board to ask for help who said in essence that "we agree with you about a lot of things, but we can't promise you a change in the public system."

The idea of starting a school was a very scary thought. We asked ourselves is there any other way to do it? We were encouraged when we visited other schools and heard of people teaching from their basements, etc. We had teaching backgrounds. The school

threatened a lot of people who thought "the public school system has done my family well. Why not you?" From the start the public school administration always supported us. We had support from the regional office. We had a time finding a space for the school. Then the church offered us the space. The first year there were 16 pupils who paid \$600 each--all the money went for supplies. All staff members volunteered their time free. The founding board wrote a bank note for \$3000 debt. With the tuition we bought materials. We had to have equipment for the experientially based education. The Episcopal Church offered the space. There was a valid support for the philosophy. The school opened after a meeting of town people in a local bank. In the first year we had 16 students. In the second year 32. Now 56. We were using parents to do everything. It worked. We spent hours haggling over philosophy. "Who are we and what are our colors?" was the catch phrase. Nobody agreed about a lot of things. People said what you're attempting has been started before many times, and failed.

The founding members were convinced that not only was a change of system feasible, but healthier for the community.

#### Governance of the School

The school, which is private, nonprofit, and approved by N.C. Department of Public Instruction as a nonpublic school, has a nine-member board composed of parents of the students. The chairman of this board describes its function to the administrator, teachers, and staff at the workshop.

Chairman:

The board is a 9-member board. A few of the positions are permanent positions. Some of the founders are still on the board and can remain on the board as long as they want to. The rest of the board are not permanent.

Administrator:

There are only 2 permanent seats now and 7 non-permanent.

Chairman:

The board meets a bunch . . . the last four months we've probably met 3 to 4 times a month . . . so there's a lot going on there. . . . You all are never not allowed to come to a board meeting . . . you probably have better things to do so we did not specifically ask you to come. . . . The board, a couple of months ago, discussed this, and what we'd like to do for next year is to have at least one of the staff members at each board meeting, and you can all get together to decide who is going when . . . if anyone else wants to come that's fine, but we'd like to have one of you there for sure. And in that way you'll hear what is going on and where it's coming from, and you can hopefully communicate that back to the teachers in an accurate manner, and this may prevent some misunderstandings of what we're asking of you, or what we're wanting or what we're thinking or why we make certain decisions, for I assure you that none of them are made shortly or quickly. The board does serve in a couple of functions. It serves the normal function of a board of directors, that is, of general philosophy setter and long-term planning and all that sort of thing. But it also is the executive and administrative body of the school, and this is where we don't do a real good job of it. I don't think that we're doing any worse than anyone else would do; it's just the matter of the system that we're under, but if the board does make a decision and gives a directive, it would be the same as a superintendent telling you that in a public school system or your principal, and so I think you need to understand this. We are the employer, so to speak, and would be your immediate supervisor. I'm not sure how we're going to communicate these things. Normally speaking, if you have someone there, then we can communicate as a body to that person and then on to the teacher. There may be other occasions when we just designate some other person to go and talk to one of you and they'll tell you that's why they're there. You ought to look at them there as the board sitting down with you. If you have a problem with it, it's no different than any other situation. We'll probably be more amiable to changing our minds or listening than about any other system you'd be in, for the board probably changes its mind about three times on every decision that we make. Let me make that clear about my position. Somebody has to be chairman or president, or whatever it is, but they're sure not in charge!

[laughing]

The other function that we have is that if you have some problems, you are free to come to the board, and I mean that sincerely. Don't let it fester, or if we're doing something you don't like, we may not change our minds, but really do come back and let's talk it out. You are not going to make anybody mad by disagreeing with what we're doing. I think you're expected to follow it, in the final analysis, but, honestly, we don't agree on much and there's no reason you should. . . . [laughing] I'm making this a little light, but I'm serious about what I'm saying--I'm being accurate, when I say we're not going to come and make decisions quickly or easily or fast or anything else, but we are genuinely interested.

Administrator:

I think the board does genuinely want to be seen as supportive and as a consultant to the staff, if they have problems of any sort. . . .

The chairman considers future trends in the organization:

I think that the philosophy is pretty much locked in and it's not going to change, absence a complete new group on the board, and it can. . . . It's the student's school and that reflects their parents, and if at some point it changes, it will, but I don't see that as happening. There won't be any radical departures on it, but I do think there has been a decision made by the board that some continued growth is preferable and necessary, if we can figure out a way to do it. There's no consensus there, but in general that's what has been voted on so I don't think it's going to change for a while. The reason is twofold: one is selfishness in a sense of parents who see their children grow up and not have a 7th grade, and that's one impetus for growth to go up to the 8th and 9th grade; and the other is just, in effect, grow from the bottom again and in effect double the size of the school. . . .

. . . besides the first reason I indicated, that is in just wanting our children to be in the school a little bit longer for growth at the lower levels, is just the fact that we're so dependent on the parental support and contributing of time under our present size, and I think it makes us less stable than I'd like for it to be. I don't mean that it's a completely unstable situation. It's not that, but it does require an awful lot of commitment from parents and I'm assuming that will continue, but something could happen 5 years



down the road that maybe we don't have all the involvement we'd like to have, and in order to do the first step, that is to get a good administrator in, we've got to be larger than we are. We just don't have the money right now to hire somebody who would largely be an administrator and keep our tuition where it now is. The tuition has gone up from the \$600 but it's at \$1350 this year, I believe, but that's still some \$1000 or \$1500 lower than private schools would be and the reason is trying to keep the school available to as many people as possible. The \$1350 tuition doesn't cover the cost of our budget. The rest is made up in pledges from parents and fundraising. We do have some scholarship money and we find creative ways of trying to see that we don't ever turn away a child because of money. I can't think of a situation where that has ever happened, where we had an opening, a child who wanted to come, we've always been able to take them and we'd like to continue to do that. But I can't promise how fast it's going to grow. If it's humanly possible we could start the middle school maybe next year.

This is still the hope.

#### The Student Population

The institution enjoys many of the advantages of a small school. There are 56 children in grades K through 6. The school is divided into four major groups: Kindergarten; Youngers, which is Grades 1 and 2; Middles, which is Grades 3 and 4; and Olders, which covers Grades 5 and 6. These multi-age groups allow for individual programs along developmental lines instead of by age or grade level. Each student's growth and development, in this arrangement, is not expected to proceed evenly or along the same track as another's. The structure allows a larger time frame to accomplish basic skill mastery and, at the same time, gives opportunity to move ahead at an individual pace. Within each class, many groups exist, both ongoing and short-term.

Provision is made, within the structure, to accelerate or hold back a student under certain conditions. In these circumstances, for example, a student might be retained in Youngers or promoted from Youngers to Middles if specified criteria are met. There are also admission criteria for attendance at the school, and a waiting list of prospective students wanting to attend has been compiled. Children with recognized learning problems or identified special needs are not taken, as the school does not have the staff or skills to meet these requirements.

I find Anyon's (1980) analysis of schools into four social class communities useful in describing this student body. She makes a distinction between working-class, middle-class, affluent professional, and executive elite schools. The children in the study are a combination of those found in her middle-class and affluent professional schools.

The former group

is composed of parents in working-class and middle-class white-collar jobs: women in office jobs, technicians, supervisors in industry, and parents employed by the city (such as firemen, policement, and several of the school's teachers). . . . occupations such as personnel directors in local firms, accountants, "middle management," and a few small capitalists (owners of shops in the area). The children of several local doctors attend this school. (Anyon, 1980, p. 72)

Typical jobs held by parents of the latter group include

cardiologist, interior designer, corporate lawyer or engineer, executive in advertising or television. There are some families who are not as affluent as the majority (e.g., the family of the superintendent of the district's schools, and the one or two families in

which the fathers are skilled workers). In addition, a few of the families are more affluent than the majority, and can be classified in the capitalist class (e.g., a partner in a prestigious Wall Street stock brokerage firm). Approximately 90 percent of the children in the school are white. (Anyon, 1980, p. 72)

The chairman of the school board summarizes the make-up of the student body. He sees a range in ability from "slightly below average to very bright" in the school population.

### The Teaching Population

There are four full-time faculty members, five part-time teachers, and a full-time administrator for the 56 students. The teaching staff are subject matter specialists in Language Arts, Math and Science, Social Studies, Music, and French. There is also a Kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator in Grades 1 and 2. Staffing today is much influenced by past arrangements. In the first days the volunteer/teacher/parents were specialists in Language Arts, Math and Science, French, and Social Studies. As teachers retired from these positions, the slots were filled by other faculty with similar qualifications. This practice, which continues today because it existed yesterday, is often questioned by a board member, but it remains without formal reassessment.

The teaching staff have their own classrooms, e.g., the Language Arts room, the Math room, the Music room, and the Art room, while the children move from classroom to classroom

for the different subjects. The Kindergarten and Youngers usually stay in their own classrooms with their classroom teacher for most of the school day.

The administrator's job description is ill-defined, but in the day-to-day running of the school she performs many of the bureaucratic functions of an acting school principal. She insists that she plays no part in the area of curriculum and instruction. However, during the time of the research, she was, on many occasions, actively teaching in the classrooms.

#### Philosophy

The school community sees parental involvement, individualized instruction, and experience-based education as the essence of its philosophy. The board credits Piaget and sometimes Dewey with stressing these attributes. The following workshop dialogue between the founding board members, who were also the early teaching staff, and the present chairman of the school board gives useful insight into the genesis of the underlying thought and the rhetoric that surrounded it.

Board Member 1:

In the early days, when we would ask, "Who are we and what are our colors?" we used to throw a lot of phrases around. . . .  
Learning is fun.  
We need to stress creativity.  
We need to go from the concrete to the abstract.  
We need real-life learning.

Parents need to be involved in their children's education.

We need child-centered education.

We need to get the parents into the classroom.

Each child has his personal agenda.

Children need to feel good about themselves.

We should reflect on Piaget's developmental stages.

We need to meet the children's special wants and needs by bringing real life into the classroom.

Children are individuals and should be treated as such.

Children need to achieve what they are capable of achieving.

We need to address the needs of the total child.

Board Member 2:

This philosophy came about after much questioning. What is education? What happens in life that we need? In life we tend to over-analyze. We break things down into bits and pieces. In this school we need to work towards integration, with not such much need to schedule for this hampers a relaxed free flowing atmosphere. How can we accomplish this "not divided learning"? That's the whole ball of wax. We have the power to make rich, exciting learning experiences for children. In the past we worked well together because we were smaller. Children come to class with all kinds of feelings. We say, "The children are more important than anything happening in our lives" so we take time to listen. Because of having to manage so many areas we can lose sight of the child's needs. We encourage putting lesson plans on hold when it is appropriate.

Chairman:

What are you looking for in the child's attitude?

Board Member 2:

We want children to think, to use their minds, and we always need to remember the child's worth. Each child deserves individualized instruction. We need to push children to achieve what they are capable of achieving, but we are ungraded. We need feedback about progress, yet we don't want to label "an average child." The children here radiate that they're liked by their teachers.

Board Member 1:

Children here should feel good about themselves as individuals. They need flexibility of time and space.

That's why we have multi-aged grouping. Children here are individuals and are treated as such. Here there should be no right answers, no cheating, only cooperation.

Chairman:

But we have to keep up with each child's progress for the school board gets scared that there might be holes in a child's education. We want to track a child's progress.

Board Member 1:

The "big three" are parental involvement, individualized instruction, and experience-based education. We encourage you to bring your own experiences into the classroom.

Chairman:

We stress parental involvement for, when the kids see parents trying to help in school, this says more than a lot of words. We want to create a family feeling.

In response to a teacher's remark, "If you don't set goals in the beginning, you don't know if you get to them in the end," the staff and board worked on a goal statement for the year. The administrator typed and distributed copies of it:

1:30 p.m. August 20, 1984  
Staff and Board Brain Storm  
WHAT WE VALUE AS A SCHOOL?

Goal Statement:

The goals of the community of this school are to promote

- Concern, caring and respect for the individual, community, and environment.
- Responsibility and independence
- An appreciation of beauty and the joy of life
- Curiosity, creativity, and problem solving
- The well being of mind, body and spirit
- With an emphasis on individualized instruction
- Parental involvement and experiential learning.

A board member summarized its functions:

In essence what this is speaking to is what it means to be here together, living together in a community . . . what this school is about and certainly what education is about. I think it's right that every so often you take time off and say, "Hey, we cherish and value this particular thing." . . . and know that no one will come back and say, "Hey, you aren't working hard enough at subtraction or whatever."

The original documents circulated in 1978 when this alternative school was being developed reflect similar values.

### History

This community credits Swiss child psychologist Piaget as most influential in shaping the underlying school philosophy. Other writers are in agreement.

The theoretical basis of the open classroom is found in the work of the Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget. His work began to influence many other experimental psychologists in the 1950s when his studies were published, but not until recently has his work been interpreted and popularized in the mass media.

Piaget is best known for his findings that intelligence--adaptive thinking and action--develops in sequence and is related to age. However, the ages at which children can understand different concepts vary from child to child, depending on his native endowment and on the quality of the physical and social environments in which he is reared. (Gross & Gross, 1972, pp. 14-15)

They continue:

. . . based on his research on how children learn, also proved that it is a waste of time to tell a child things that the child cannot experience through his senses. The child must be able to try things out to see what happens, manipulate objects and symbols, pose questions and seek their answers, reconcile what he finds at one time with what he finds at another, and test his findings against the perceptions of others his age. Activity essential to intellectual development includes

social collaboration, group effort, and communication among children. Only after a good deal of experience is the child ready to move on to abstract conceptualizations. Piaget is critical of classrooms where the teacher is the dominant figure, where books and the teacher's talking are basic instructional media, and where large group instruction is the rule, and oral or written tests are used to validate the whole process. Clearly from his findings, traditional teaching techniques are ineffectual. (Gross & Gross, 1972, p. 15)

But alternatives to traditional thinking about education go beyond Piaget.

Alternative forms of schooling have existed in American education since the rise of mass schooling in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The steady trend towards universal, compulsory schooling in state-supported and controlled schools has been a concern of many and challenged by some since those early days. The alternative schools took many forms. In 1800 the Latin Grammar School, Common or English Schools, Academy and Parochial Schools all flourished. Since the nineteenth century other categories of alternatives often termed liberal, progressive, free, open, new, or modern emerged. Their commonality was a concern for school reform.

Cremin (1976) describes part of this "fascinating Kaleidoscope of endless diversity and change" (p. 27). He summarizes the progressive educational movement of Dewey's time. The elements explored are common to many alternative situations.

In my study of the progressive education movement, titled The Transformation of the School, I put forward a number of arguments.



First, that the movement was not an isolated phenomenon in American life, not the invention of a few crackpots and eccentrics, but rather the educational side of the broader progressive movement in American politics and social thought.

Second, that the movement began in protest against the narrowness, the formalism, and the inequities of the late nineteenth century public school.

Third, that as the movement shifted from protest to reform, it cast the school in a new mold, viewing it as (a) a lever of continuing social improvement, (b) an instrument of individual self-realization, (c) an agency for the popularization of culture, and (d) an institution for facilitating the adjustment of human beings to a society undergoing rapid transformation by the forces of democracy, science, and industrialism.

Fourth, that the movement was exceedingly diverse, enrolling men and women as different as Theodore Roosevelt, Jane Addams, Booker T. Washington, and Samuel Gompers, but that one could discern at least three major thrusts: a child-centered thrust, which peaked in the 1920's; a social-reform thrust which peaked in the 1930's; and a scientific thrust which peaked in the 1940's.

Fifth, that John Dewey saw the movement whole and served as the chief articulator of its aspirations--recall his little book, The School and Society (1899), in which the first essay reflected the social-reform thrust; the second essay, the child-centered thrust; and the third, the scientific thrust.

Sixth, that the movement enjoyed its heyday during the 1920's and 1930's, began to decline during the 1940's, and collapsed during the 1950's for all the usual reasons--internal factionalism, the erosion of political support, the rise of an articulate opposition associated with post-World War II conservatism, and the sort of ideological inflexibility that made it unable to contend with its own success. (Cremin, 1976, pp. 59-60)

This cycle of education repeated itself in the sixties.

The new movement began slowly, with the organization of Summerhill societies and Summerhill schools in different parts of the country. It gathered momentum during the middle 1960's, fueled by the writings of

John Holt, Herbert Kohl, George Dennison, James Haddon, and Jonathan Kozol. And it manifested itself in the appearance of scores of new child-centered schools of every conceivable sort and variety.

Simultaneously, growing out of the civil rights movement, there arose the political programs of black and ethnic self-determination and the so-called community free schools associated with them--Harlem Prep in New York, the CAM Academy in Chicago, and the Nairobi Community School in East Palo Alto. (Cremin, 1976, p. 61)

In the 1970's he writes:

Also, during the last five or six years, we have seen a fascinating interweaving of the child-centered and political reform themes in the literature of the movement, so that open education is viewed as a lever of child liberation on the one hand and as a lever of radical social change on the other.

At least two of the three themes of the first movement, then, the child-centered theme and the social reform theme, have emerged full-blown in the present-day movement. Interestingly enough, however, the scientific theme of the first movement has been noticeably absent from the present version. In fact, there has been an active hostility on the part of many free school advocates toward presentday efforts to apply scientific principles to the techniques of instruction and evaluation. (Cremin, 1976, pp. 61-62)

He sees earlier and latter-day advocates of the progressive and free school movements as "notoriously atheoretical" and "ahistorical" (p. 62). However, he applauds their authentic concern to reform the institution of education.

The central issue in all school transformation was the issue of freedom.

In general, reformers did not conceptualize freedom in terms of the kinds of experiences children should have for "complete living." Rather, the approach was negative: freedom from teacher domination, freedom from the millstone of subject matter, freedom from adult-imposed curriculum goals.

Implied in all this was that left to their own devices, children would develop into something better than previous generations: they would be distinct personalities able to cope in new ways with the problems of their social order. Furthermore, they would be happier personalities because they could communicate with others freely and without self-consciousness. Thus, the twin goals of freedom were health in terms of personality and hope in terms of the flowering of a brand new kind of human being who was better able to build the good life for others and live it himself or herself. (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 294)

Liberal educators had and have implicit trust in the power of education to readjust the deficiencies in society.

In the United States the prophets of the common school movement argued that a common school would create a consensus of political and social values and effectively reduce political and social unrest. They exhibited an almost limitless faith that the school, regardless of its political control, would become a great engine for freedom and human progress. For example, Henry Barnard, one of the great American common school reformers of the nineteenth century, expressed awareness of the problems caused by state control of the schools, but dismissed them arguing that in the end education always led to freedom. (Spring, 1975, p. 19)

Radical educators have no such faith:

The literature of radical school reform associated with free schools vehemently opposes the compulsory and authoritarian aspects of traditional public and private schools. This literature attacks the emotional and intellectual effects of conventional pedagogy and projects a radical theory in which freedom is the central virtue. The most uncompromising form of both the attack and the theoretical alternative is found in A. S. Neill's Summerhill. The small number of free schools which existed in the U.S. before the current wave began are almost all explicitly Summerhillian schools. In recent years, the writings of Paul Goodman, John Holt, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, George Leonard, Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, George Dennison, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, and others have popularized the general notion surrounding free schools:

that children are naturally curious and motivated to learn by their own interests and desires. The most important condition for nurturing this natural interest is freedom supported by adults who enrich the environment and offer help. In contrast, coercion and regimentation only inhibit emotional and intellectual development. It follows that almost all of the major characteristics of public school organization and method are opposed--the large classes, the teacher with absolute power to administer a state-directed curriculum to rigidly defined age groups, the emphasis on discipline and obedience, the constant invidious evaluation and the motivation by competition, the ability tracking, and so forth.

We can see in this central concept of freedom two distinct ideological sources for an alternative school movement, one political and one pedagogical (or more broadly, cultural). (Graubard, 1972, p. 67)

The school in the study stems from the pedagogical or cultural source, as distinct from the political source. Of the utmost importance in this conception of freedom is the assumption that children who develop into happier and healthier personalities are able to contribute to the creation and reconstruction of a new social order. It is not surprising that the school in question and others with this child-centered thrust advocate a curriculum

weighted heavily toward the creative arts: these, after all, were human vehicles for self-expression. Furthermore, this was the side of individual development that was most neglected by the traditional school with its single-minded interest in intellectual discipline. (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 295)

Young people, it was believed, have other interests and the curriculum of children should reflect these interests.

The school in the study tries to encourage these interests in its experientially-based approach.

Closely associated with child interests, impulses, initiative, and freedom was the idea of the child's doing--learning through activity. By 1933 the terms activity movement, activity program, and activity curriculum had become the commonplace in pedagogical parlance. Used freely and sometimes interchangeably with these terms were units, unit of work, central theme, and center of interest. The terms problem and project had gained currency in the first two decades of the twentieth century. It is of interest that projects were used in the Dewey School before the turn of the century and in the Francis W. Parker School as early as 1901--well before they were systematized into a method by Kilpatrick in 1918. (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 299)

The emphasis placed on the human experience and the relations between the environment and the culture of man firmly roots the school in question in the philosophy of pragmatism and the work of Dewey and Kilpatrick.

The essence of the school philosophy is the pragmatic position that education should not be looked upon as a preparation for life but life itself. Whitehead (1957), in The Aims of Education, agrees. "There is only one subject-matter for education and that is life in all its manifestations" (pp. 6-7) for "you may not divide the seamless coat of learning" (p. 11). Dewey (1897) believed that all living educates, but school life that is "as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home" (p. 237) is particularly "effective in bring the child to share in the inherited resources of the race" (p. 237). This particular school's emphasis on parental involvement is one attempt to integrate the experiences of life at home

and life in the classroom. In fact, the founders of the school hoped that a curriculum based on the spontaneous interests of the children's home and school life would emerge. It was, however, considered necessary for the teacher to have an outline of concepts that were appropriate outcomes for each subject area. The state adopted text, Competency Goals and Performance Indicators: K-12, greatly influenced the guide.

The influential Plowden Report (1967), Children and Their Primary Schools, had great impact on American educators involved in integrating home and school life. It recognized that "homes and schools interact continuously" (Great Britain Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967, p. 37) and "that one of the essentials for educational advance is a closer partnership between the two parties to every child's education" (GBCACE, 1967, p. 37). The interrelatedness of the total family in the school community is recognized, for "It has long been recognized that education is concerned with the whole man, henceforth it must be concerned with the whole family" (GBCACE, 1967, p. 48). The chairman of the school board recognizes the importance of parental involvement in education for other reasons. "The more parental involvement the more problems are prevented." However, his greatest concern is for the creation of a caring, home-like environment for optimum student growth.

Dewey believed that children grow emotionally, physically and educationally in a provocative stimulating environment. He respected inbuilt natural programs of development but believed implicitly that a freer environment could stimulate or retard development. Following the biological functional psychology of James and Angell, Dewey was convinced of "individual structure and laws of growth" (Dewey, 1897, p. 243). Towards maturity flourishing in this rich active community, paradoxically, this idea of growth towards maturity which stresses the student's individuality, uniqueness, and a special brand of freedom, when placed in a bureaucratic system of education, which is more comfortable dealing with groupings than diversity is the antithesis of community.

Many progressive school communities, including the school in the study, bought into the notion of individualized instruction. In Winnetka, Illinois, in the early 1920's, Superintendent Carleton Washburn's school was a prototype of the new education.

Children were allowed to work on units as long as needed for mastery. They worked independently, using self-instructive, self-corrective materials developed by the Winnetka staff. After each self-test the child was given a check test by his or her teacher. Class assignments and recitations were abolished. All elementary grades in Winnetka were organized on this basis.

What came to be known as the "Winnetka Plan" was the first systemwide attempt to "individualize" the subject curriculum. It was based on the idea that the best way to improve the curriculum was to reorganize it so that each child could master it at his or her own individual rate. (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 311)

The board members of the school in the research feel that each child deserves individualized instruction "to achieve what they are capable of achieving." This philosophy, together with experiential education and parental involvement in schooling, are seen as ways of fostering a concern for the uniqueness and diversity of the individual while integrating school life into the real life of the larger interrelated community.





CHAPTER III  
THE CLIMATE OF  
SOCIAL INTERACTION

CHAPTER III  
THE CLIMATE OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The milieu of social interactions in a classroom is important as an indicator of how the participants create and recreate their worlds. This research adopts the attitude that in order to understand the experience of education, one has to come to some position on the nature and climate of these relationships.

In ecology, climate is generally accepted as any physical measurement that describes the physical state of that community. In this classroom I have chosen to examine notions of stratification, dominance, or even nurturance to explore the fundamentals of taken-for-granted assumptions. In Chapter V I will show that these concerns can act as barriers or bridges to the formation of an "authentic community" that lives together in justice, equality, and fraternity. The issues are also critical to the development of an understanding of the hidden curriculum of schooling.

Jackson (1968) describes this hidden curriculum in Life in Classrooms. He characterizes these values, beliefs, moral and aesthetic judgments and modes of understanding which are dominant in all educational communities, both traditional and alternative. He finds it "useful to think of there being two curriculums in the classroom" (Jackson, 1968, p. 34).

The "celebrated" (p. 3) and the "unnoticed" (p. 3). Most teachers, he believes, feel that their celebrated, value-neutral, curriculum is the real substance of education. He believes, rather, that "the humdrum elements of human existence" (p. 3), "the daily routine, the 'rat race' and the infamous 'old grind'" (p. 3), are the real lessons "we must heed as we seek to understand life in elementary classrooms" (p. 3). These lessons, he believes, become so much a part of the life of the student that the oppressive dimensions of the hidden curriculum remain unnoticed.

Jackson is only one of many exploring this crucial issue currently. These writers believe that the dominant ideology of capitalist society is so prevalent in American education that, daily, schools create and recreate this reality. Education, they argue, plays into the hands of those with a vested interest in the preservation of the status quo. They contend that schooling in America is about control and the production of quiet, submissive students who cannot disobey. This authoritarian approach, they believe, channels the more competitive pupils to their just rewards. The climate emphasizes the punishing of cheaters and the rewarding of the deserving. The message is clear. A good disciplined life of hard work, obedience, and delayed gratification is always rewarded.

Unfortunately, in the process, students become objectified, isolated, and culturally indoctrinated. Societal

hierarchies are sustained amid an atmosphere of legitimate authority. Consequently, students become alienated from their work in a seemingly necessary hierarchical society. They sublimate their critical consciousness and, from an early age, feel that they are powerless in the face of a world which forgets that all men are equally deserving of justice, liberty, and fraternity. The data in this chapter support this body of writing.

This hidden curriculum of schooling has many implications in today's alternative and traditional classrooms. Because of this importance, I have chosen to devote Chapter VI of this dissertation to developing the complexity of this issue. To amplify the topic, at this time, would be unhelpful to the reader. Instead, a presentation of the opinions and experiences of the children is more instructive.

### A Guide to the Chapter

#### The Snapshots

In order to get at the norms accepted by the children, and often reinforced by the institution of schooling, I have started the chapter with a series of "snapshots." Following Batcher (1981), these introductory glimpses of school life, as recorded in the children's poetry, journal writing, interviews and classroom proceedings are "central to a number of conceptual" themes and "seemed characteristics of the total picture (Batcher, 1981, p. 40). Not only are they appropriate to the metaphor of ecological community, but the

participants' words state the underlying concerns of the hidden curriculum of schooling with considerably more clarity than much scholarly theorizing at this juncture.

#### The School Schedule and Rules

The chapter continues with an examination of the school schedule and rules. Jackson (1968) reminds educators that "a world in which traffic signs, whistles, and other regulatory devices abound is quite different from one in which these features are absent" (p. 10). He feels that students become "school-wise" or "teacher-wise" when they have discovered how to respond with a minimum amount of pain and discomfort to the demands, both official and unofficial of classroom life" (p. 34). An examination of the schools' schedule and rules provided useful insight into the climate of social interaction in this community.

I find it useful, at this point in the chapter, to make a crucial distinction between the "important" things that go on in this classroom and the "valuable" things that occur there. I decided, after much thought, that this distinction was a significant way to approach the data. Not only did the distinction reflect the words of the students, who referred to the activities that took place in the morning as "important," "basics" or "main things," but it reflected the atmosphere of "importance" that prevailed, in the classroom, at these times. A banking model of education (Freire, 1983, p. 59), which reinforces the idea that "importance" is what

is accomplished by someone else's standards, was dominant. The atmosphere was quiet, repetitive, and controlled. Achieving the "important" was often a barrier to the existence of "authentic community."

The children spoke about "valuing" the relationships and the activities that took place in the afternoon. The school board referred to these as "enrichment activities." In the afternoon the students engaged in "education as the practice of freedom" (Freire, 1983, p. 69). At these times the students moved "towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (Freire, 1983, pp. 12, 13). These moments were bridges to a spirit of "authentic community." Because this distinction between "important" and "valuable" is pivotal to an understanding of the children's world, the chapter continues with an examination of these concepts.

#### The Children Speak of the "Important" Things

The students exhibited a great deal of insight when they talked about the "important" elements of schooling. They put the "learning about things" as top priority. They spoke about the "basics" of education, which they saw as a necessary ingredient for "a good life" and "a good job." Reading, writing, math, and science were as important to them as they appear to be in the popular media. Their fears of "not getting a good grade" or "not getting a good job" were

uppermost in the discussion. These "important things" usually took place in the morning in this school community.

#### The Children Speak of the Things They "Value"

The students perceived the "special creative things" that took place in the afternoons as most valuable. They saw these creative activities as a way of establishing and nurturing relationships within the school community. They felt that these activities were enjoyable because they made connections and let them "be an adult person." A marked difference in climate prevailed when the children were involved with the "important" and when they were involved with the "valuable" in their classroom.

#### The Climate of Social Interaction When the Students Were Involved with the "Important"

The climate of the morning classes, in this school community, was often cold, controlled, and impersonal. The hidden curriculum of schooling contributed largely to this ambiance. In this situation the children had fully internalized the norms of their adult world. They had accepted a culture of positivism, characterized by a preponderance of mechanistic and technical teaching and learning situations. They knew exactly what constituted a "good" or "bad" student. They had bought into the idea of limited resources and the need for competition. They felt that a hierarchy of power was justified, and openly tolerated "repetition, redundancy, and ritualistic action" (Jackson, 1968, p. 5). They quickly

adopted strategies and "psychological buffers" that coped effectively with the "wear and tear of classroom life" (Jackson, 1968, p. 26). They were obedient, docile, and tolerant of stress in the face of the many mundane and routine tasks that took place every morning. They coped continuously with "crowds, praise and power" (Jackson, 1968, p. 9). This taken-for-granted reality of everyday life was examined in detail. It was dissected into many fragments for closer scrutiny. The research examined the following components: experience-based education, the curriculum, work and play, repetition, cheating and punishment, an atmosphere of quiet control, individualized instruction, the grading system, stratification, dominance, the "bad" student, the "good" student, and parental involvement.

The Climate of Social Interaction When the Students Were Involved with the "Valuable"

There was a marked difference between the climate of the morning and the afternoon classes in this community. A warm, harmonious and mutualistic milieu prevailed when the students were involved in activities that encouraged creativity, relationship, and praxis. It seemed inappropriate to dissect these educational experiences into separate components for closer scrutiny. Instead, an attempt was made to capture a significant moment, in each classroom, in its totality. The situations described reflected living together in "authentic community." They promised hope for a change, from the dominant paradigm, at some future date.



How Would the Children Change the Climate of  
Their Classroom?

The chapter closes with an examination of the ways by which the students would, if given a chance, ameliorate the harsher aspects of their community's climate. They were unable to imagine "things as if they could be otherwise" for they were "accustomed to viewing their situations as determined as given" (Greene, 1985, p. 149). It is my hope that the study will bring the issues of the hidden curriculum to the surface, foster awareness, heighten consciousness, and increase the possibility of true change.

The Snapshots

Competition: Poetry

Achievement Test

Achievement, believment  
Of what we ought to be.  
Achievement Test  
To be our best  
then we rest  
Free to be  
What we want to be.  
But first  
Before our freedom  
We must feel the thrill  
That is given to us  
That are real.  
Nervous, uneasy, scared  
shared by the olders  
As nervous as an animal  
Abandoned  
And forced to face the world.  
As scared as a human  
about to face death  
As uneasy as a light  
We face the rest  
And take the test.

Mutualism: A Class in Progress

The Middles (3rd and 4th graders) are really enjoying their literature class. The teacher sits cross-legged on the band room floor. The children lie around on the carpet. The story is Tolstoy's Peter the First and the Peasant.

Teacher: What do you think he is saying?

Eawan: Always be nice to your parents. I think that is his moral. Be nice to them when they're old for they were good to you and I think he is saying that you don't throw away money by breeding girls.

Marc: He's also saying that ladies can work just as hard as a man in a field.

Patty: And a person can sometimes not see something right beside him.

Caring: Poetry

In the darkness the moon glittered  
 On the Shining walls  
 Just washed by busy nurses  
 This is the beloved Hughson Hall  
 Hughson Hall has been devoured by a machine,  
 But its heart is still there waiting  
     to beat again  
     within the walls  
 of the new auditorium.

Hughson Hall was a nursing school  
 Started in 1938  
 First it was small  
 Then it got big  
 But then they tore it down  
 Doesn't anybody care at all?

Pecking Order: The Cooking Class

The teacher, parent helper, and the class are in the kitchen preparing to make pancakes with M and M's.

Teacher: How do I choose the person who helps?

Children: (they answer together) The one who is sitting quietly on the floor.

Teacher: Paul, come and sit right here beside me. Come here and listen. Don't be looking at the gerbils. Sally, you are sitting so quietly and nicely; you will help me.

Another teacher moves through the kitchen and out the back door. She carries an aquarium containing greenery and many caterpillars. A student addresses her.

Meg: What are you doing?

Teacher: Pay no attention to them. Sit down and when it's your turn, you will be able to do it.

Some children play with the overflowing pancake mix. Some spills onto the chair.

Paul: Can I clean it up, teacher?

Teacher: No, I'll do it cleanly.

A child protests that he hasn't helped yet.

Teacher: You have been complaining and haven't been quiet, so I haven't picked you.

The children look at their teacher when they talk and never communicate with each other.

Teacher: How many times do you want to stir?

Children: (shouting out numbers together) 90, 25, 16, 100, 1000.

Teacher: Let's do it 20 times. Bottoms on the floor when you're sitting on the ground!

Student: When my mother makes pancakes. . . .

The teacher looks at him, puts her arm in the air indicating that he didn't raise his arm before speaking. He obeys, stops talking, raises his arm and continues to speak.

The children take turns at making a pancake on the griddle. All are sitting quietly although Peg is shaking her head and arms. All the girls, except Peg, are picked to make their pancake first, then all the boys are picked and lastly Peg is picked. She comes over to me, as if to read my mind, and says, "I wanted to be last anyway." To her teacher she says defiantly, "It doesn't matter that I'm last for we're all doing the same thing."

Stratification: The Children Talk

May: I don't like her putting Fanny and Steve in the 2nd Grade book for English and Math and I don't think it's right to do it.

Ann: They're better than you, May.

May: They're better than you, Ann (the children listening laugh loudly).

Ann (looking sad): Fanny is doing much more at home than I.

May: She (teacher) wants Fanny and Steve to be happy and she lets them make volcanoes and experiments with water and all that good work on the bulletin board (pointing to the board).

Chris: I don't like Math for it's hard for me. I would prefer to be playing and drawing pictures.

May: Steve is doing worst, he does bad things. One day he spat at me and he was eating soup the wrong way.

In the foyer Jess, Tania, and Milly are making up their own play. "We're the science group," Tania whispers proudly, "we're so far advanced in the brown book we might get the 7th grade one."

Buffalo or Turtle: The Journal

Journal for Friday the 30th

"Excuse me, Mrs. Mons," I said as I scampered down the stairs and into the math room. Another day had begun at school with Mrs. Graves saying, "Make your corrections," as she passed out papers to a portion of the Olders. The ones who had no corrections to make started games and soon the others joined in. I played Crazy 8 with Kim and Pass the Button with a group of people. At 9:20 Ms.. Graves called us together to go over our homework and decide how to remake the Temperature and Sun Location Chart. When that was done we were dismissed for break. The herd of buffalo stampeded down the stairs and out the front door. Once the buffalo were on the playground they changed to Olders and played the games they chose to play. When they heard the words "Let's Go!", these Olders seemed to immediately change to turtles that poked along aimlessly towards the front door, only to hear "Hubba! Hubba! Hubba!" These words were like magic for the turtles were instantly Olders rushing to class. In L.A. we turned in our homework and read until Mrs. Woods asked us to work on our Incan art projects. We soon were cleaning up and rushing to get our lunch with roaring stomachs. When we were dismissed to lunch break we went outside quickly not to waste one second of free time. Again we played the game we chose and at the words "Let's Go!" we obediently went inside to French. In French we had a test and read a poem. Our next period was Reading. We read. Then our final class for the day, Art! In art we again worked on our Incan projects. It has been a great day at school, but aren't all Fridays!

Conflict: The Workshop

At the workshop, a board member describes the discipline policy to the teaching staff. He explains the use of "time out" for disruptive or aggressive behavior. Other punishments considered are loss of playtime or writing an essay. The latter, it is recognized, causes a dilemma. There is a concern that the children would associate language arts with

punishment. If the children fail to bring their homework to school they stay in from play during recess. Stealing is accompanied by a conference and tardiness with "giving back" the time the child was late during break time. Unfortunately, it is recognized children are often punished when the tardiness is the parent's fault. There is no corporal punishment. The board member describes the model of conflict resolution adopted by the school. In this model:

One, look at the situation. Two, see what the options are. Three, evaluate the consequences. Four, find a solution.

There is always a positive solution. This is a better model than hit and run. It's better than the con game that the children play of avoidance of you. This takes a lot of time but it is better than a tap on the bottom.

He went on to discuss what children learn in school.

Board Member: They learn how to relate to authority, social behavior. They learn voice tone, body language. Every interaction is important. Whose behavior is more important than any behavior in a classroom?

Teachers: The teachers?

Board Member: Right! Children do what we do, not what we say. Modeling is the best teacher, bad or good.

He continues with a description of psychological theories and their need for replication.

It's not a good theory if someone else cannot do it somewhere else with kids. This model has been thoroughly researched for 15 years. It was started in Kansas at the College of Human Development. These people observed people who were good with kids. They developed components and researched them. . . . These are the components of the teaching interaction. One, initial praise. This first thing sets the stage. This praise sets the tone. Two, immediate consequence. "You need time out." The hardest thing is to get some

consequences. But, by golly, that behavior is not going to go away unless you do. This is great for it really gives you a track to run on with the kid who's really putting your stomach in a knot.

Teacher: My initial response is "Why are you doing that?"

Board Member: There's got to be something (consequence) and it's usually that kid that you don't want to interact with that needs this kind of thing.

You've got the first four steps.

You've described the inappropriate behavior and given the rationale say, "Do you understand?" Don't lose your track. The kid is not going to learn unless you put a consequence on there. The kid won't learn the appropriate (behavior) unless he has a real reason for learning, something that's going to be functional for him. Practice of feedback. What you are trying to do is pull out a bad tone of voice and put a good one in its place.

Work: The Journal

"Let's gooooo," calls Mrs. Mons. We scurry to get to our class on time. When we get there we read. Then Mrs. Graves said, "Put up your books." We started to work in our folders. We worked, and we worked, and we worked, until finally she said, "Put your folders back on the shelf, we are going for a walk." We got in one straight line and went outside with our eyes shut. There we opened our eyes and she explained what we were going to do. She picked partners and then she said, "You close your eyes, you close your eyes, and you close yours." Unfortunately, I was one of those people who closes their eyes. Jessica lead me around. I was feeling the fence when I grabbed something. It stung me. I knew what it was. "A bee!" I screamed. We switched

partners. I was the person who could see and Jessica was the person who had their eyes closed.

At break people played four-square and football.

In Language Arts we went to the library and we wrote about our garden. At the library Monica told us the rules which we already knew.

### Mimicry

The Kindergarten teacher and the children are sitting on the carpet in a spot marked with masking tape in the shape of the letter "X". Betty places her plastic bears in a very straight line. The teacher says, "I love the way you placed your bears, Betty." Kerri peeps over her shoulder to see Betty's arrangement. She changes her arrangement to make her bears look exactly like Betty's.

### Dominance: Interview

The leaders of this school are Mary, Bob, and John. They are the "in" people that everyone likes a lot. In this school there are a certain amount of people that are "in" and a certain amount of people that aren't exactly "out" but aren't included as much. I'm included some, not as much as the others, there are some that are excluded like Eavan and Emer because they're quiet. The others talk a lot and get people's attention. They're talking about their friends in Riverswood (a fashionable part of town) and the people there, and things that you would like to find out about. I don't live anywhere near there.



Option 1: Continue to Compete--A Fourth Grader Speaks

Child: I've had a good week. I got 100% in a French test and 12 out of 12 in a vocabulary test.

Int: What were your vocabulary words?

Child: Democracy, preventive. . . .

Int: Do you know the meaning of democracy?

Child: Yes--a mess like . . . I came home this morning and the house was in a democracy.

Int: Did everyone get 100% on the French test?

Child: No. Mrs. Brown called out the names of those who got less than 100%.

Int: Did those people feel badly?

Child: No, for there were lots of them.

Option 2: To Move: A Class in Progress

Mrs. Smith tells the rules of the game. There are two teams. The children will compete for scores. If an individual gets his own question right he gets 5 points. If it is a bonus question he gets 10 points. If the team as a whole cooperate and get the question right, they get 2 points. A parent keeps score on the chalk board. The two teams are Pat's and Joan's teams.

Teacher: Klari, who was the vice president with John Adams?

Klari: (No response. She looks pained. Other students are waving their arms wildly. They are obviously very keen to answer.)

Pam: Thomas Jefferson.

Teacher: Who was the first lady to serve ice cream in the White House?

Children: (Together) Me Miss! Me Miss! (Arms are shaking excitedly)

Teacher: Would you all take on a blank expression, like a mummy and not tell anyone anything.

Teacher: What president wrote the Declaration of Independence?

Jon: Thomas Jefferson.

Klari: Oh no!

Teacher: He was right! (Children laugh) Klari gets red. She pulls herself away from the group and does not answer until the game is over. The children on her team look less than pleased at her response.

Teacher: Don't have any look on your face but one of wonder. Pam, what 7 presidents were born in Virginia? Get the obvious ones, the ones with the pretty houses in Virginia.

Pam: Thomas Jefferson, John Tyler, James Madison, George Washington, Zachary Taylor.

Teacher: Presley, what president's wife was the mother of a president?

Presly: No answer.

Teacher: She hung her clothes to dry in the east room of the White House.

At the end of the game, the winning team had 49 points, the other team had 34.

Sam came up to Klari yelling, "Good game youall!" sarcastically. Klari did not answer.

### Option 3: To be Impeded: Interview

Jane is left out of things partially because of what happened to her, and partially because she's grouchy sometimes when you're trying to help her. She gets angry for she thinks that she can do everything by herself. Sometimes

we get angry at her for being so angry. You see, it's hard to understand. We've never been in that situation before so it's hard for us and Jane right now. Because of that, some people don't want her around. We feel uneasy around her because people think there's a disease or something. Jane comes over a lot to me and even I am hesitant to do things, but I just tell myself--"There's nothing wrong with Jane, it's fine." The only thing that happened to her is that: there is nothing else. If more people get used to her I think she'd probably be included more. It's hardest for her to mix in. It's like "Here's Jane," he said, pointing the index finger of his right hand, and "here's us," he said, making a circle with his thumb and index finger of his left hand, and it's hard for her to get in here, demonstrating by placing his finger in the circle.

I was struck by his assessment and by the way he had avoided using the words "cancer" or "blindness."

#### Option 4: Or Be Eliminated: A Lesson

The Youngers and their teacher are doing a work sheet. The aim is to match the words with the pictures and connect both with a line. The words are "paint," "look," and "help."

Teacher: Who is helping?

Child: (pointing to a picture of a person with a brush)  
Him?

Teacher: Yes, he is helping, but who is really helping?

Child: (looks confused and points to the headless woman who is carrying a bag of groceries at an open door) Her?

Teacher: Good, draw the line (the child obeys). Who is looking?

Child: (looks confused and points to the man with the brush) Him?

Teacher: No, who is really looking?

The child points to the only other choice--the man with the telescope.

#### Buffering: Interview

Int: Yesterday at school I saw you working on those worksheets about Table Rock. They asked questions about the distance between Table Rock and the School. If you were working in the classroom on one of those worksheets, and you weren't able to do some of the questions, what could you do?

Child: You either skip it or you can go ask the teacher.

Int: Could you look at your neighbors?

Child: No.

Int: Why not?

Child: That's cheating.

Int: Why would that be cheating?

Child: You're supposed to do your own work. What you know yourself instead of looking at everybody's papers. When we were doing those papers, I wasn't there all the time because I was working on another subject, but when we were doing those papers I noticed that lots of people were having trouble with them and lots of people weren't. They just tried to make excuses for themselves, like saying, "I know that, but I just don't want to do it now."

#### Diversity: Interview

Int: Would you go to school in clothes that look like regular old working clothes?

Child: Probably not because it's harder to teach people that come to school like that.

Int: Harder to teach?

Child: Everybody stares at them and then it loses the attention of the teacher.

Int: Why do you think people would be staring at them?

Child: Because they look funny.

Int: Do you think it's important to your friends how you dress? Do you think that's important?

Child: I don't think it should be that important. . . .

Int: No, no. I'm not asking should it be, I'm asking is it important?

Child: No.

Int: Who thinks it's important to their friends? Amy?

Child: I think it's important to some people because I think it's important to some people to look good because their . . . I don't know. . . . Well, I think no because it doesn't really matter how you look to your friends, it's how your friends feel about you.

Int: I'm really wondering why is it when I look at the children in the school they all dress very, very much better, if you want to say better. Smarter and all that, than other schools. That is what I'm interested in. Why is it?

Child: I think because maybe they don't really have very bad clothes to wear, because they want to look good for themselves and maybe for some other people, but they don't really feel like they should.

Int: Do we get all sorts of children at this school?

Child: Yes, we do. Well, it's sort of hard to explain how they're different. . . .

Int: Are they the same children that go to every other school that you know of?

Child: Well, some of them are the same and some of them aren't.

Int: How are they different?

Child: Well, they dress different, . . .

Int: Do they talk differently?

Child: Some of them.

Int: And what else do they do differently?

Child: Well, they eat differently. I've noticed that.  
They're a lot more prepared to come to class. It's  
just . . . they're different.

### Tolerance

. Parent: How was it in school today?

Child: Boring, very boring.

Parent: Did something good happen? Was there not something  
you liked?

Child: No, it was very dull.

Parent: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 as awful and 10 as  
fantastic, how would you rate your day?

Child: Nine (she thinks for a while) Yes, 9. I'd say it  
was a 9.

### Stress

(A Sixth Grader's Journal)

"Oh no!" the sixth graders have their writing test today. When we walked into school the fifth graders went to the math room for English with Mrs. Mons. The sixth graders went to the language arts room for our writing test. As we approached the door to the language arts room you could tell everyone was nervous. Everyone was glad when 10:00 came.

### The School Schedule and Rules

An examination of the school schedule and rules gives a measure of the classroom climate. The schedule, for the two semesters in which the data were collected, was a complex

picture of rigid time frames, a large number of subject areas and little choice of flexibility for the student.

The school day was divided into two parts. The "basic subjects," math, science, language arts including writing, poetry, and grammar, took place in the morning. The "enrichment areas," journal, physical education, music, art, French, computer, social studies, reading, publication, and drama, took place in the afternoon. The school day started at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m., with a half-hour recess at 10:00 a.m. and a break from 11:50 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch. The children brought a snack to eat at recess and a bag lunch for the noontime break. Milk was provided by the school.

As the year proceeded, a change in scheduling took place. The school day was seen as too short to get the desired work covered so reading was started at 8:20 a.m. instead of 8:30 a.m. On Wednesday and Friday the Middles and Olders had their official physical education period during recess. The schedule looked more like a high school schedule than an elementary school one with its order, rigid time frames, and fragmentary subject areas. The school authorities were not comfortable with this arrangement. At the start-of-the-year workshop it was explained, "We need to work toward integration, with not so much need to schedule for this hampers a relaxed free-flowing atmosphere."

Perhaps in an effort to overcome this discomfort, a notice beside the timetable read, "Remember schedules subject to change without notice." I did not, however, witness any schedule changes during the course of the research. The children spoke of this inflexibility.

If I was really involved in something I was doing and it's time to go to the next class I'd probably say, "Oh gosh, I can't wait until tomorrow when we finish this subject," but I don't say, "Teacher, may I please keep on going?"

We usually do (go to the next class) because if you don't you might get in trouble, and you can always do it later, but you do leave the thing and go to your next class.

The next day when you come in, they'd let you do it in the morning when the school hasn't started yet.

The students felt that they had little choice in what they learned.

In this school there is no choice. You take the classes that they give you.

We don't really choose the subjects. The board, the teachers and sometimes the parents pick the subjects.

We don't pick because the teacher has already other things planned, but if you wanted to do percentages, you would say, "Teacher, I want to learn percentage," and she'd say, "Well, maybe another day."

The students accepted this situation willingly. They trusted that their teachers were choosing because of good reasons. They suspected an underlying scope and sequence of work.

Sometimes you might want to do things, like I'm learning adding right now, and you want to learn multiplication. She might want you to learn adding before you learn to multiply.



Sometimes, however, big events in the school year did alter the timetable. A student wrote on election day:

Mrs. Graves explained to us that, because the String Quartet from the North Carolina Orchestra was coming, we would have a funny schedule. We went to our cubbies and got our books for L.A. (language arts). Bump, push, shove. We all make our way to L.A. class.

Bumping, pushing, and shoving are only some of the by-products of a crowded, unbending agenda. A schedule that is programmed to reflect the shortness of the school day and the enormity of the task of covering the required work during those hours automatically creates a need for great speed, activity, and a desire to contend effectively with crowds. The children often write about this in their daily class journals. They speak urgently of coping with haste, chaos, and the many inconveniences of this situation. Often they use the words "scurry," "scramble," "rush," or "trample" in these descriptions.

We rush up the stairs.

Get out of my way!

Go faster!

After being pushed a couple of times, I successfully get into the math room.

Oh, no, late again!

Oh, how will I make it to class on time?

I heard lots of people coming near to the room. Whew, I got out quickly without being clobbered.

After break they shuffle to Mrs. Wood's room where they find assigned seats waiting for them.

Let's goooooooooo!

Move it!

Don't push!

Get out of my way!

Another day of kicking and trampling at the school. As usual we start off with math. Mrs. Graves said, "Finish your math sheets first and work on your scale drawing of the classroom.

After we finished and 10:00, we tried to make our way up to the upstairs cubby room. Another, "Let's gooo!" followed and we went to Mrs. Wood's room. There we read a book called Secret of the Andes and enjoyed it.

11:50 Lunch

Och!

Hurry up!

Guess what I have to drink!

As we came down the steps and went into the L.A. room we stepped on each other.

It's like being in a boat in a storm and the boat is being pushed. Finally the voyage is over and we get into the room.

A blind student writes:

Friday morning, I rushed to my cubby dragging my bag of bricks. Getting two of the biggest ones out, I hear the Older's footsteps on the stairs. Coming into the room, I get a push from behind and stumble into a chair. I sat down and began to read. After reading we did some oral math problems, but most of all I just sat and listened. Then Mrs. Graves said, "You'll show me that you're ready by sitting at your place." Then it was break. We went to put our books away and rushed outside.

This student, because of her disability, did not cope as readily as the other children with the classroom routine.

This was often a cause of mild irritation.

She thinks she can do things by herself. She hasn't realized yet that we can do things more quickly and that in classtime we need to hurry. She feels she can take her time and work it out. But she needs to do that at home and get to the point.

The dominant perception of school is obviously one of strict time frames. The rules of the school, which were written by the children, did not reflect any strictness. Tim wrote in his journal:

In the foyer, Mrs. Mons and the children made a list of school rules. They do it every year and I don't like it.

The teacher asked that the rules be positive rather than negative, and the children complied. The following rules hung in the hall:

1. Do walk in school.
2. Be kind to each other.
3. Keep the school clean.
4. Be kind to the cat.
5. Obey the rules.

Many times during the research, the rules were seen as an exercise in teacher pleasing. A kindergarten student explained to the administrator, "I done you a favor, I walked in the hall." Another child spoke of the agony of being caught by teachers while breaking rules.

If I'm at school and bending the rules a little, like running down the stairs, it seems that Mrs. B. is always there. If I go fast in the halls, she's always there. Right there . . . always there. . . .

The written rules appeared benign and nonthreatening. They were part of a taken-for-granted way of behaving in any

learning situation. The library was no exception so when Monica, the librarian, explained her rules, Marie remarked, "Monica told us the rules which we already knew." Many important rules, however, were left unwritten.

### The Children Speak of the Important Things

The children interviewed see schooling as having two functions. They see it as a place "to learn about other things" and a place to "know about other people and socialize a bit." When asked what is important in school, they were in agreement that the "learning about things" was top priority. These "basic" things were, in the children's minds, inextricably caught up with the nature of goodness and the necessity for the institution of schooling.

I don't think you'd be good if you didn't go to school because you wouldn't learn anything. You couldn't read and you couldn't get around if you didn't know how to read.

You'd be like stupid, if you didn't go to school. People would think you were stupid and dumb and don't know anything.

They described the essentials of a good education.

You need to learn about countries. Like in social studies, if you wanted to go to Japan, you wouldn't know anything about Japan if you didn't have social studies. Right?

It's important to learn how to read and that stuff so that you can get a job, or be good at something, or go to college, stuff like that.

I think reading and writing and the basics in math are the most important so you'd be able to understand.

The most important thing is to read and read the words correct, and to write and spelling, to take little by little until you get bigger words, get higher grades.

Reading is real important. You'd start slow and when you get faster it'd get easier.

I think it's important that you learn to behave yourself like for homework, if it's due on Friday, you have to organize yourself.

Like in class, not talking and drawing. If you do you'll get punished.

I think reading is the most important, because if you're in high school and can't read and you get a car and you can't read the signs . . . or you can't read the newspaper or books, I think that is most important.

I think reading and basic math is important.

What is also important is to learn to organize yourself, like Ann said, because you need to do your homework if it was due Wednesday. You need to organize yourself. If maybe you don't have anything to do one day, just goof off that day and get it over with.

I think reading and writing is probably the most important . . . 'cause if you got in a car and went off and you looked at a sign and didn't know what to do you might cause an accident and be killed or kill someone else.

The students spoke freely about their fears of being unsuccessful in their basic subjects.

Sometimes it makes you afraid if you don't know anything and you think everybody else knows it.

I think what makes me scared is like, a teacher walks up to you and asks you a question and you have no idea what the question is about, but here, she never explained it to you, and it just really scares me if I get the wrong answer. They'll get mad at me.

What I get afraid about is when we had this test and I'm really worried. Am I going to get a good mark? Are my parents going to think I'm good? Am I going to do well? I'm scared of going into a new grade and a new class too.

Sometimes it can make you scared if you're going to class and you really don't know what you're supposed to be doing. Nobody will answer your questions. It's not important to them.

The important subject matter takes place in the mornings. The school board believes that children are "fresher in the morning" and more receptive to the complex world of math, language arts, and science. The students give other reasons for this scheduling.

In the morning you have more time to do things than in the afternoon. One of the things may go later and school would be out.

They want you to get the main things done first so that you can do other things later.

I think what's important is that you learn those basic things in the morning.

In the morning you just do the basic things. In the afternoons they have special creative things to do.

The children link these "special creative things" with the secondary function of schooling. They see art as a way of knowing themselves better and "getting to know other people" at the same time.

#### The Children Speak of the Things They Value

When the students talked of the important things of their community they stressed the basic tasks of classroom existence that "will get you a good education." When questioned about what was valuable in their school, personal relationships were top priority.

I value the teachers because they take enough time to come and teach us.

I value Mrs. Mons because she makes everything happen for us and she organizes field trips . . . and I love her.

I value all the Kinders, because some of them I like. Some I might not like that much because I don't know them, but I value their friendship.

I value the security of knowing everybody. You feel sort of secure.

Why do you feel secure?

Well, it's not as if you were . . . if you'd see somebody you didn't know. I don't know. You just feel secure if you know everybody.

Any breach of personal relationship made the students feel sad. They spoke about being angry when people do not want to pass the ball and "always want to pass it to the other boys and they never think of you." They felt personally violated "when I put something in my cubby and I don't find it there later" or "when some of the teachers . . . this sounds mean . . . don't take time to explain something to you." They felt uncomfortable when they were not trusted by the teacher or the other students.

When a teacher walks in and says "You all sit!" when she doesn't know, she really can't point out the people and she can't trust anybody's word.

Why can she not trust your word?

Because you want to get out of it, and don't want to sit through break.

Sometimes I still say "I will do this" but the teacher won't trust you. She'll say, "Let me write a reminder for you."

Sometimes I feel that I'm not trusted. . . . If someone else believes in something and you don't and you are true and they don't believe it . . . maybe their friend has told them something. . . .

Sometimes lack of relationship, especially with the teacher, makes the student "feel like an object and not like a person."

Sometimes if you're trying to get the teacher's attention, and they won't pay attention to you, they're like somewhere else and you know they've heard you . . . then they go on to a million other people and just don't pay attention to you and you feel like a thing.

I've felt like that sometimes. I've felt left out, like nobody wanted to play with me. I don't really remember, it has been a long time, but I remember feeling that way.

Like when you're in class and they've been asking questions and they never come to you, you sort of get discouraged. Like they're never going to ask you something and if you're not really paying attention, you're really left out. You're just sitting there.

I feel left out too, like if you're talking with somebody and somebody else comes by and they say, "Oh, hello!" Then they just start talking to them. It's like you're not even there. May be they're just not interested in what I'm saying. I suppose they just don't really care.

If a person really likes a person and wants to have a special friendship with them, the person that they want to have a special friendship with sort of takes advantage of them and says, "Go, get my lunch" . . . to make other people jealous. I don't think it's right and sometimes I want to go up there and stop them, but I don't for I think they'll try to ignore me or something.

I think if you go up to a friend, one of your best friends, and you start playing . . . and they rule you and take advantage of you saying, "Go, get this and go, get that and give me" . . . I would do it just because I want a special friendship with them, I guess. . . . If I noticed that they were doing that to me I'd say, "No, it's not what I want." But if I didn't notice, I would do it for them because I'd want them to like me.

Some people try to . . . I know some people that take advantage of you and when there is someone else to play with them they just forget about you and play with the other person. You get really sad because



you're not getting to play with them and you get really mad at them because . . . I don't like that feeling at all.

The students were clear about their parents' feelings. They valued the many warm, caring relationships which the community nurtured, but they also prized the "good education" offered by the school.

They can really trust the people that go there because they've really worked hard there. They've been there for a real long time and they can really trust them a lot.

They value knowing that we will get a good education there.

What do you mean by "a good education"?

That we'll learn, say if you went to a school and somebody didn't care if you learned or not. They might say, "I'm getting paid for this job so it doesn't matter if they learn or not as long as I get paid." This is not the way at this school.

I think my parents value the fact that we're able to go there because some people are not able to go there.

Why are they not able?

Because either they don't have the qualifications or they can't pay for it.

My parents value that I get a good education . . . you learn things and you learn to have friends. They value the teachers.

My parents value the teachers, Mrs. Mons of course, and all the adults that come to help in school.

My mom values the school program. I'm not sure about my dad, but I know my mom does.

I think my parents value me for trying to go in there and not goof off. They value the teachers and everything. The principal too.

The students connected the valuable with "the special creative things" which took place in the afternoon. They saw art, band, and music as enjoyable, but also ways of making connections, strengthening relationships and learning "to be."

You could draw things that lots of people would admire.

If you took band you could play an instrument really well.

Learning how to be creative you, sort of, be an adult person. Without these things you wouldn't get much in life.

#### The Climate of Social Interaction When the Students Were Involved with the Important

##### Experienced-based Education

There was very little experience-based education when students and teachers were involved with mastering the important basic subject areas. When real-life learning existed it seemed to be tacked on awkwardly to an otherwise routine, repetitive program. It had little place in the morning program. At this time there was a course to be covered, usually dictated by a textbook, a series of sounds, symbols, rules, and exact situations to be mastered before proceeding to other things. The classroom climate was, for the most part, quiet, controlled, cold, and repetitious. Many times the activities appeared fragmented and boring. The students addressed most of their comments to the teacher rather than the other students. Their questions were technical rather

than reflective. There was a marked absence of conflict, especially with the older students. They appeared to have internalized the classroom rules and accepted them willingly. They considered these activities as useful and extremely necessary.

Murray's journal entry on a Tuesday, early in the school year, typified the atmosphere of mornings in this school. This time of day was concerned with the routine, the exact, the immediate, and the completion of compulsory tasks.

As soon as we got done with that we checked our Basic English books. I checked Tom's book and he got all of them right. After that we had our first day of cursive. We had to do a's, o's, and e's. After that Mrs. Cape came in. We had to finish our poems about Stingray.

### The Curriculum

The school board, teachers, parents, and students thought of curriculum as a course of studies wide in scope and graded in sequence. A first grader expressed this view clearly, "French is harder this year because we're getting older and more capable and we have to do more capable things."

The following letter received by the school board reflects the concerns implicit in this definition of curriculum. It also provides insight into methods of meeting these concerns on the part of the teacher.

Dear Board Members,

I have had my first monthly meeting with the math teacher as requested of each liaison at last night's meeting. We met at school today to discuss the math program for the middles and olders. I questioned the Math teacher on the issues voiced at the meeting.

1. What are the middles and older doing presently?
2. Where does this fit into plans for the rest of this school year and the future years?
3. Is there a guide or scope and sequence to which she is referring?
4. What preparation, if any, is there for the C.A.T. scheduled later in the semester?

Maude said that the math program is guided by the scope and sequence provided by the Addison-Wesley math text. This provides a checklist from which she can keep files on each child's progress. It provides direction for this academic year and also for future years. It ensures that the instruction is individualized and that the major concepts for the year are being covered. Hopefully, when the children do the C.A.T. later in the year, they will be able to score on level or above. She is not, however, teaching for the standardized tests specifically, although practice and review play a part in the total math program.

With the integrated age groups in the middles and youngers, some of the younger children are present at the teaching of topics that are not "on level" for their grade. They are learning from this while Maude feels the older children, and the more capable, are being challenged by the issues and real-life problems taking place.

Maude shared her units on groceries/checkbooks/discounts and "Around the World" money/time/distance/geography with the olders and the middles total school survey work. These seemed very interesting. She hopes that the inclusion of this type of unit is a way of introducing concepts that are not just on "grade level" but are often "above."

Defining, implementing and mastering a course of studies in a short space of time was often seen by the staff as an "overwhelming task". The teachers spoke freely of the enormity of this burden.

I feel I have to keep all the content of the program in mind daily. I say, "I need to get this done today" and I feel badly if I can't get it done. There's only so much time and so much to cover.

A lot of good things have been happening in this school over the years. Now all these things are expected to happen in each school year.

I am concerned, not with method, but with assuring that nothing is left out, that there are no gaps in the program. I'm concerned about scope and sequence.

I'm embarrassed to say "I can't do this."

Parents reflected similar concerns about covering the program.

I want to know the children have covered everything they should cover up to the 6th grade.

We want to know that she knows all she should for the junior high school.

I want to know what they have done so that they won't do it again later on.

At the parent meeting I brought up that Jo was not having enough homework. I like them to get lots of homework. It's good for them.

Peg is doing nothing new in school. She's bored with the easy stuff. They've been reviewing since school started.

I was afraid the teacher was taking too much time off from the work, spending time telling the kids how to behave to each other.

### Work and Play

In this definition of curriculum there is a definite distinction between work and play. Work is often facts, theories, or laws which require assimilation by the student. Work, in this setting, was often dull, repetitious, monotonous and often fragmentary. It required a particular mind set. Students were challenged to endure their intense struggles and not "give up easily." They were expected to experience hardship, embarrassment, and personal inconvenience. However, there was never, in the course of the study, punishment for classroom work. Often the children dealt with abstract signs, sounds, diagraphs, unimaginably large numbers, or other mathematical symbols. Many times the tasks seemed far removed from the real life of the participants. The following activity was typical.

In the foyer three children were trying to paste cut-out pictures on a chart which had, as its heading, "Long, Short & Controlled-r." A picture of Jackie Kennedy's face was in the column marked "short."

Parent: Why is Mrs. Kennedy in the short column?

First Grader: Because of "head." Is this a controlled-r sound, "World"?

Parent: I don't know what a controlled-r means. Let's ask Mrs. Low.

Parent: I don't know either. Let's ask Mrs. Speak.

Parent: I know nothing of controlled-r's either. Let's look in the dictionary.

The parents consulted the dictionary but did not understand what it meant.

First Grader 2: It is controlled. Listen, Mrs. K. "World."  
Do you hear that R?

Parent: I surely hear it, but I don't know anything about it.

First Grader 2: Let's ask the teacher when she's finished teaching her group.

The morning work was exact in nature and the tasks performed had correct answers. The teacher's word was the final authority. She knew the exact method of obtaining the answers.

Teacher: If you get stuck, I will tell you the way to do it.

Student: I didn't know we hadn't to do only one book. I didn't know we could go on. I thought we only had to do one.

Teacher: Just a minute, I'll tell everyone where they're at and what I want them to do. I'll tell you in a minute. I'll tell everyone what to do.

Student: The teacher gave me this rule for getting the right answer. Count the numbers of zeros and count from the right that same number and put your decimal point in there in the answer.

Student: You are not allowed to write your journal at reading time unless the teacher says, "If you're finished you may write in your journals."

Parents had difficulty with this exactness.

My daughter has started counting on her fingers and she has been put back to easier math. She was adding and subtracting two digit numbers and now she is back on one digit numbers, just because she could not answer  $8+7$ ,  $7+2$ ,  $6+3$  like "snap, snap, snap." Is there anything but paper and pencil math here?

Mrs. Woods asked us to work at home on Jack's speech patterns. His mother, his grandmother, and all his kin are from this county. That's the way they all talk. I just ignored it--she'll have to accept us the way we are.

### Repetition

The classroom climate in the mornings was one of repetition and frequently boredom, but not all students experienced it similarly. The materials and activities being used by the sixth grade blind student were particularly dull and repetitious. She read in braille, "The numpity, numpy, numpity is big and bad and bumpity. Nimpity, numpity and nimpity. . . ." She sighed, "They say this a thousand times!"

For those children who were working beyond grade level there were special privileges. On more than one occasion three Olders went to the local public library in town to do independent research. For the rest, much time was spent with pencil and paper filling in blanks, working on work sheets, or in their textbooks. On one occasion, when the students had spent a half-hour on quiet, repetitive tasks, the teacher described the activity to follow. It seemed like more of the same. Instead the students accepted the challenge and exclaimed, "Oh, good!"

### Cheating and Punishment

This narrow definition of work led to a well defined concept of cheating and the appropriateness or the inappropriateness of punishment on the part of the older students.



These concepts were not yet internalized by the younger children and considerably more conflict was evident in these two younger groups. The following incident was typical of the interaction with the younger children.

Kevin comes with Brian's fill-in-the-blanks work sheet, completed.

Teacher: You did Brian's work sheet for him, Kevin!

Kevin: Yea. Brian did it too. I just wrote it.

Brian: Well, I couldn't spell the words.

Teacher: Weren't they written up there, Brian?

The older children had a clearer grasp of the concept of cheating.

You can't ask your neighbor for help for that's cheating.

Well, sometimes if it's something that you really don't understand and the teacher is busy with the group or something, she'll say, "Don't disturb me in this group, ask your friend. Ask your neighbor, or skip it." I think it's ok to ask a friend for help if the teachers allow you to, but if it's a test . . . you know already that you're not allowed to do that.

You're supposed to do your own work, what you know yourself.

You could ask your neighbor if the teacher said you could ask someone, but if the teacher didn't tell you, you could not.

If the teacher was extra busy and you were sure the person you were going to ask was right. . . .

I wouldn't ask a neighbor because they might have the wrong answer.

You shouldn't ever ask another student unless they listen.

I don't think anybody would ask for the answers on a test because I think they would know that would be cheating and, if somebody saw you, you wouldn't like that. You'd feel very guilty.

The students had exact notions of the concept of right and wrong. They accepted being punished for wrong behavior but did not like to be punished for someone else's wrong doing.

If you didn't do your homework, I think it's fair to stay in for break. A person doesn't like taking time out, but I think it's fair if you do something wrong.

It's pretty fair if you stay in when you do something wrong, unless you didn't do it. If the teacher thought you did and you had to stay in, but you didn't do it. . . .

Sometimes we have a problem in school and have to sit. Sometimes when we're eating lunch and everybody gets real loud, but just a few people don't, the teacher comes in and accuses the whole class for being too loud even though a few people weren't. Everybody has to sit. I don't think that's fair.

I have been punished for someone else and I don't think it's fair at all. The other person gets away and he or she should learn to do better than what they did.

If you didn't do homework or bring it in, then you deserve some punishment. You could try harder.

### An Atmosphere of Quiet Control

An atmosphere of quiet controlled activity existed most mornings of the research. When the noise level threatened to increase above the permissible intensity several teachers switched off the classroom lights and did not put them on again until there was complete silence. The children responded instantly on most occasions. Frequently a teacher yelled to quieten her class. The students said that this made them afraid.

Zip your lips!

It's too loud!

Is there work being done?

Sit on the floor with your legs crossed like an Indian!

Sit still and be quiet!

On one occasion a student came over during class to tell me of her allergies. "I must stay away from oak trees, ragweed, dust, red dye in foods and chocolate," she explained.

Let's do the work Tim. If it's not done I'll be seeing you.

On another occasion:

What are you supposed to do when I'm talking?

The child replied:

Zip it.

When the students entered the classroom in the morning, they usually checked off their homework charts. Then they went to their assigned seats for the morning's work. In those rooms where the students could freely pick a seat, the threat of giving assigned seats was used as a method of keeping the students from "being bad." A student explained, "We have assigned seats for Mrs. Woods. If we start being bad for two days in a row Mrs. Graves is going to give us assigned seats, but we haven't."

At the end of the class the teacher dismissed the students using various methods. Sometimes they left according to a particular item of clothing which they were wearing.

She shouted:

People with white shirts stand up and put in your chairs. Stand up and push in your chairs I said!

Always the students left in order, often alphabetically or by grade level. They left quietly and promptly.

### Individualized Instruction

A picture of Stonewall Jackson with the quote, "You may be what you resolve to be," hung in the language arts room. It echoed the school's philosophy of individualized instruction. The school community spoke of the uniqueness of each child and endeavored to promote the well-being of all. The authorities advocated a noncompetitive atmosphere. "Any competitiveness which exists we would like to exist with the student himself, to compete with him or herself to do better and not with Johnny or Susan." The school was ungraded but recognized that "some parents never really have been truly comfortable with not having report cards."

Even though the children received no formal grades, it was acutely apparent where each student stood in the classroom hierarchy. The top children proudly boasted of their progress. "We're on integers in the seventh grade book!" Those that appeared at the bottom often stayed inside during recess as punishment for homework undone. The bulletin board proclaimed the order

#### Whiz Kids

May	5
Ben	2
Tim	5
Jerry	7
Ken	9

Classroom games were frequently competitive and on occasion tears filled the eyes of the participants. Frequently teachers openly endorsed the more dominant students. The kindergarten teacher told me, "I love watching those two chiefs." The comments on the bulletin board work contributed to an understanding of the children's world. "You did not stick to the subject." "You paid close attention to what is happening. I like that."

"There is no need to underline a title unless it is a book." "Perfect." "100%." A mother complained, "My daughter is very much aware of what everyone is on and it worries her." A first-grader complained, "I don't like her putting those two in the second grade book for English and math. I don't think it's right to do it." He added after some thought, "She wants them to be happy. She lets them make volcanoes and experiments with water and all that good work on the board." When there was evidence of individualized instruction by the teachers, some students felt overlooked at the expense of their peers. When there was an absence of individualized instruction, some parents were downright angry. In many cases individualized instruction increased the competitive atmosphere in the classroom.

A teacher of the Youngers commented on this competitive climate.

I have never worked, in all my years of teaching, with more competitive children. There's so much one-upmanship. If one says, "I've got twelve blocks,"

the other has to say, "mine is twenty." They always have to be better. It's strange for we are ungraded but they all want to be the best. It must be something that they're getting. I guess we all are, by nature, competitive, but this is different. When someone reads a word wrongly and another person laughs at them, as if to say that they wouldn't do that, I say, "That's not very kind." I guess we need to take time off from the work and talk to them about hurting each other.

### The Grading System

The students spoke easily about competitiveness and the place of grading in the classroom. They recognized their places, and those of their peers on the academic hierarchy. They knew who was most influential and who was totally lacking in power. They noted the difficulty of displacing a leader from his preferred niche. Unfortunately, they seldom questioned the justice in this state of affairs. The following interviews reflect their attitudes.

Do you get grades?

Not that I remember.

No. We get 95 or just numbers.

Well, you don't get grades like a C or B in something. You usually get something like a 95. Just a number.

The year before last year I was in the public school and we got report cards there. The teachers were really strict, and when I say strict, I mean it. This school doesn't have report cards but Mrs. Dawson gave these little things like papers out that were like a report card. It told you what you needed to work on and that stuff.

Say you're writing a big story about something and you work really, really hard and you get a B or C, well it doesn't matter what those grading things are. It's just how hard you worked.

I think some of the people that do work hard don't get a chance to do what they really need to do and they deserve that chance.

Why do they not get the chance?

Because sometimes the teacher is off with someone else or she has already done it.

I think if you get an A it means you studied really, really hard and get a C. . . . I think those letters aren't anything compared to how hard you worked and how well you did and how hard it was to study.

How would you feel if you saw that a person had a very high mark on a paper?

I'd feel happy for them.

How would you feel if you had a very low one on your paper?

I'd feel sorry for me.

I'd sort of be embarrassed that they got a high mark and I got a low one, I'd be mad at myself, because I didn't do well.

It would make me want to try harder to do my best.

It makes me envy them, when they've got a high mark and I've got a low mark. It makes me mad because I tried my best and I didn't get a good mark or anything.

Stratification was a taken-for-granted necessity of classroom life.

It's obvious in our class when people are at the top of the class and people are at the bottom. It seems like if they'd try their best they could do a lot better. They would rise to the top.

I think it's pretty obvious. Well, if I'm sitting beside someone and they're goofing off and there is somebody on the other side really working hard, you will find that the person might be a little bit higher up than the other person.

How do you know the person is goofing off?

If you look over and you see him just didly-daddling and talking to a friend, laughing their heads off.

You can really tell because if somebody like stays in for break and forgets their homework for about five weeks in a row, for one subject, doesn't bring in a book or anything, that's the bad person.

You can tell the people who are doing really well in a subject for the teacher will ask you to do different things. You can tell when you get a hard sheet and I see some other sheet. It might be a little easier.

I think usually the top students are the ones who listen, because they're sort of the teacher's pet. The teacher likes them because they listen. I think other people could because, if they'd make an effort, they could do better.

Are there people that feel they're at the bottom of the class?

I think there are because they know they are, they don't just feel. In our class they don't think that I'm at the bottom. . . . I think they really should make an effort.

Are there people that feel less important?

Yes.

Yes.

I think there are too.

Dominance. Some students exerted more influence over their peers than others. The students accepted this situation willingly, as an inevitable outcome of the educational experience.

People in our class have the power, the authority, to tell the class, like if the teacher is out in the hall with someone else, to tell the class they need to be quieter.

They will get up and say, "Well, let's just try to finish this off while she is out in the hall." They say, "Let's be quiet or read until she comes back in," or something like that.



These people listen, they know what's right and wrong. They do good work, but they have nice friends. They get along with people.

I think it would be pretty hard to be the class leader, sometimes.

Do you think the class leader would let you?

I don't know. It all depends. The class leader might not want to be it anymore. It's usually the person that's smartest, it would be hard if someone had chosen to be the leader or something to stop being it.

I think the leader couldn't be pushed out unless they started doing rotten things. Then you could, but you could also join him. I don't really think you could get pushed out.

Do you think there is room for more than one person at the top?

Yes, I know there is room for more than one person.

How do you think the students feel about those people that are leaders in their class?

Well, sometimes you can feel really nice about them, but some of the people might brag, like I'm the best person, I'm the smartest person.

The "bad" student. The children had a clear picture of what constituted a "bad" student. They were not entirely sympathetic with his/her behavior.

What is a bad student like?

Well, a bad student is like when they try hard but they forget their homework and they don't do some things right. They play around at school and they draw, like some people in my class do.

What should they be doing when they're drawing?

They should be listening to what the teacher is saying so they can learn something.

There's at least one bad student in every classroom. Everyone is bad some time.

Somebody who sits across from you and they're scribbling, talking really loud, they don't really care what the teacher is saying and you're trying to listen.

There's a time when everybody goofs off a lot. You have to have fun sometime. It happens to me a lot, but it's hard to say. . . .

The "good" student. The children had a clear picture of what constituted a "good" student. The "good" student was seen as deserving of special privileges.

A good student is a person who listens, raises his hand and asks the teacher before he does something. He does really good work on his papers and stuff.

If you want to be good at math you study and have your mother and father call out problems and answer them, like times tables, additions, subtraction, division.

A good student would try to do their best and they'd do their homework and that sort of thing.

They wouldn't play in school, only at break and lunch.

I agree, as long as you try your hardest you can't be bad. You're doing the best you can. I think everyone should try their hardest.

If the teacher gives you directions and they do it instead of asking questions about what she just asked, they've listened to what she said and went on and did their work. Some others are at the very start, still asking questions and everything. I mean it's good to ask questions, but it's good to listen to the teacher too.

I think that the people who deserve the most are the people that work the hardest.

That's pretty much what I think. The people that are being quiet and doing their work and things, I think they deserve more.

### Parental Involvement

The parent volunteer program was a vital ingredient in fostering warmth and caring in the school climate. Parents

and other community volunteers were welcomed wholeheartedly by students, teachers, and board members. A parent volunteer described their many functions to the teachers. During the time of the research I saw parent volunteers carry out these functions and countless other duties.

Lots and lots of parents are willing to come in and give you time, 18 regular volunteers every week. They are anxious to do whatever you guide them in. Some of those volunteers, myself being one of them, are probably more comfortable if you give them some advance idea of what you want them to do in that slot of time that they're in, not that they couldn't do something, it's just that they would like to do what would help to facilitate whatever you're teaching or whatever you need for them to do at that point. If you have Jane in every Tuesday, to read with whatever group or to do math with whatever group, you want to give her an idea of what you want done on that particular day. They are volunteers though, and there will be times when they will not be able to come, the other child at home is sick, they have a doctors's appointment or something like that. It doesn't happen often but there will be those times. When you have those times, if you don't have someone else to come in, don't get too upset with the parent that isn't there because it really is volunteer time. They really are such a vital part of the school and the working of the school. It gives you much more time with smaller groups to do more things that would not be possible if you had the entire class together. It gives you time to zero in on children that need help in specific areas. It lets you work with children that don't need help in that area and that want to go on to something else that may help them in another area. It really helps you to be able to work, to a degree, as much as possible with the individual child in the cvlssroom, or at least with smaller groups. I've seen it, in the past, be an excellent way for individual instruction, to allow a child to have the one-on-one makes a difference in the way they master a particular thing they're having difficulty with. It's fun too. In the past we've used volunteers a whole lot for half a class, to take half a class to another area and work with that half. We've also used volunteers to work with an individual child if that child needs that help. This is, to a degree, a little bit tougher because you don't want to single that child out and make

the child, or the rest of the class, feel like he is being singled out. It can be done and it definitely has its advantages when you need it. The other thing that I remember last year, someone had some things that needed to be corrected on a weekly basis and there are people that can do those kind of things. The parents will be your drivers too for field trips. They really are at your disposal. They'll do whatever you ask. They realize the importance of their role. There will be times when there will be scheduling conflicts and things like that, but they are definitely not as many as you'd find in any other situation, I'm sure. We have some wonderful, supportive, and capable people.

When the parents were working in the basic subject areas they were doing routine classroom tasks. Some heard multiplication tables, others worked with spelling or S.R.A., others listened to reading. They were well received by the students who enjoyed having other adults around. They brought to the classroom another set of assumptions about the way children behave and learn. Many times the students received mixed messages.

Teacher: Don't talk when Ken is talking for we can't hear what he's saying.

Parent: Don't talk when someone is talking for it's bad manners.

On another occasion, when a kindergarten boy was shouting excitedly about a toy he received at Christmas, the parent, who was with the teacher in the classroom, said: "Say that again, Tom, nicely this time." He repeated it slowly and without emotion. "Good," she said.

Volunteer Teacher: "If you don't listen, you'll never learn."

Administrator: (listening at the classroom door) If you don't break they'll have no computers!

Sometimes there were problems with parent volunteers.

Board Member: The teacher shared her concern over a matter that had arisen earlier when the parents of a first grader visited with her. The parents had been most upset and asked that a bulletin board of the children's work should be taken down because of the nature of the work. When I saw the display, I was impressed by the richness and depth of feelings and fears explored in the art work and stories. The bulletin board explored death and violent death, which unfortunately has a place in our children's world.

Teacher: When I have a volunteer parent in, some children go home and tell their parent we only work on alternate days. I have the teacher one day and we work. The next day we have the parent and we don't work that hard. The parents asked me if the children had not worked but just played on these days.

Teacher: I had not enough volunteer help for the tasks I was expected to do. I often had last minute cancellations with the help that was lined up.

Parent: Do the teachers know parental involvement is encouraged at this school? When I was in I was not made to feel welcome, but when my husband was in last week the teachers were all over him asking him what would he like the children to call him. You know, it's the old male-female thing.

Parent: When I was in the kindergarten class the other day, it took the teacher forty minutes to read a short story because of the many interruptions to discipline the children. "Meg, stop touching Pat!" "Pat, stop touching Meg!" The story would have only taken a few minutes without these interruptions.

When the parent volunteer was a student's father or mother a whole new dimension was added to the classroom interaction.

The students spoke about this situation.

Sometimes a parent might be talking about something that happened at home that you didn't want them to tell.

I like mothers being in school and helping. My mom was cooking once. The one thing I don't like, you don't get spoiled as much when your mom is a teacher than when your mom is at home.

Some parents are real hard, others are real easy.

It was fun having my mother in because last year, she told about the Jewish people.

Sometimes when your mother is your teacher you don't get to do your usual thing.

I like mothers to teach us because they do different things and fun things.

Some parents expect something from you and that's what I hate about parents coming to school.

I don't like it because if I'm supposed to be reading my mom will say, "Read your book!"

I feel the same way, my mom teaches French like two days of the week and I feel like she expects a lot of me, but that's not bad. But Klari is right, my mom does the book thing and it's bad.

There's two sides to have your parent in school, sometimes I don't like it, sometimes for she knows what my homework assignments are and she can help me with that. She's got a key to the school and if you forget your books you can get them, and you get a little more privileges. You could go up to her office and you can get some comfort if you are sick, or get hurt, or something. The other students think I'm one of them, but they think I get more privileges than them because my Mom's here. They get more privileges than me, because my Mom's here, for I take the beatings. Whenever the "youngers" are around and I do something that's legal, that's in the rules of the school, but that's on the outside, my Mom will get angry with me for showing bad examples to the "youngers" and she doesn't get angry with the others for it--she's right there.

In the mornings the volunteer program did much to ameliorate an otherwise unyielding classroom climate.

#### The Climate of Social Interaction When the Students Were Involved with the Valuable

It is easy to find words to describe a cold, formal, uninviting climate. It is much more difficult to do justice to a situation of profound caring, concern, and love. I have

no doubt that the teachers in this school community cared deeply for their students. The children sensed their importance and returned this warmth. Unfortunately, the business of schooling is a powerful enterprise, and this community recognized that there were important goals to be achieved during the school day. This situation left little opportunity to celebrate good feelings. Thankfully, when those basics were covered, much tension was alleviated and an air of responsible freedom was apparent.

At those times the students were encouraged to choose freely, take reflective action, and satisfy standards that mainly came from inside. There were few correct answers, no assigned seats, and no confinements of space or time. The total school building, the outside yard, and the larger community became the focus of their attention. Creativity flourished. Poetry, music, art, and drama were everywhere.

At these times, the pupils were particularly attuned to their own feelings and sensitive to those of their peers. They actively encouraged those who struggled. They rejoiced at ideas and accomplishments of fellow community members. They were pained at their sorrows and challenged by their problems. They questioned openly many taken-for-granted assumptions that were never queried in other situations. The following interchange is typical of how the students thought differently about their freely chosen activities than those which took place within the confines of a basic subject area class.

One afternoon two third-graders decided to play a math game in the foyer. They lay on the carpet on the floor and began. Dan held up the first card. It read  $7 \times 8$ .

Marie: Fifty-four, no just wait, 56.

Dan: No, I can't count that. You're only allowed one chance.

Marie: I don't think that's right, only one chance. I said no, just wait. I know I was wrong and changed it to 56.

Dan: No, only one chance, we all know that's the rule.

Marie: Well, it doesn't have to be one chance only.

Dan: But it is.

This atmosphere of freedom, where each felt vulnerable yet capable, permitted a climate where all could be rewarded. None were more deserving than others and any stratification, dominance, or hierarchy was totally nonexistent. At these times the students spoke of feeling as family. They experienced a true sense of community where students could live together with parents and teachers as equals. They could proclaim the humanness of all without embarrassment. On these occasions the students felt that they were "all adults."

Some teachers seemed more capable of orchestrating these moments of true reflective action than others. This seemed to be a function of their experience, self-confidence, personality, or teaching style. These moments happened more often in their presence. Other teachers generated an illusion of freedom rather than true freedom. On these occasions



the classroom climate was either strictly controlled or extremely chaotic. This was most prevalent when classroom "games" were in progress. The following example was typical.

The Kindergarten teacher explained the rules of the game "Jalopy" to the children. The rules were complicated, rigid, and exact. They appeared too complicated for the listeners. The gaily colored cars on the cards had numbers. The teacher held up the first card. The number was 239. The students looked puzzled. They obviously did not recognize the number.

Teacher: What's this number?

Child 1: Three?

Child 2: Two?

Child 3: Nine?

Teacher: No, just say all the numbers, 239, 239. This number is 2, 3, 9, 2, 3, 9.

The children mimicked the response in unison.

On another occasion, when some children were playing with the gerbils, the teacher coaxed them happily, "Come here, I need your help." The help was a work sheet to be completed.

Nonetheless, there were countless instances of a warm, caring, and reflective climate prevailing in all classrooms. These moments were highly valued by the students and their parents and spoken of frequently by past pupils. The

following examples are illustrative of this aura. These times were highly valued by the student body because the participants "took time to share themselves."

#### The Youngers' Room

"There's something nice about making your own house," said the second grader. "You can put things the way you like it." The students were busy creating their own fantasy village. Their classroom was a mess of crackers, candies, ice cream cones, and icing. Delight shone from each face, as they constructed a fantasy land of snow-covered homes and cherry-covered trees. Not all the goodies went on the gingerbread houses. Some were popped into the mouths of the participants as they worked. The parent and teacher surveyed the scene quietly. They encouraged here and placed a helpful finger there. "This room smells so good!" said Jake, as he fashioned his heart-shaped windows.

Hearts were very much in the news that day. The Youngers were deep in conversation about Baby Fae, who had just received her baboon heart. Some said it was great news; others were not so sure. The topic of conversation shifted to heart transplants. The children spoke eagerly as they dissected their chicken hearts. They poked earnestly looking for auricles and ventricles. "I've found the mitral valve!" yelled one 6-year-old. Later Wilson wrote:

We cut open a chicken heart. I thought it looked grot to the max, or not too bad. When the people killed the chicken, the chicken probably hurt. It was interesting.

Tom wrote:

We looked at a chicken heart. It looked neat. We got to look at it with a magnifying glass. We each got a heart. We cut open the chicken heart. I couldn't see the chambers in my heart. The outside of it felt damp, but the inside felt wet and slimy. The heart was little. When I looked at it from one side it looked like a face. From the other side, it looked like a steak. It also looked like a Santa Claus hat.

### The Language Arts Room

Mr. Brown, a father of a Kindergarten child, is telling the Olders how to plant their garden. He explains spacing, planting, and watering. The students are eager to try their farming skills. Their teacher, Mrs. Wood, is taking photographs. A fifth grader, Jon, interrupts the proceedings. "What a big bug!" he cries. All heads turn. Moments later they return to planting the small plants. There is obvious pleasure at having a father in school, and the students question his every action.

Patrick, a sixth-grader, rests under a tree, his cap pulled down over his eyes. "How are you now, Pat?" I ask. "Still not 100%," he replied. Further down the playground some children sweep the pine needles on the hard-top into an enormous heap. "They do this every year; it's the nesting instinct," laughs the teacher. They hop quickly into the completed nest. Nan finds a caterpillar and brings it over for admiration.

"The photos are here," says Mrs. Woods, several days later. The children are in the classroom helping to arrange the encyclopedia recently acquired from the public library book sale. "Let's see them. It's such a pity that beautiful old building had to go," remarks Joan, as she looks at a photograph of the nursing home's demolition. "It's such a shame when they tear down old things." The classroom windows were open as the children moved around, arranging their new acquisition. Andy, a recently graduated student, passed down the street. Hannah ran to the window. "How's the junior high going, Andy?" she yelled. "Oh, great!" was the reply. Teacher and pupils were equally delighted.

Mr. Brown was outside checking the plants. "You all did a great job. They're really growing well," he said. "Look at that time!" yelled Jim. They left for home. Eve and Joe stopped near the tarantula. His jaws were open. Joe blew into his mouth. "He hates my breath," he told me.

#### The Kindergarten Room

The room was a hive of activity as the students painted their dough ornaments. Jean, the teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. A parent, Mrs. Smith, helped fix glitter on the homemade box. There were black rings under the teacher's eyes. "We really missed Jean when she was in the hospital," I was told by Maggie. "You know her baby broke her nose. Mrs. Lowe was our teacher when she was away. Did you hear

we made a Thanksgiving feast for the whole school?" There was much I did not know. "Did you see the photo of the feast in the newspaper?" A fourth-grader told me that the feast was delicious. She had been amazed that "the Kinders did it all by themselves." "I love holidays," said Ben, as he fingered his pretzel wreath. "This one looks like a giant flower," he said. "It's more like a he-man," said Sam.

Jean encouraged her students to attempt many different activities. "Right now the Kinders especially need their independence. They're going to be separated from their parents now and they need to trust each other and learn to say, 'Hey, I can do this myself. I don't need Mommy sitting right here beside me.' For most of them it's the first time they've left home unless they've been in day-care and they need to have a sense of worth in their independence."

The children were not totally independent. As I visited in the classroom, Tony shouted from the next room, "There's no toilet paper!"

"I need you to change my pants!"

Jean went quickly, carrying a change of clothing, left by a mother, for such an emergency. The teacher went about her work kindly.

"I really am tired today," exclaimed Sharon. The room was darkened as the students went to the open closet. They found their resting mats. Some were elaborate crib covers,

others had favorite pillows attached. Jean read quietly as she lay in her bean-bag chair. The children settled quickly. They listened and began to sniff. Soon many blankets were being twitched happily.

### The Band Room

Nan, the administrator, sat on the yellow carpet. The Middles and Olders lay or sat nearby. All were intrigued by the mystery, Rescue at Sea. The story was about some seemingly irrational events which lead to a rescue. The students pondered the unexplainable. Each had his personal story of intrigue. Tim recalled his.

The night before granny died, my mother had a very strange dream. My grandmother was in the dream and she told mom everything would be all right. We knew everything was all right.

Taylor described a weird feeling which he often got.

I often think I've been in that place before. I think it's called "deja vu."

A mother, who was listening, shared a strange occurrence that she had witnessed. John added: "I believe dreams really do come true. They really do." Nan assured the students that it was "all right and not silly" to have those feelings. She was thankful that they had shared them. "Come here," said the blind student later, "give me a hug."

### The Math Room

The math unit was completed, and it was time for dialogue. The students were open and frank. They described,

in detail, what they liked and what they did not like. They mentioned the difficult, and what could have been excluded without displeasure. The teacher welcomed their suggestions. The scale drawings had been interesting, but long division seemed to be a problem area. The leaf unit was great, and some children had done much more than the required collection. As I drove, later, in a wooded area, I stopped to talk with a family whose children attend this school. They were deeply engrossed in tree identification. "The leaf unit is over. You can stop now!" I joked. They knew, but their interest had been sparked, and with their three children they were enjoying a little private research.

Would the Children Change the Climate  
of the Classroom?

The children interviewed had no desire to drastically change their schooling. When questioned, they suggested minor readjustments in scheduling and the removal of inconveniences, but they did not advocate any true change of educational paradigm.

I'd like to put French on Thursday, because usually Friday is the day you have art and maybe we'd have art the whole period.

I would change homework. I would change to less homework every night. Like in math you have a lot of homework, especially in language arts, literature, spelling, all sorts of things. It's so much homework.

I would change not having sharing anymore. I would want sharing, but not as a whole group.

I would change P.E. from break to another time.

The lack of substantial change in this situation was understandable. The students had many contacts with children in the local public school system. Some had attended these institutions, while others had relatives and friends attending there at the time of the study. By comparison, the climate of their school was not harsh. They saw no need to ameliorate it. In fact, the opposite was the case.

Here it's a whole lot different from public school because you do more activities. There is less people and it's a whole lot easier for me.

When I went to public school they'd just say every week they'd give you the same thing, not like the activities and things you do here

You'd get sick and tired of the same teacher all day and they were very strict. For spelling every day you'd get a spelling test. They won't let you learn words and stuff.

Even though the students felt "sick and tired" at the thought of having only one classroom teacher, they expressed a desire to see more permanence in their own situation. Since school started, there were many staff changes. Teachers came and left, giving various reasons for their departures--often the teaching job was considered difficult, the expectations of parents and staff too great, or the salaries inappropriate. Some teachers relocated to other geographic areas or returned to graduate school. Whatever the motive, these faculty changes were not welcomed by the students.

If I was a ruler in school, some teachers keep on switching around because they keep getting lots more things. You get a different one every year and people



keep on leaving and you're used to something and then they leave. The new ones have a whole new different system.

Any new system was greeted with apprehension, and leaving this elementary school to go to junior high school was no exception. Two sixth-graders expressed anxiety about such a move. Their words reflected the feelings of many in this community.

Well, I've been a part of the school for so long and so have my family that I'm going to feel sort of scared to go into a new school.

I'm really going to miss this school. . . . It's going to be really different. I'm going to be sort of scared. In this school there is so little of number, you get to know everybody and you feel like a family. . . . It's going to be different, very different.



CHAPTER IV  
COMMUNITY:  
MEANINGS AND MESSAGES

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COMMUNITY: MEANINGS AND MESSAGES

Guide to the Chapter

The chapter begins with a consideration of the search for community in today's world. As the term "community" has many connotations, I find it necessary to separate the concept into two parts. It is my contention that there is only one form of "authentic community." All other efforts at community formation are termed, in this dissertation, "unauthentic."

I believe that this split into the two concepts of "authentic" and "unauthentic" is important as a way of knowing, of seeing relationships, and understanding connections that are essential to the meanings and messages of community. It highlights values that are significant yardsticks against which to measure social arrangements of the students in the study. It also reflects most accurately the words of the students. In this study they made a clear distinction between the "important" areas of schooling, which correspond directly to the characteristics of "unauthentic community." They spoke of the "valuable" which corresponds directly to the attributes of an "authentic community."

The elements of "authentic community" are then named. These attributes are common to all forms of community but

each is manifested differently, depending on the status of the community. These attributes are:

1. Humanity.
2. God, sin, grace.
3. Freedom/lack of freedom.
4. Equality/inequality.
5. Fraternity/lack of fraternity.
6. Work and knowledge.
7. Real love/repressive love.

The attributes are considered from the viewpoints of writers who have made a significant contribution to the meanings and messages of community.

The chapter finishes by contrasting "authentic" community with the characteristics of "unauthentic" community. The same seven attributes are considered, but they manifest themselves differently in this situation. The writings of Freire (1983) and Fromm (1969) are used to illuminate these differences.

#### An Examination of Community

The data in Chapters II and III are analyzed with a particular vision of schooling in mind. This vision is based on a quest for liberation on a personal, institutional, and societal level. It is my contention, as an educator, that there is only one form of educational community worthy of total commitment. This "authentic community" is one based

on the concept of just liberation. It has been my belief, since a childhood spent in British-occupied Northern Ireland, that people who are in bondage, no matter how benevolent or well-intentioned their authority figures seem, are the victims of an unjust, repressive, and unauthentic community.

Having been involved in this school community since its inception, I am keenly aware of the love, energy, and personal sacrifice expended by all of its participants in order to create "the best possible world." The metaphor of "authentic community" is used, not in a destructive fashion to undo this good, or to point angrily to the times when barriers to community were erected. Neither is it presented as a utopian solution, nor a road map of how to get from "here" to "there"; rather it is offered in the light of certain values that I, and hopefully others, find particularly significant. It is one yardstick against which to measure the actual social arrangements of the children involved. In this spirit, I trust that any criticism herein is genuinely constructive.

There have been many efforts to construct community in recent years. Daily we read of anguished attempts to gain strength, support, and comfort from living and working purposefully in shared groups. In the America of the 1980s the term "community" conjures up notions of hippie communes of the sixties, the Jonestown massacre, or even the liberation theologians living dangerously in Latin America.

Dissimilar as all these movements are, they have one commonality, one thread of connection. All are deliberate reactions to these brutal, uncertain, and anxious times--times when the future of the human race hangs in the balance and when the men charged with pushing the buttons of nuclear annihilation can quip flippantly on national T.V., "Come along, make my day!"

One attempt to overcome these harsh realities has been a turning to religion for a form of identity. Cox (1984) describes a conservative and a radical view of modern theological community. He depicts two attempts to unite people in a church congregation. The two antimodernist religious movements described are political Fundamentalism, the electronically mediated church of Jerry Falwell, and the Christian base communities, mainly of Latin America. Both seek community, and both movements were formed out of a sense of frustration at these desiccated, lifeless, and desolate times--times that have been termed "wasteland" (p. 38). Cox describes these times as "frantic, contrived, plastic, unnatural, excessively technological, rootless and artificial" (p. 38). This age lacks any dimension of the religious, "the sacred, the element of mystery in life, the transcendent" (p. 38). To fill this gap in a secularized world, Cox believes that both the conservatives and the radicals turned towards religion to establish a sense of community. The results, unfortunately, were very different in each case.

Mass media fundamentalism, though it varies in tone and tenor, presents a theology that celebrates patriotism, individual success, and a political spectrum ranging from moderately conservative to the far, far right. The base communities on the other hand, though they also vary immensely from place to place, exemplify a theology that affirms social justice, the rights of the poor, a communal understanding of salvation, and a politics that stretches from moderately reformist to revolutionary. (Cox, 1984, p. 25)

Fundamentalism exhibits many of the characteristics which will be explored in the notion of "unauthentic community," while the base communities exhibit many of the characteristics of an "authentic community."

#### Characteristics of an "Authentic Community"

The seven elements, which are common to all forms of community, have the following characteristics in an "authentic community."

1. Human nature is intensely significant.
2. God is just and loving, grace is communion, while sin is injustice.
3. Freedom is understood in terms of responsibility.
4. Human beings are born equal.
5. Human beings receive strength from their inter-relatedness, their fraternity.
6. Work and knowledge is creative and personal.
7. Love is a spontaneous affirmation of self and others.

The attributes are considered separately.

Human nature is intensely significant. My vision of "authentic community" reveals human beings as intensely significant creators--free agents who make choices and act upon their world, rather than accepting the meanings given by others. As meaning-makers, they are the subjects of their world. As subjects, the very act of living affirms their body, mind, and spirit. In this vision all are wide-awake and powerful because of a strong sense of identity. Fromm (1968) captures this aliveness: "There is only one meaning of life: the act of living itself" (p. 289).

This living, if it is to be anything other than an exercise in submission, must affirm rationality, critical awareness, and spirituality. In so doing it frees the possessor to become more fully human.

Freire (1983) believes that human beings, because of their humanity, have great potential to interpret and transform their being in the world.

Man's ontological vocation . . . is to be a subject who acts and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. (Shaul, 1983, pp. 12-13)

Because of the historical nature of human beings, they act in ways that are in sharp contrast to the rest of the animal world.

Men aware of their activity and the world in which they are situated, acting in function of the objectives which they propose, having the seat of their decisions located in themselves and in their relations with the world and with others, infusing the world with their creative presence by means of the transformation they effect upon it--unlike animals, not only live but exist; and their existence is historical. . . .



For animals, "here" is only a habitat with which they enter into contact; for men, "here" signifies not merely a physical space, but also an historical space. (Freire, 1983, p. 88)

Greene (1985) has this physical and historical space in mind when she urges the creation of a school community where students are removed from passivity and semiconsciousness. In such a space they feel free to disclose their humanity and learn to deal with the world of formal and informal ideas and relationships. Greene envisions these "autonomous beings" (p. 149) coming together in the light of some mutual promise or agreement and where they "contract with one another, as it were, to act in concert in the name of some shared conception of the valuable" (p. 149). This sharing of responsibility and mutuality is an overt confirmation of the intense significance of the humanity of each.

God is just and loving, grace is communion, while sin is injustice. My vision of God in an "authentic community" based on the teachings of my faith. In the Catholic Church the relationship of God to the individual is based on membership in the communion of saints. For years I have recited in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty . . . and in the communion of saints." This doctrine has always held great personal appeal because of the importance placed on interdependence and solidarity among peoples and promise of future reunion. Its "main emphasis is on the mutual interchange and interplay of supernatural

energies and goods among all" and "on what is called a 'horizontal' sharing by all the members in the varied common life" (New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967, p. 41). The doctrine stresses the strength and comfort in facing a loving, just, and merciful God "as an integral part of a group" (p. 129) rather than as an isolated entity. It affirms groupness or communion as a desirable attribute of holiness, or the state of grace, and looks on sin as any structure that unjustly shatters this communion.

I do not depend, solely, on my personal faith to reinforce this vision of sin and grace. Bakan (1966) also identifies these two fundamental ways of existing in the world and uses the terms "agency" and "communion" to describe them. He projects agentic qualities on the figure of Satan and the nature of evil. Likewise, he associates "communion with the Judeo-Christian State of Grace, the Easter, and the Exodus. Bakan uses "agency" to describe the existence of an organism as an individual and "communion" to describe the participation of the individual in some larger organization of which the individual is a part. He contends that agentic qualities manifest themselves in self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion and often promote competition, alienation, and isolation. Human beings, he believes, have been presented with a paradox, "the most critical paradox that man must live with, of the possibility that all that is characteristically associated with evil is, in some way, intimately intertwined with good" (Bakan, 1966, p. 37).

"Communion," or grace, in Bakan's thinking, manifests itself in a lack of separations, openness, contact, and union. This sense of wholeness or holiness is celebrated through feeling and impulse. This "communion" is characterized by "non contractual cooperation" (Bakan, 1966, p. 15) and a "lack or removal of repression" (p. 15).

These two modalities provide a framework for the examination of many aspects of Western life. Bakan sees parallels in countless facets of social life and culture including the Protestant ethic, human sexuality, Freudian psychodynamics, and the connection between Judaism and Christianity. He recognizes that wholeness and holiness, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, comes not only from God but from living in "communion" with God's people.

Merton (1961), in New Seeds of Contemplation, is in full agreement. "I must look for my identity somehow, not only in God, but in other men" (p. 51). He considers living in "communion" essential if a person is to be really whole for "the man who lives in division is not a person but only an 'individual'" (Merton, 1961, p. 48). Injustice, by these standards, encourages stratification, pattern, and division. Those who espouse such division

can only conceive one way of becoming real: cutting themselves off from other people and building a barrier of contrast and distinction between themselves and other men. They do not know that reality is to be sought, not in division, but in unity for we are "members one of another!" (Merton, 1961, pp. 47-48)

This membership or solidarity among God's people is a trademark of "authentic community."

Freedom is understood in terms of responsibility. Freedom is a central issue in any "authentic community." Any freedom brings with it an increase of individuality and the pain of isolation and aloneness. How people deal with this isolation is a central issue in this vision of a truly liberating community. The main emphasis of Fromm's (1969) Escape from Freedom concentrates on human nature's anxious attempts to surrender freedom. Fromm asserts that the more a human being gains freedom "in the sense of emerging from the original oneness with man and nature, and the more he becomes an 'individual,' he has no choice but to unite himself with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work" (pp. 37-38). These individuals who embrace the world on this higher plane gain a strength of self and progress towards happiness. This state of happiness, Fromm terms "positive freedom" (p. 161). He believes that there is a state of positive freedom when the individual exists as an independent person and yet is not isolated but united with the world, other people, and nature. This freedom is one way human beings can overcome the terror of isolation without sacrificing the integrity of the person. "Man can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind. This freedom man can attain by the realization of his self, by being himself" (p. 283). This positive freedom allows human beings the chance of dealing critically and creatively with their world in a responsible and creative manner.

Human beings are born equal. The biblical concept that all human beings are made "in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26) reigns supreme. Although this stresses equality, it does not mean that all people are alike. In fact, Fromm's notion of positive freedom as the realization of the self implies the full affirmation of the uniqueness of the individual. Men are born equal, but they are also born different (Fromm, 1969, p. 290). This variety is based on differently inherited physical and mental "equipment" (p. 290) with which people start their lives. It is also based on the "particular constellation of circumstances and experiences that they meet with" (p. 290). The thesis that all people are born equal implies in an "authentic community" that all have the same fundamental human qualities; they have all equal and inalienable claims to freedom and happiness, and they are all born to die. Because of this equality, their life is one of relationship and solidarity, for they are all God's children.

Human beings receive strength from their fraternity. Of the three demands of the French revolution, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the latter is often given the least attention, yet it is this fraternity, this brotherhood that exists among humans, this strength of solidarity, that gives most comfort in these troubled times.

Fraternity in an "authentic community" is predicated on the fact that all are born equal and thus entitled to a life

of human dignity. This dignity can only be realized in relationship and solidarity with others. A spirit of fraternity brings with it a responsibility to ensure that all parties of the relationship are totally affirmed.

As a human being, I look for social arrangements that facilitate participation and fellowship based on equality, unity, and solidarity. People get and give strength from a feeling of interrelatedness, a feeling of oneness. This unity empowers them to deal critically and creatively with their worlds. It gives hope.

As a Catholic, I take hope from the first draft of the Bishop's pastoral letter, Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy (1984). It challenges all Americans to work towards fraternity by collaboration and mutual responsibility on a global level. The letter points out that the greatest challenge of the eighties is not the continued pile-up of anti-communist weapons or propaganda, but the shaping of "conditions of interdependence according to the standards of justice, equity and charity" (U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, 1984, p. 340). The bishops envision "a new experiment in cooperation and collaboration to renew a sense of solidarity, enhance participation and broaden the sharing of responsibility" (p. 340) in society. They feel that life must serve and support a dignified communion which needs to be realized in relationship, fraternity, and solidarity with others.

To be human is to hear the call to fraternity. This bishops' letter stresses that human wisdom and experience confirm the conviction that "human life is essentially communitarian" (p. 343). Fraternity stresses this interdependence in any mutual undertaking.

Work and knowledge is creative and personal. In true community, human beings are inextricably connected to the product of their labors. Work and knowledge, in this situation, are extremely personal and creative. Every thought and action affirms the individuality of the self while uniting the self both in and with the world. Fromm (1969) contends that creative work "affirms the individuality of the self and at the same time it unites the self with man and nature" (p. 287). Lamm (1972) examines the epistemological roots of this outlook. His radical alternative to the dominant instrumental paradigm of curriculum is appropriate for this vision of "true community."

Knowledge, he asserts, is intended for the process of individuation. This view reflects the ethical egoist position that a person can contribute more fully to the whole human community by actualizing his or her unique personality and identity. Ethical egoists recognize their meaningfulness and responsibility to humanity as a whole. They feel important as people for they value their personal judgments. Lamm's model, therefore, considers paramount issues of community and fraternity but also celebrates the uniqueness and diversity of each individual.

He considers knowledge not as a "given," a common denominator, something hard, but as something soft and personal. This radical approach to curriculum is a new way of thinking for many educators, bound, as they are, by the constraints of a system intolerant of the nonquantitative. It stresses individuation, "a process in which the individual actualizes his unique personality and crystallizes his unique identity" (Lamm, 1978, p. 128). It openly celebrates diversity and innate potentiality. In the same vein, it contends that student fulfillment is best attained through a frank pursuit of knowledge which furthers one's creativity, subjectivity, and self-awareness.

Human beings are creative animals and must capitalize on this limitless potentiality. Creativity "is regarded by radicals in education as an act of liberation from culture with its patterns and authority" (Lamm, 1978, p. 134). This creativity, when unrepressed, takes many forms. For some, to be creative is to be aware, to respond, to take initiative. For others, it is a landscape to photograph, a song to write, or happiness experienced in the very act of living. It is rarely prosaic and always special. Older cultures make time for it, and mundane matters can wait for *mañana*. Creativity never loses its essence, and truly creative people do not fear disapproval. Neither have they fear of failing. They are not easily controlled. They cannot be manipulated. Unfortunately, those in positions of power feel threatened by this creativity.



Knowledge designed to further an "intensification of subjectivity" (Lamm, 1978, p. 132) is also perceived as threatening to existing educational hierarchies. The radical mood encourages this subjectivity, this meaningfulness. Teachers and students with this subjectivity feel important as people. They value their personal judgments. They affirm themselves. They can understand what is important to them and strive for truth in life's activities. This "assumption of subjectivity frees the teacher from the necessity of manipulating his students" (Lamm, 1978, pp. 134-135). This mood of Lamm's, which is clearly influenced by existential thinking, fosters meaningful choice-making and gives alternatives to education. Nonmeaningful learning, Lamm believes, makes the possessor dehumanized.

Without self-awareness, one is also dehumanized. Lamm's view of knowledge as a means to further an "intensification of self-awareness" (p. 132) is splendid. He pictures the creation of a beautiful "autonomous creature" (p. 136) completely detached, a separate being. This self-awareness provides playful opportunities for self-actualization, develops tolerance and scrutiny, and is motivated, activated and alive. This "may be reduced to one central principle: self-regulation" (p. 138). From this self-regulation springs identity of the individual as a separate entity, a butterfly from a cocoon, a creative, meaningful, autonomous creature. Self-regulation sets the mood.

Lamm's radicalism is "a mood which gives rise, on the one hand, to criticism of education as it exists and, on the other hand, to ideas about alternative ways of education" (Lamm, 1978, p. 131). It has been criticized as lacking a social dimension which explicitly speaks to personal interactions in educational settings. I do not believe this criticism to be justified. If radicalism is truly a mood, its emphasis should be on setting a frame of mind. It should set the tone and give the cues. It should speak to morale and give spirit when needed and leave a more enlightened educator "to organize the environment of his students in such a way that it will provide sufficient stimuli to engage them in interaction with it" (p. 140), an interaction that takes place through "self-regulation and self-motivation" (p. 140), an interaction "which is a necessary condition both for the actualization of the human in the individual and for the survival of the human race" (p. 130). Lamm's understanding of the creative and personal aspects of knowledge and work provide new insights for the furtherance of an "authentic community."

Love is a spontaneous affirmation of self and others.

The vision of an "authentic community" is predicated on the ability of human beings to responsibly name and rename their world. Such an act of creation is only possible in a spirit of genuine and profound love, a love based on equality and freedom. The love I have in mind is not the media-hyped

notion of romantic love; nor is it the selfish possession of one by another; but rather the spontaneous affirmation of self and others. The dynamic quality of this love "lies in this very polarity: that it springs from the need of overcoming separatedness, that it leads to oneness--and yet that individuality is not eliminated" (Fromm, 1969, p. 287). This love affirms the individuality of the person while, at the same time, "unites the self with man and nature" (p. 287).

This love helps us understand, get inside of, and dwell in that which we are, rather than separating us in the name of "objectivity." This vision recognizes that "there are in the end three things that last: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love" (Corinthians 13:13). On a personal level, I question if the God of an "authentic community" is just and loving, can we be any less?

Freire (1983), who advocates a pedagogy based on dialogue, contends that love is both the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. As such, it is the prerogative of responsible subjects and cannot be associated with any relationship of domination.

Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause--the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love. Only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which

that situation made impossible. If I do not love the world--if I do not love life--if I do not love men--I cannot enter into dialogue. (Freire, 1983, p. 78)

This love, which spontaneously affirms world, life, and men, is the bedrock of "authentic" community.

### Characteristics of an "Unauthentic Community"

The seven elements, which are common to all forms of community, have the following characteristics in an "unauthentic" community:

1. Human nature is innately wicked. People are powerless, insignificant.
2. God, if He exists, is repressive. Grace is personal success, while sin is personal failure.
3. Freedom is understood individualistically and is often associated with authoritarianism or submissive conformity.
4. Human beings are not born equal.
5. No real fraternity exists.
6. The value of work and knowledge is decreed from outside. Human beings are detached and estranged from the product of their labors.
7. Love is patronizing. There is no real affirmation of self or others.

The attributes are considered separately. The writings of Fromm (1969) and Freire (1983) have made significant contributions to this understanding of "unauthentic" community.

Human nature is innately wicked. In "unauthentic community" many factors operate on the development of human beings to increase their sense of anxiety, powerlessness, and insignificance. Under these circumstances, people become as nothing but a means for the glory of an unjust and unmerciful God. They are innately wicked.

Fromm (1969) contends that the teachings of Luther and Calvin have significantly contributed to this scenario. He suggests that both have psychologically assured humanity of its wickedness and prepared it for the role which must be assumed in modern industrial society.

One main point in Luther's teachings was his emphasis on the evilness of human nature, the uselessness of his will and of his efforts. Calvin placed the same emphasis on the wickedness of men and put in the center of his whole system the idea that man must humiliate his self-pride to the utmost. (Fromm, 1969, p. 131)

This feeling of insignificance and of being ready to subordinate one's life exclusively for purposes that are not one's own, leaves humanity "ready to become nothing" (Fromm, 1969, p. 131). It is but one short step to unconditional acceptance of the role of lackey to the capitalist machine.

This intense sense of insignificance and powerlessness, unfortunately, makes for a world of flatness and indifference. Powerless humanity becomes innately insecure and lacks emotion and critical judgment. When human beings live in such a world to which they have lost genuine relatedness, a world in which everyone and everything has become instrumentalized, the necessity to conform increases in importance.

Grave doubts arise about personal identity. "If I am nothing but what I believe I am supposed to be--who am I?" (Fromm, 1969, p. 280). Such despair thwarts life itself and sacrifices humanity to a life of uncommitment.

Freire (1983) points to the many similarities of uncommitted human beings and the lower animals in an "unauthentic community." Unlike liberated human beings, who have the possibility of re-creating and transforming their worlds, animals live a uniform, flat, atemporal existence.

Animals cannot commit themselves. Their ahistorical condition does not permit them to "take on" life. Because they do not "take it on" they cannot construct it; and if they do not construct it, they cannot transform its configuration. (Freire, 1983, p. 88)

The "banking model" of education, which negates the personal worth of all human beings, wholeheartedly affirms this life of uncommitment. Freire contends that the practice of banking gives the impression that schools are in the business of neutral education. He believes, however, that this is not the case. Schools, which alienate man from their own decision-making, are, on the contrary, intensely political. Students, in these situations, are turned

into "containers," into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. (Freire, 1983, p. 58)

Their life, by Freire's standards, is one of prescription by an oppressor for the oppressed. As such, one person's will is imposed on another, thereby "transforming the

consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness" (Freire, 1983, p. 31). In such a situation, neither the oppressed person's words or actions are their own, for they are "disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance" (p. 59). As such, they reinforce a sense of powerlessness, alienation, and insignificance. The "unauthentic community" is consequently maintained.

God is repressive, grace is personal success, while sin is personal failure. In the "unauthentic community" the state of anxiety, the feeling of powerlessness and insignificance are all symbols of an "overwhelmingly strong power" (Fromm, 1969), p. 260). This superior power, God, Fate, Necessity, History, or Nature offers the comfort of having someone to look up to but is still a figure of injustice and oppression. Fromm sees this deity, who decides before birth which part of humanity is chosen and which part is damned, as lacking in any real mercy. In light of this assumption of predestination, it is surprising that the fatalistic attitude of avoiding any effort is not more prevalent. However, this is not the case.

This state of anxiety, and especially the doubt concerning one's future after death, spawns a solution to an otherwise totally unbearable situation. The solution, which Fromm sees as the submergence of oneself in frantic activity, is one way to escape these paralyzing feelings. Human beings get urgently involved in doing something active.

Activity in this sense assumes a compulsory quality: the individual has to be active in order to overcome his feelings of doubt and powerlessness. This kind of effort and activity is not the result of inner strength and self-confidence; it is a desperate escape from anxiety. (Fromm, 1969, p. 111)

The frantic effort masks the feeling of insignificance.

This unceasing effort, in the Calvinist doctrine, has a deeper psychological meaning. It is often interpreted as a sign from God that one has succeeded in one's moral, as well as one's secular work.

The irrationality of such compulsive effort is that the activity is not meant to create a desired end but serves to indicate whether or not something will occur which has been determined beforehand, independent of one's own activity or control. (Fromm, 1969, p. 111)

In Calvinism, as in the "unauthentic community," success becomes a sign of God's bountiful grace; failure, the sign of eternal damnation. The underlying message of this spiritual individualism is the fact that one faces God totally alone.

Fromm compares this individualistic view of Protestantism to a general characteristic of a capitalist economy. In both, the individual is put "entirely on his own feet" (Fromm, 1969, p. 128). What one does, how one does it, whether one succeeds or fails, is entirely one's own affair. This principle helps sever all ties between individual and individual, thereby isolating and alienating humanity. In so doing, the

individual is completely alone and in his isolation faces the superior power, be it of God, of competitors, or of impersonal economic forces. The individualistic relationship to God was the psychological preparation for the individualistic character of man's secular activities. (p. 129)



This spiritual individualism, which sees grace as personal success, and sin as personal failure, gives justification to an economic individualism which holds similar qualities dear.

Freedom is understood individualistically. Fromm (1969) considers the dilemma of the individual freed from the primary bonds which give security but limit the individual. Once these are severed, he or she faces the outside world as a completely separate entity. There are two courses open. He or she can progress towards the positive freedom of "authentic community" or proceed to the negative form of freedom of an "unauthentic community." In both, the individual tries to overcome aloneness by eliminating the gap that has arisen between the self and the world. This escape from threatening panic is characterized by a complete surrender of individuality and integrity of self. Instead of leading to happiness and freedom through communion with others, it results in a neurotic phenomenon. The individual escapes from the burden of freedom into new dependencies and submission.

Fromm refers to these new arrangements as "secondary bonds" (p. 163). They are characterized by a series of masochistic and sadistic trends which vary in strength, but are rarely absent. The masochistic tendencies are more conscious than the sadistic ones. Both result in feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and insignificance. Persons with masochistic tendencies have the following characteristics:

1. They often belittle themselves, deliberately become weak, and fail to master things.
2. They tend not to assert themselves but rather submit to the "higher" orders of outside forces.
3. They are incapable of experiencing the feelings of "I want" or "I am." Life is seen as something overwhelmingly powerful, which is impossible to master or control.
4. They tend to hurt and make themselves suffer. This often takes the form of self-accusation or self-criticism.
5. They often antagonize those whom they love or on whom they are dependent.
6. They often become physically ill.
7. They perceive dependency as love or loyalty.
8. They feel that their inferiority feelings are a justifiable expression of actual shortcomings.
9. They feel that their suffering is due to unchangeable circumstances (Fromm, 1969, pp. 164, 165).

The sadistic tendencies are usually less conscious than the masochistic trends but are often more rationalized. They are, unfortunately, socially more harmful. Persons with sadistic tendencies have the following characteristics:

1. They make others into instruments, who are dependent on them, and have absolute and unrestricted power over them.

2. They exploit, they use, they steal from them physically, emotionally, or intellectually.
3. They wish to make others suffer or see them suffer, either physically or mentally. Their aim is to hurt actively, to embarrass, to humiliate or see others in humiliating or embarrassing situations.
4. Often the sadistic tendencies are covered up by reaction formations of over-goodness and over-concern for others. The oppressor says and often believes that he or she rules because he or she knows what is best for the oppressed. In reality he or she has become dependent on the object of his sadism (Fromm, 1969, pp. 167, 168).

The authority figure in an "unauthentic community" often confuses his feelings of domination and ownership with feelings of love.

He bribes them with material things, with praise, assurances of love, the display of wit and brilliance, or by showing concern. He may give them everything-- everything except one thing: the right to be free and independent. (Fromm, 1969, p. 168)

The subordinate, in the relationship, succeeds in eliminating the conspicuous suffering but associates "love" with being caught or blocked in their desire for true freedom. History tells countless stories of humanity's tragic search to escape this silent unhappiness. The Fascist ideology, which capitalized on these feelings, is a case in point. Freedom in such instances means submissive conformity.

Human beings are not born equal. A basic assumption in an "unauthentic community" is the principle that human beings are created unequal. Fromm (1969) examines this inequality in Escape from Freedom and points to the connection between this way of looking at the world and Calvin's theory of predestination. He notes that, for Calvin, two kinds of people exist--those who are predestined to eternal damnation and those who are saved. Both have this fate thrust upon them since birth and both are unable to alter this course. No action, or lack of action in life, can change this innate inequality. Since there is no equality in creation, there can be no equality in destiny. Fromm feels that this belief "represents psychologically a deep contempt and hatred for other human beings" (p. 109). He contends that, in an age where much lip-service is paid to equality, the Calvinist's principle has never been banished completely.

This doctrine of inequality has been used as rationalization and justification for many atrocities in recent years. It is the cornerstone of Nazi ideology, which sees people of different racial backgrounds as basically unequal. It is the thinking implicit in the notion that the person who is not as well adapted to our taken-for-granted norms "assumes the stigma of being less valuable. On the other hand, the well-adapted person is supposed to be the more valuable person in terms of a scale of human values" (Fromm, 1969, p. 160).

In school settings, the principle of inequality is reified in the notion of authority. Fromm defines authority as "an interpersonal relation in which one person looks upon another as somebody superior to him" (p. 186). The definition implies the inequality of superior and inferior beings. Fromm gives two examples of ways of modifying this gap between student and teacher. The pupil can become "more and more like the teacher himself" (p. 187), or the distance can become "intensified" (p. 187) when the superiority serves as a basis for exploitation. Unfortunately both suggestions are the very negation of the humanity and equality of the students.

No real fraternity exists. Just as fraternity in "true community" is predicated on the fact that all are born equal and, as human beings, are entitled to a life of human dignity, the lack of fraternity in "unauthentic community" is predicated on the inequality and inhumanity of all. If the principle of equality is refuted, then the strongest basis for human solidarity is denied. The dominant ideology of American society contributes tremendously to this denial.

Capitalism is dedicated to increasing the hierarchies among people. These hierarchies inherent in the system help to "sever all ties between one individual and the other" (Fromm, 1969, p. 128) and thereby isolate and separate the "individual from his fellow man" (p. 128). Capitalism and fraternity do not sit well together for there is little

place for brotherhood in a system which postulates the scarcity of resources and the legitimacy of selection.

The denial of the humanity of individuals is equally damaging to a spirit of fraternity. In the American society of today there is little emphasis placed on the fundamental human qualities which stress our interrelatedness, our solidarity. These qualities which include the stark fact that all have the same basic fate and therefore the same "inalienable claims on freedom and happiness" (Fromm, 1969, p. 290) are repeatedly repressed. In fact, this era emphatically denies death and suffering and surrounds these proceedings with an aura of mystery. In so doing one of the strongest incentives for living a life of solidarity, fellowship, and ultimately joy is swept under the rug.

Fromm believes that although individuals are forced to repress the ugly facts of suffering and death, these stark elements do not cease to exist. He contends that the fear of death continues to live an illegitimate life among us.

It remains alive in spite of the attempt to deny it, but being repressed it remains sterile. It is one source of the flatness of other experiences, of the restlessness pervading life, and it explains, I would venture to say, the exorbitant amount of money this nation pays for its funerals. (p. 271)

It is, however, a necessary denial for the maintenance of an "unauthentic community."

The value of work and knowledge is decreed from the outside. In an "unauthentic community" human beings hold fast to the illusion of being center of their world, while

engulfed by an intense sense of insignificance and powerlessness. In reality, the value of their work and knowledge is ultimately decreed from outside, rather than coming from within. Constantly humanity is complying with someone else's standards. Fromm (1969) considers this situation.

Man has built his world, he has built factories and houses, he produces cars and clothes, he grows grain and fruit. But he has become estranged from the product of his own hands, he is not really the master anymore of the world he has built. . . . He seems to be driven by self-interest, but in reality his total self with all its concrete potentialities has become an instrument for the purposes of the very machine his hands have built. (p. 138)

The human being, in this situation, becomes the means to an end, an object to be manipulated, not a concrete person with body, mind, and spirit. This quality of instrumentality creates a devastating alienation within the individual. Relationships between human beings, consequently, assume the character of relations between things. "Man does not only sell commodities, he sells himself and feels himself to be a commodity" (Fromm, 1969, p. 140). Work and effort, in this situation, become compulsive activity in order to escape aloneness. Human beings produce, not for the satisfaction that comes from personally fulfilling activity, but for the abstract purpose of creating a "valuable" product. "We regard our personal qualities and the result of our efforts as commodities that can be sold for money, prestige, and power" (Fromm, p. 288). In the process, human beings miss the real happiness that comes from savoring the

activity of the moment, while pursuing the illusory dreams of future success.

Freire (1983) contends that "it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system" (p. 58). He believes that, in any "unauthentic community" all are denied their ontological and historical right to become more fully human. They are treated as ahistoric animals rather than as thinking human beings. Instead of relating to their world, they learn "to adapt to it" (p. 90). In so doing, they become domesticated.

Freire describes the dominant paradigm of school work where students become domesticated and creativity is inhibited. His "banking model" of education stresses conformity, obedience, docility, and routine.

- (a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) the teacher talks and the students listen--meekly;
- (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (Freire, 1983, p. 59)



In this model, the value of work and knowledge is decreed from outside and students are detached, alienated, and estranged from the product of their labors.

Love is patronizing. There is no real affirmation of self or others. Love in an "unauthentic community" is the negation of one's own life, happiness, growth, and freedom. The assumption underlying this thinking is that to love oneself is innately selfish and greedy, while to love others is virtuous and worthy. In this way of thinking, love for others and love for oneself are mutually exclusive.

Fromm (1969) contemplates the nature of the individuals who subscribe to this outlook. He finds that such persons lack the inner security which can exist only on the basis of a genuine personal fondness and affirmation. He feels that they become greedy and narcissistic as over-compensatory mechanisms for their basic lack of self-love (p. 137). This narcissism, for Fromm, is proof that they love neither self nor others. This unbearable lack of personal affirmation, Fromm contends, makes human nature resort to sadomasochistic tendencies which are often "confounded with love" (p. 182). Masochism and love, however, are complete opposites.

Love is based on equality and freedom. . . . If it is based on subordination and loss of integrity of one partner, it is masochistic dependence, regardless of how the relationship is rationalized. Sadism also appears frequently under the disguise of love. To rule over another person, if one can claim that to rule him is for the person's own sake, frequently appears as an expression of love, but the essential factor is the enjoyment of domination. (Fromm, 1969, p. 183)

Fromm believes that a person can be entirely dominated by sadistic stirrings and genuinely believe that he or she is motivated only by a sense of duty.

Teachers, in school communities, are often swept up in this type of patronization. They feel motivated by a sense of duty while becoming satisfied that they are doing what is best for their students. Their superiority is the condition for the helping of the subordinate subjected to their authority. "The teacher is satisfied if he succeeds in furthering the pupil: if he has failed to do so, the failure is his and the pupils" (Fromm, 1969, p. 187). Often the recipient of this "care" feels some elements of gratitude, love, or blind admiration while repressing feelings of hatred or pain. They rationalize this situation. "If the person who rules over me is so wonderful or perfect, then I should not be ashamed of obeying him (p. 188). Often, in these circumstances, the irrational overestimation or admiration tends to increase. The students find security and comfort in being protected and cared for by a helper who is "endowed with magic qualities" (p. 197). The teacher becomes a father figure.

Freire (1983) describes this type of arrangement. He sees paternalism as a way of keeping the oppressed from real empowerment. His sharing of the life of the poor taught him the evils of the paternalism of which they were victims.

Rather than being encouraged and equipped to know and respond to the concrete realities of their world, they were kept "submerged" in a situation in which such critical awareness and response were practically impossible . . . the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence. (Shaul1, 1983, p. 11).

In many ways, this paternalism reveals the pathology of love.



**CHAPTER V  
BARRIERS AND BRIDGES  
TO COMMUNITY**

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In the previous chapter a theoretical framework was proposed. This framework described the seven characteristics of "authentic" and "unauthentic" community. In this chapter the framework is applied to the data of Chapters II and III.

In so doing, it is hoped to affirm the humane, enriching, and creative experiences enjoyed by this community in the afternoon program. These experiences provide a backdrop against which to contrast the unauthentic nature of the morning activities. Hopefully this dissonance gives the reader joy and faith that a measure of change is possible at some future date.

In this situation, as in schooling in general, the critical issue is not people per se. This faculty is supportive, thoughtful, and loving. They care deeply about their students, both in the mornings and in the afternoon classes. Unfortunately they are caught in the dilemma of presenting educational experiences within the context of present societal structures and expectations. In this arrangement, the spirit that affirms the living together as an interdependent "authentic" community gets shelved in the interests of more pressing concerns.

It is my hope that, in the future, the characteristics of "authentic" community can be maximized in this setting,

while those of "unauthentic" community minimized. This chapter ends with suggestions for change toward this "authentic" community.

#### Human Nature

Although there were countless instances of a warm, caring, and reflective climate prevailing in all classrooms in the afternoons, the morning activities in this school setting fostered the belief that children were intensely insignificant and powerless. The children in the study constantly accepted the meanings of others rather than making their own meaningful choices. They felt unable to transform their world.

It's like being in a boat in a storm and the boat is being pushed. Finally the voyage is over.

The morning activities were monotonous and humdrum. The children were relieved when these chores were over and it was time for recess. One child captured this feeling in her journal. She described the change from feeling as one of a "herd of buffalo" in class to being a real person outside on the playground.

When that was done we were dismissed for break. The herd of buffalo stampeded down the stairs and out the front door. Once the buffalo were on the playground they changed to Olders and played the games they chose to play.

When it was time to go back to the classroom their demeanor changed to that of sluggish, boring turtles.

When they heard the words "Let's Gooo!" these Olders seemed to immediately change to turtles that poked along aimlessly toward the front door.

Because the children felt powerless and insignificant, they felt that they could not be trusted to act responsibly.

When a teacher walks in and says, "You all sit!" When she doesn't really, she really can't point out the people and she can't trust anybody's word.

Why can she not trust your word?

Because you want to get out of it, and don't want to sit through break.

Sometimes I will say, "I will do this," but the teacher won't trust you. She'll say, "Let me write a reminder for you.

Sometimes I feel that I'm not trusted. . . if someone else believes in something and you don't and you are true and they don't believe it . . . maybe their friend has told them something. . . .

This lack of trust was increased by the tight external control and lack of flexibility in the schedule. When the children came to school in the morning they left at home their right to order time according to their personal agendas. One student, because of her blindness, did not accept the inflexible classroom schedule as readily as the others. This was a cause of mild irritation for some.

She thinks she can do things by herself. She hasn't realized yet that we can do things more quickly and that in classtime we need to hurry. She feels she can take her time and work it out. But she needs to do that at home and get to the point!

The rest recognized that they should not expect to use time according to their personal needs.

If I was really involved in something I was doing and it's time to go to the next class I'd probably say, "Oh gosh, I can't wait until tomorrow when we finish this subject," but I don't say, "Teacher, may I please keep on going?"

We usually do (go to the next class) because if you don't you might get in trouble, and you can always do it later, but you do leave the thing and go to your next class.

The next day when you come in, they'd let you do it in the morning when the school hasn't started yet.

Even with this tight control on time the school day was seen as too short to get the desired work covered, so reading was started at 8:20 a.m. instead of 8:30 a.m. On Wednesday and Friday the Middles and Olders had their official physical education period during recess. At these times the children were totally alienated from their own decision-making. Not only was the humanity of the children denied in the morning activities, but certain stereotypes were deeply reinforced.

Sit on the floor with your legs crossed like an Indian!

The following work sheet activity completely denied the right of the child to think creatively or personally while reinforcing the dominant role of women as headless homemaker. The male in the picture, however, was off viewing the intricacies of life through the marvels of a telescope.

The Youngers and their teacher are doing a work sheet. The aim is to match the words with the pictures and connect both with a line. The words are "paint," "look," and "help."



Teacher: Who is helping?

Child: (pointing to a picture of a person with a brush)  
Him?

Teacher: Yes, he is helping, but who is really helping?

Child: (looks confused and points to the headless woman  
who is carrying a bag of groceries at an open door)  
Her?

Teacher: Good, draw the line (the child obeys) Who is  
looking?

Child: (looks confused and points to the man with the  
brush) Him?

Teacher: No, who is really looking?

The child points to the only other choice--the man with the  
telescope. The exercise did not encourage any critical  
judgment.

Being critically aware was not a feature of the morning  
activities. In fact, the uniform, flat, atemporal existence  
of the students, at this time, actively discouraged any  
display of oneself. There was no place for emotion. On  
one occasion when a kindergarten boy was shouting excitedly  
about a toy he received at Christmas, the parent who was  
with the teacher in the classroom said, "Say that again, Tom,  
nicely, this time." He repeated it slowly and without emo-  
tion. "Good," she said. The removal of emotion is one way  
to ensure that the humanity of each child is denied.

The school's treatment of conflict resolution was  
another way of refuting this humanity. A board member  
described the process.

One, look at the situation. Two, see what the options are. Three, evaluate the consequences. Four, find a solution.

There is always a positive solution. This is a better model than hit and run. It's better than the con game that the children play of avoidance of you.

This lock-step approach denies the humanity of each, while ignoring the fact that, in conflict, there can reside the seeds of progress. When a teacher challenged the formula by saying, "My initial response is why are you doing that?" she was told:

There's got to be something (consequence) and it's usually that kid that you don't want to interact with that needs this kind of thing.

You've got the first four steps.

You've described the inappropriate behavior and given the rationale saying, "Do you understand?" Don't lose your track. The kid is not going to learn unless you put a consequence on there. The kid won't learn the appropriate (behavior) unless he has a real reason for learning, something that's going to be functional for him. Practice feedback. What you are trying to do is pull out a bad tone of voice and put a good one in its place.

This behavioral prescription supports the notion that human nature is innately wicked and, as such, cannot be trusted to act responsibly. Fortunately, in the afternoon activities, this underlying assumption was challenged.

The contrast between morning and afternoon activities, where the students "could be adult human beings," was hopeful, creative, and refreshing. I was struck by the association of empowerment with adulthood. One way to relieve oneself of anxiety from an overwhelming task, even dissertation

writing, is to constantly remind oneself that "this too shall pass." The children used this tactic to reduce the tension and anxiety of their powerlessness in the face of an all-powerful system of education. They looked forward to the "enrichment activities." At these times their humanity increased, and they transformed their world. I pondered the use of the word "adult." At first I felt that, as adults, they would be freed from the institution of schooling and able to do what they want, rather than that which is imposed from above. However, on further reflection, I believe that the notion that the pain and anxiety associated with the "important" areas of schooling has a definite end-point has become very attractive to the students. They are comforted to believe that their powerlessness and insignificance in life is something which will pass.

The children felt significant as people when they were involved with the "special creative things" which took place in the afternoon. They saw art, band, and music as enjoyable, but also as ways of making connections, strengthening relationships, and learning "to be."

You could draw things that lots of people would admire.

If you took band you could play an instrument really well.

Learning how to be creative you, sort of, be an adult person. Without these things you wouldn't get much in life.

They openly celebrated the diversity of their humanity.

It was fun having my mother in because last year she told about the Jewish people.

At these times the students experienced a measure of autonomy, initiative, and person creativity. Their education became the true "practice of freedom" (Shaul, 1983, p. 15). They spoke with enthusiasm and warmth about recreating their world. "There's something nice about making your own house, you can put things the way you like it." They felt capable of challenging the status quo.

One of the most hopeful signs of confrontation came in the children's poetry.

#### Achievement Test

Achievement, believment  
 Of what we ought to be.  
 Achievement Test  
 To be our best  
 then we rest  
 Free to be  
 What we want to be.  
 But first  
 Before our freedom  
 We must feel the thrill  
 That is given to us  
 That are real.  
 Nervous, uneasy, scared  
 shared by the olders  
 As nervous as an animal  
 Abandoned  
 And forced to face the world.  
 As scared as a human  
 About to face death  
 As uneasy as a light  
 We face the rest  
 And take the test.

In this medium, the students openly confronted their anxiety, fears, and powerlessness and experienced the joy that comes from sharing a troubling experience.

The following example is also hopeful. One afternoon two third-graders decided to play a math game in the foyer. They lay on the carpet on the floor and began. Dan held up the first card, it read  $7 \times 8$ .

Marie: "Fifty-four, no just wait, 56.

Dan: No, I can't count that. You're only allowed one chance.

Marie: I don't think that's right, only one chance. I said no, just wait. I know I was wrong and changed it to 56.

Dan: No, only one chance, we all know that's the rule.

Marie: Well, it doesn't have to be one chance only.

During these afternoon activities human beings seemed significant and powerful; nevertheless, these "enrichment areas" were not considered the "important" areas of the program.

### God, Sin, Grace

The afternoon activities with their lack of separations, openness, and union were an example of the justice of "authentic community." The God of this community was loving and merciful, while the students experienced a wholeness of body, mind, and spirit. They were empowered to express intuitive feelings that, in the morning, would have appeared totally irrational. They struggled with thoughts, feelings,

and actions that promoted the grace of contact with peers and teachers. This was good at times, wonderful at best.

Unfortunately, there was a complete reversal when working with the "important" morning activities. At this time the school program exhibited many of the agentic qualities described by Bakan. Coping mechanisms manifested themselves in self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion. Agency in these situations resulted in competition, alienation, and isolation. The God of the morning classes welcomed division, separation, and barriers of distinction. Grace took the form of personal success, while sin was looked on as personal failure.

The overwhelmingly strong power of God, the system, or necessity was often personified in the classroom teacher. Both teachers and students recognized this role.

Teacher: People with white shirts stand up and put in your chairs. Stand up and push in your chairs, I said!

Teacher: If you get stuck, I will tell you the way to do it.

Student: I didn't know we hadn't to do only one book. I didn't know we could go on. I thought I only had to do one.

Teacher: Just a minute, I'll tell everyone where they're at and what I want them to do. I'll tell you in a minute. I'll tell everyone what to do.

Student: The teacher gave me this rule ~~rule~~ for getting the right answer. Count the number of zeros and count from the right that same number and put your decimal point in there in the answer.

Student: You are not allowed to write your journal at reading time unless the teacher says, "If you're finished you may write in your journals."

The teacher was seen as the holder of the "grand plan."

Sometimes you might want to do things, like I'm learning adding right now, and you want to learn multiplication. She might want you to learn adding before you learn to multiply.

Both students and parents took much comfort in knowing that things were under the control of Fate.

The students had a clear notion of what was good, worthy, and right. In the morning, it was good to "do your own work," "stand on your own feet," and face God alone. To cooperate, work together, or get help from a peer was cheating.

You can't ask your neighbor for help for that's cheating.

Well, sometimes if it's something that you really don't understand and the teacher is busy with the group or something, she'll say, "Don't disturb me in this group, ask your friend. Ask your neighbor, or skip it." I think it's ok to ask a friend for help if the teachers allow you to, but if it's a test . . . you know already that you're not allowed to do that.

You're supposed to do your own work, what you know yourself.

You could ask your neighbor if the teacher said you could ask someone, but if the teacher didn't tell you, you could not.

If the teacher was extra busy and you were sure the person you were going to ask was right. . . .

I wouldn't ask a neighbor because they might have the wrong answer.

You shouldn't ever ask another student unless they listen.

I don't think anybody would ask for the answers on a test because I think they would know that would be cheating and, if somebody saw you, you wouldn't like that. You'd feel very guilty.

Int: Yesterday at school I saw you working on those worksheets about Table Rock. They asked questions about the distance between Table Rock and the School. If you were working in the classroom on one of those worksheets, and you weren't able to do some of the questions, what could you do?

Child: You either skip it or you can go ask the teacher.

Int: Could you look at your neighbors?

Child: No.

Int: Why not?

Child: That's cheating.

Int: Why would that be cheating?

Child: You're supposed to do your own work. What you know yourself.

They accepted being punished for wrong behavior, but they did not like to be punished for someone else's wrongdoing.

If you didn't do your homework, I think it's fair to stay in for break. A person doesn't like taking time out, but I think it's fair if you do something wrong.

It's pretty fair if you stay in when you do something wrong, unless you didn't do it. If the teacher thought you did and you had to stay in, but you didn't do it. . . .

Sometimes we have a problem in school and have to sit. Sometimes when we're eating lunch and everybody gets real loud, but just a few people don't, the teacher comes in and accuses the whole class for being too loud even though a few people weren't. Everybody has to sit. I don't think that's fair.



I have been punished for someone else and I don't think it's fair at all. The other person gets away and he or she should learn to do better than what they did.

If you didn't do homework or bring it in, then you deserve some punishment. You could try harder.

In the minds of the students, the institution of schooling was inextricably caught up with the nature of goodness.

I don't think you'd be good if you didn't go to school because you wouldn't learn anything. You couldn't read and you couldn't get around if you didn't know how to read.

It's important to learn how to read and that stuff so that you can get a job, or be good at something, or go to college, stuff like that.

You'd be like stupid, if you didn't go to school. People would think you were stupid and dumb and don't know anything.

This institution brought with it certain expectations and assumptions about the ways good, successful students dress and behave.

Int: Would you go to school in clothes that look like regular old working clothes?

Child: Probably not, because it's harder to teach people that come to school like that.

Int: Harder to teach?

Child: Everybody stares at them and then it loses the attention of the teacher.

Int: Why do you think people would be staring at them?

Child: Because they look funny.

Sometimes the students received mixed messages.

Teacher: Don't talk when Ken is talking for we can't hear what he's saying.

Parent: Don't talk when someone is talking for it's bad manners.

In the mornings, the students developed mechanisms to appear more successful and consequently more "good."

The Kindergarten teacher and the children are sitting on the carpet in a spot marked with masking tape in the shape of the letter "X". Betty places her plastic bears in a very straight line. The teacher says, "I love the way you placed your bears, Betty." Kerri peeps over her shoulder to see Betty's arrangement. She changes her arrangement to make her bears look exactly like Betty's.

Student: I noticed that lots of people were having trouble with (math) and lots of people weren't. They just tried to make excuses for themselves, like saying, "I know that, but I just don't want to do it now."

The children perceived that personal success was associated with "good," and personal failure with "bad," in the minds of their parents.

I think my parents value me for trying to go in there and not goof off.

What I get afraid about is when we had this test and I'm really worried. Am I going to get a good mark? Are my parents going to think I'm good? Am I going to do well? I'm scared of going into a new grade and a new class too.

Effort and activity in the "important" areas were seen as a sign that one had succeeded in one's moral, as well as one's secular, work. There was, in this "unauthentic community," no place for personal failure. In sharp contrast, the afternoon activities celebrated more "authentic" concerns.

### Freedom

How people deal with isolation is a central issue of freedom. In this school setting the children had a chance of dealing with it creatively and critically during the afternoon program. Then their world was one of responsibility and creativity. Unfortunately, when the "important" work was taking place, the children chose the route of dependency and submission. At these times, the atmosphere was one of conformity, obedience, docility, and lack of "authentic" freedom. The banking model of education was the order of the day, and the children harbored feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and insignificance.

They had assimilated this culture's standards of meaning and value as their own. They viewed "importance" in their situations, as determined. In this they echoed the "importance" placed on the hidden curriculum of beliefs, practices, and meanings of the ruling class. To the degree that this happened, they had become submerged in the "culture of silence" (Shaul, 1983, p. 14). Consequently, there was no freeing to act responsibly.

This was particularly evident with the older students. They exhibited very little conflict and accepted, quietly, the authoritarian approach which channelled the more competitive pupils to their just rewards. This climate emphasized the rewarding of the deserving rather than the punishing of the undeserving. However, the children accepted the clear

message: a good disciplined life of hard work, obedience, and lack of "authentic" freedom is always rewarded. Because of this, they were willing to "receive, memorize and repeat . . . but in the last analysis, it is the men themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system" (Freire, 1983, p. 58)

The lack of freedom was evident in the classroom. An atmosphere of quiet, controlled activity existed most mornings of the research. When the noise level threatened to increase above the permissible intensity, several teachers switched off the classroom lights and did not put them on again until there was complete silence. The children responded instantly on most occasions.

When the students entered the classroom in the morning, they usually checked off their homework charts. Then they went to their assigned seats for the morning's work. In those rooms where the students could freely pick a seat, the threat of giving assigned seats was used as a method of keeping the students from "being bad." A student explained, "We have assigned seats for Mrs. Woods. If we start being bad for two days in a row, Mrs. Graves is going to give us assigned seats, but we haven't."

Many times the classroom "games" gave the illusion of freedom. The following activity was typical:

The Kindergarten teacher explained the rules of the game "Jalopy" to the children. The rules were complicated, rigid, and exact. They appeared too complicated for the listeners. The gaily colored cars on the cards had numbers. The teacher held up the first card. The number was 239. The students looked puzzled. They obviously did not recognize the number.

Teacher: What's this number?

Child 1: Three?

Child 2: Two?

Child 3: Nine?

Teacher: No, just say all the numbers, 239, 239. This number is 2,3, 9, 2, 3, 9.

The children mimicked the response in unison.

On another occasion, when some children were playing with the gerbils, the teacher coaxed them happily, "Come here, I need your help." The help was a work sheet to be completed.

The children in the study eliminated, in part, the gap of aloneness between the self and the world by surrendering to the sadistic and masochistic tendencies of "repressive community." Unfortunately, in the process, they were made into instruments which were, in large measure, dependent on others. They spoke of the times when they felt "like an object, not like a person."

Sometimes if you're trying to get the teacher's attention, and they won't pay attention to you, they're like somewhere else and you know they've heard you . . . then they go on to a million other people and just don't pay attention to you and you feel like a thing.

I've felt like that sometimes. I've felt left out, like nobody wanted to play with me. I don't really remember, it has been a long time, but I remember feeling that way.

Like when you're in class and they've been asking questions and they never come to you, you sort of get discouraged. Like they're never going to ask you something and if you're not really paying attention, you're really left out. You're just sitting there.

The children confronted another sadistic tendency of "unauthentic community." They spoke of the times when they were exploited, used, or stolen from, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. They spoke about being angry when people do not want to pass the ball and "always want to pass it to the other boys and they never think of you." They felt personally violated "when I put something in my cubby and I don't find it there later" or "when some of the teachers . . . this sounds mean . . . don't take time to explain something to you." They felt uncomfortable when they were not trusted by the teacher or the other students. I saw many occasions when students made other children suffer emotionally by embarrassing or humiliating them. This often happened in the context of a classroom "game." When one student, Klari, had not played to her team's expectations, Sam came up to Klari, yelling, "good game youall!" sarcastically. For the moment Klari looked sad. She made no

response. Later she resorted to a show of overgoodness and overconcern for the same children who had humiliated her.

The students resorted to many of the masochistic tendencies of "unauthentic community." They did not assert themselves, rather they, on most occasions, submitted meekly to "higher" orders. A student wrote:

After reading we did some oral math problems, but most of all I just sat and listened. Then Mrs. Graves said, "You'll show me that you're ready by sitting at your place." Then it was break. We went to put our books away and rushed outside.

Such conformity was positively reinforced. The comments on the bulletin board contributed to this reinforcement:

"You did not stick to the subject." "You paid close attention to what is happening. I like that."

The children rarely said "I want" or "I am." They felt that they had little choice in what they learned.

In this school there is no choice, you take the classes that they give you.

We don't really choose the subjects. The board, the teachers, and sometimes the parents pick the subjects.

We don't pick because the teacher has already other things planned, but if you wanted to do percentages, you would say, "Teacher, I want to learn percentages," and she'd say, "Well, maybe another day."

Fromm (1969) contends that persons with masochistic tendencies often become physically ill. This school population was particularly sensitive to matters of health. On most days of the study, I had children speak of their sicknesses and allergies. "I must stay away from oak trees,

ragweed, dust, red dye in foods, and chocolates," one student explained. The school refrigerator often contained medicines, to be administered at break and lunch. Because of my limitations in the field of medicine, I can only speculate on any connection there might be. However, I feel that future research on the relationship of the hidden curriculum and sickness in schools would be in order.

I am sure that the suffering endured by the students during the "important" activities seemed unchangeable. The children felt belittled and consequently bought into the idea that the status quo could not be challenged. The following exchange shows how the child concerned felt "boring" was just another fact of school life.

Parent: How was it in school today?

Child: Boring, very boring.

Parent: Did something good happen? Was there not something you liked?

Child: NO, it was very dull.

Parent: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 as awful and 10 as fantastic, how would you rate your day?

Child: Nine (she thinks for a while). Yes, 9. I'd say it was a 9.

The written rules in this school, as in most others, are not the real threat to "positive freedom." The rules, which were written by the children, were particularly benign. Tim wrote in his journal: "In the foyer, Mrs. Mons and the children made a list of school rules. They do it every year and I don't like it." The teacher asked the rules be



"positive" rather than "negative" and the children complied.

The following rules hung in the hall:

1. Do walk in school.
2. Be kind to each other.
3. Keep the school clean.
4. Be kind to the cat.
5. Obey the rules.

Many times during the research, the rules were seen as an exercise in teacher pleasing. A kindergarten student explained to the administrator, "I done you a favor, I walked in the hall." Another child spoke of the agony of being caught by teachers while breaking rules:

If I'm at school and bending the rules a little, like running down the stairs, it seems that Mrs. B is always there. If I go fast in the halls, she's always there. Right there . . . always there. . . .

The written rules appeared nonthreatening. They were part of a taken-for-granted way of behaving in any learning situation. The library was no exception, so when Monica, the librarian, explained her rules, Marie remarked, "Monica told us the rules which we already knew." Many important rules, however, were left unwritten. These rules were decreed by the hidden curriculum of schooling. These rules told, clearly, who was boss.

Teacher: What are you supposed to do when I'm talking?

Child: Zip it!

Even though there were many examples of "unauthentic community," the lack of "authentic" freedom in this setting was accompanied by a degree of security.

I value the security of knowing everybody. You feel sort of secure.

Why do you feel secure?

Well, it's not as if you were . . . if you'd see somebody you didn't know. I don't know. You just feel secure if you know everybody.

However, the children clearly recognized the difference between the freedom enjoyed outside the school and the freedom inside the classroom. One student wrote: "It has been a great day at school, but aren't all Fridays!"

In this school, the children overcame the isolation and aloneness that comes with freedom by escaping into new dependencies and submission. Fortunately, there was some space in their school day for positive freedom. In the afternoon activities the students got many chances to deal with their world in a responsible and creative manner. At this time they experienced "authentic community."

### Equality

In Chapter III the student body was seen to correspond to Jean Anyons' (1980) middle class and professional school populations. The children recognized that they were different from other school populations.

Int: I'm really wondering why is it when I look at the children in this school they all dress very, very much better . . . than (the children) in other schools?

Child: I think because maybe they don't really have very bad clothes to wear, because they want to look good for themselves and maybe for some other people, but they don't really feel like they should.

Int: Do we get all sorts of children at this school?

Child: Yes, we do. Well, it's sort of hard to explain how they're different. . . .

Int: Are they the same children that go to every other school that you know of?

Child: Well, some of them are the same and some of them aren't.

Int: How are they different?

Child: Well, they dress different. . . .

Int: Do they talk differently?

Child: Some of them.

Int: And what else do they do differently?

Child: Well, they eat differently. I've noticed that. They're a lot more prepared to come to class. It's just . . . they're different.

The fact that the school did not cater to a greater cross-section of the population was a source of concern for some board members. Unfortunately, alternative school systems often appear too risky to a large number of people. However, these children believed that their parents recognized and were glad that their children were among the "chosen" ones.

I think my parents value the fact that we're able to go there because some people are not able to go there.

Why are they not able?

Because either they don't have the qualifications or they can't pay for it.

Although the children were from similar social class backgrounds, there was no real equality in this setting when the "important" basic areas were being covered. This school, like many others, was in the process of sorting, sifting, and separating. As a result some were more equal than others. The dominant students exerted more influence over their peers than others. The students accepted this situation willingly as an inevitable outcome of the educational experience.

People in our class have the power, the authority, to tell the class, like if the teacher is out in the hall with someone else, to tell the class they need to be quieter.

They will get up and say, "Well, let's just try to finish this off while she is out in the hall." They say, "Let's be quiet or let's read until she comes back in" or something like that.

These people listen, they know what's right and wrong. They do good work, but they have nice friends. They get along with people.

The children had a clear picture of what constituted a "bad" student. They were not entirely sympathetic with his or her behavior.

Well, a bad student is like when they try hard but they forget their homework and they don't do some things right. They play around at school and they draw, like some people in my class do.

What should they be doing when they're drawing?

They should be listening to what the teacher is saying so they can learn something.

There's at least one bad student in every classroom. Everyone is bad some time.

Somebody who sits across from you and they're scribbling, talking really loud, they don't really care what the teacher is saying and you're trying to listen.

There's a time when everybody goofs off a lot. You have to have fun sometimes. It happens to me a lot, but it's hard to say. . . .

In the morning activities, these children believed that some students were superior, while others were inferior. Usually the person who was well-adapted to the taken-for-granted norms was considered more valuable in their eyes. The student, unfortunately, who was less well adapted to these norms assumed the stigma of being less valuable. The student body had its share of leaders.

The leaders of this school are Mary, Bob, and John. They are the "in" people that everyone likes a lot. In this school there are a certain amount of people that are "in" and a certain amount of people that aren't exactly "out" but aren't included as much. I'm included some, not as much as the others; there are some that are excluded like Eavan and Emer because they're quiet. The others talk a lot and get people's attention. They're talking about their friends in Riverswood (a fashionable part of town) and the people there, and things that you would like to find out about. I don't live anywhere near there.

The children had a clear idea of what constituted a "good" student. Not all, they believed, had the same rights to freedom and happiness. The good student was seen as deserving of special privileges.

A good student is a person who listens, raises his hand, and asks the teacher before he does something. He does really good work on his papers and stuff.

If you want to be good at math you study and have your mother or father call out problems and answer them, like times tables, additions, subtraction, division.

A good student would try to do their best and they'd do their homework and that sort of thing.

They wouldn't play in school, only at break and lunch.

I agree, as long as you try your hardest you can't be bad. You're doing the best you can. I think everyone should try their hardest.

If the teacher gives you directions and they do it instead of asking questions about what she just asked, they've listened to what she said and went on and did their work. Some others are at the very start, still asking questions and everything. I mean it's good to ask questions, but it's good to listen to the teacher too.

I think that the people who deserve the most are the people that work the hardest.

That's pretty much what I think. The people that are being quiet and doing their work and things, I think they deserve more.

Fortunately, in the afternoons, the children had an opportunity to work and live as equals in a spirit of "authentic community." However, these enrichment activities were not considered the "important" areas of the program.

### Fraternity

The school goals, listed in Chapter III, named "independence" as a desirable attribute. There was no mention in the list of "interdependence," solidarity, or fraternity. Although the students gained much strength from their fraternity during the afternoon program, it was not surprising that there was little evidence of this virtue in the morning activities. In fact the opposite was the case. The presence of hierarchies that divided student from student was marked.

May: I don't like her putting Fanny and Steve in the 2nd grade book for English and Math and I don't think it's right to do it.

Ann: They're better than you, May.

May: They're better than you, Ann (the children listening laugh loudly).

Ann: (looking sad) Fanny is doing much more at home than I.

May: She (teacher) wants Fanny and Steve to be happy and she lets them make volcanoes and experiments with water and all that good work on the bulletin board (pointing to the board).

Chris: I don't like Math for it's hard for me. I would prefer to be playing and drawing pictures.

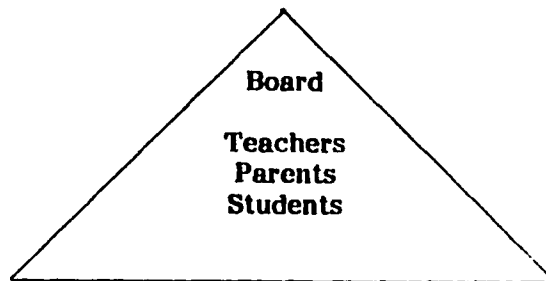
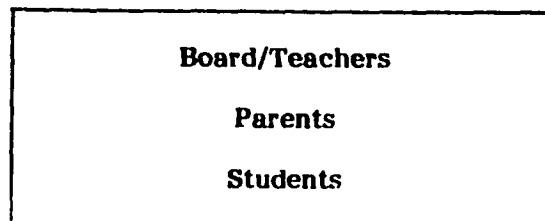
May: Steve is doing worst, he does bad things. One day he spat at me and he was eating soup the wrong way.

In the foyer Jess, Tania and Milly are making up their own play. "We're the science group," Tania whispers proudly, "we're so far advanced in the brown book we might get the 7th grade one."

The students recognized hierarchies within their school system also. They perceived the school board as more influential than their parents or teachers, who in turn were more powerful than the students. They accepted this as an important "given" in the institution of schooling. The school board supported this belief in its message to the teachers.

If the school board makes a decision and gives a directive, it would be the same as a superintendent telling you that in a public school system, or your principal and so I think you need to understand this. We are the employer, so to speak, and would be your immediate supervisor. I'm not sure how we're going to communicate these things.

I found it helpful to draw a diagram of the organizational structure of the school, as I see it now, and in the past.

**NOW****PAST**

In the present triangular model, command flows down, compliance up. The school board, which "takes the place of the school principal," issues commands to the teachers who in turn issue commands to the students. At the beginning of the school's formation there was an attempt to challenge this dominant paradigm. Much of the rhetoric at this time was focused on giving the students and parents more control of their children's education. The founder members of the school were also the teaching staff, board members and parents, while the majority of the students were their own children.

In the past, the organizational structure was more rectangular with more sharing of power. In reality, the regime has changed towards a more bureaucratically organized



institution, and all participants recognized the hierarchies that were involved in this structure. Unfortunately, bureaucracies which promote division, stratification, and fraternity do not foster the same aims.

The students felt that stratification was a necessity of classroom life. They believed that schools were about independence rather than interdependence.

It's obvious in our class when people are at the top of the class and people are at the bottom. It seems like if they'd try their best they could do a lot better. They would rise to the top.

I think it's pretty obvious. Well, if I'm sitting beside someone and they're goofing off and there is somebody on the other side really working hard, you will find that the person might be a little bit higher up than the other person.

How do you know the person is goofing off?

If you look over and you see him just diddly-daddling and talking to a friend, laughing their heads off.

You can really tell because if somebody like stays in for break and forgets their homework for about five weeks in a row, for one subject, doesn't bring in a book or anything, that's the bad person.

You can tell the people who are doing really well in a subject for the teacher will ask you to do different things. You can tell when you get a hard sheet and I see some other sheet. It might be a little easier.

I think usually the top students are the ones who listen, because they're sort of the teacher's pet. The teacher likes them because they listen. I think other people could, because, if they'd make an effort, they could do better.

Are there people that feel they're at the bottom of the class?

I think there are because they know they are, they don't just feel. In our class they don't think that I'm at the bottom. . . . I think they really should make an effort.

The children believed that students, for the most part, attained their rightful position on the hierarchy. They recognized that some students rightfully became the classroom leaders.

I think it would be pretty hard to be the class leader, sometimes.

Do you think the class leader would let you?

I don't know. It all depends. The class leader might not want to be it anymore. It's usually the person that's smartest, it would be hard if someone had chosen to be the leader or something to stop being it.

I think the leader couldn't be pushed out unless they started doing rotten things. Then you could, but you could also join him. I don't really think you could get pushed out.

Do you think there is room for more than one person at the top?

Yes, I know there is room for more than one person.

How do you think the students feel about those people that are leaders in their class?

Well, sometimes you can feel really nice about them, but some of the people might brag, like I'm the best person, I'm the smartest person.

The students acknowledged the stratification within their classroom. They spoke freely about "the smartest" at the top, and those at the bottom of their class. They learned from an early age that they were powerless in the face of this inbuilt, legitimate hierarchy. Some bought into the idea that they were less intelligent and consequently less valuable. They felt that they often "don't get a chance to do what they really need to do and they deserved that chance." This injured dignity became part of their

life's excess baggage and they felt that it was hopeless to struggle against the "facts of life."

Often when engaged in the morning activities, they seemed alienated from their work in a seemingly necessary hierarchical society. On these occasions they repressed their critical consciousness and became as objects, no longer able to participate in the creation and recreation of their world. As objects they were sieved, sorted, and standardized. In the process there were those who rose to the top in an atmosphere of legitimate authority. Rightfully they looked on themselves as "whiz kids" and proclaimed proudly, "We're so far ahead, we're in the grey book now!"

The concept of lack of fraternity was not fully internalized by some of the younger students. In their morning activities they often shared information, solidarity, and fellowship. This, however, was not encouraged by the teacher, when the "important" work was in progress. The following incident was typical of the interaction with the younger children.

Kevin comes with Brian's fill-in-the-blanks work sheet completed.

Teacher: You did Brian's work sheet for him, Kevin!

Kevin: Yea. Brian did it too. I just wrote it.

Brian: Well, I couldn't spell the words.

Teacher: Weren't they written up there, Brian?

In many cases, individualized instruction fostered a lack of fraternity in the classroom. It increased the competitive atmosphere and pitted student against student. A teacher of the Youngers commented on this competitive climate.

I have never worked, in all my years of teaching, with more competitive children. There's so much one-upmanship. If one says, "I've got 12 blocks, the other has to say, "mine is 20." They always have to be better. It's strange for we are ungraded but they all want to be the best. It must be something that they're getting. I guess we all are, by nature, competitive, but this is different. When someone reads a word wrongly and another person laughs at them, as if to say that they wouldn't do that, I say, "That's not very kind." I guess we need to take time off from the work and talk to them about hurting each other.

Even though the children received no formal grades, it was acutely apparent where each student stood in the classroom hierarchy. The top children proudly boasted of their progress. "We're on integers in the seventh grade book!" Those that appeared at the bottom often stayed inside during recess as punishment for homework undone. The bulletin board proclaimed the order:

Whiz Kids

May	5
Ben	2
Tim	5
Jerry	7
Ken	9

The students spoke easily about competitiveness and the place of grading in the classroom. They recognized their places, and those of their peers on the academic hierarchy.

They knew who was most influential and who was totally lacking in power. They noted the difficulty of displacing a leader from his preferred niche. Unfortunately, they seldom questioned the justice in this state of affairs. The following interviews reflect their attitudes.

Do you get grades?

Not that I remember.

No. We get 95 or just numbers.

Well, you don't get grades like a C or B in something. You usually get something like a 95. Just a number.

The year before last year I was in the public school and we got report cards there. The teachers were really strict, and when I say strict, I mean it. This school doesn't have report cards but Mrs. Dawson gave these little things like papers out that were like a report card. It told you what you needed to work on and that stuff.

Say you're writing a big story about something and you work really, really hard and you get a B or C, well it doesn't matter what those grading things are. It's just how hard you worked.

I think some of the people that do work hard don't get a chance to do what they really need to do and they deserve that chance.

Why do they not get the chance?

Because sometime the teacher is off with someone else or she has already done it.

I think if you get an A it means you studied really, really, really hard for an A. If you study really, really hard and get a C . . . I think those letters aren't anything compared to how hard you worked and how well you did and how hard it was to study.

How would you feel if you saw that a person had a very high mark on a paper?

I'd feel happy for them.

How would you feel if you had a very low one on your paper?

I'd feel sorry for me.

I'd be sort of embarrassed that they got a high mark and I got a low one, I'd be mad at myself, because I didn't do well.

It would make me want to try harder to do my best.

It makes me envy them, when they've got a high mark and I've got a low mark. It makes me mad because I tried my best and I didn't get a good mark or anything.

The lack of fraternity in the "important" activities, in the morning, fostered anger, embarrassment, and downright suffering. On many occasions I saw tears fill the eyes of the students during classroom "games."

Teacher: What president wrote the Declaration of Independence?

Jon: Thomas Jefferson.

Klari: Oh no!

Teacher: He was right! (Children laugh. Klari gets red. She pulls herself away from the group and does not answer until the game is over.)

The students spoke freely of their deep fears of being unsuccessful in the basic subject areas. They knew that, on these occasions, they were "on their own." There was no hope of solidarity from one's peers.

Sometimes it makes you afraid if you don't know anything and you think everybody else knows it.

I think what makes me scared is like, a teacher walks up to you and asks you a question and you have no idea what the question is about, but here, she never explained it to you, and it just really scares me if I get the wrong answer. They'll get mad at me.

Sometimes it can make you scared if you're going to class and you really don't know what you're supposed to be doing. Nobody will answer your questions. It's not important to them.

In contrast, in the "enrichment areas" there was a large measure of solidarity and fraternity. Often teachers and students challenged the barriers that separated individual from individual. At these times, they explored topics that stressed their similarities, the fundamental human qualities that are shared by all, in song, story, and art work. Unfortunately this did not always meet with the approval of the parents. A board member explained:

The teacher shared her concern over a matter that had arisen earlier when the parents of a first grader visited with her. The parents had been most upset and asked that a bulletin board of the children's work should be taken down because of the nature of the work. When I saw the display, I was impressed by the richness and depth of feelings and fears explored in the art work and stories. The bulletin board explored death and violent death, which unfortunately has a place in our children's world.

However, the teachers continued to explore death and suffering, and, in so doing, they inserted one of the strongest incentives for living a life of solidarity into this community. They openly recognized that all are born to die. At these times they encouraged the children to speak about their personal anguish. The following words, used when a sixth grader described the plight of a fellow student, was an example of how this young man sensitively wrestled with ideas of cancer and blindness. He was, however, unable to use the words "cancer" and "blindness."

Jane is left out of things partially because of what happened to her, and partially because she's grouchy sometimes when you're trying to help her. She gets angry for she thinks that she can do everything by herself. Sometimes we get angry at her for being so angry. You see, it's hard to understand. We've never been in that situation before so it's hard for us and Jane right now. Because of that, some people don't want her around. We feel uneasy around her because people think there's a disease or something. Jane comes over a lot to me and even I am hesitant to do things, but I just tell myself--"There's nothing wrong with Jane, it's fine. The only thing that happened to her is that: there is nothing else. If more people get used to her I think she'd probably be included more. It's hardest for her to mix in. It's like "Here's Jane," he said, pointing the index finger of his right hand, and "Here's us," he said, making a circle with his thumb and index finger of his left hand, and it's hard for her to get in here, demonstrating by playing his finger in the circle.

The math teacher openly celebrated this child's blindness by a role-playing exercise. In so doing she greatly increased the spirit of fraternity among these older students. Unfortunately the incident was marred by a bee sting. Later a student wrote in her journal:

We got in one straight line and went outside with our eyes shut. There we opened our eyes and she explained what we were going to do. She picked partners and then she said, "You close your eyes, you close your eyes, and you close yours." Unfortunately, I was one of those people who closes their eyes. Jessica lead me around. I was feeling the fence when I grabbed something. It stung me. I knew what it was. "A bee!" I screamed. We switched partners. I was the person who could see and Jessica was the person who had their eyes closed.

There were many examples of this community receiving strength from their interrelatedness, their fraternity, during the "enrichment activities." However, when the "important" subject matter was being covered, no fraternity existed.



### Work

The data in Chapter IV reveal many of the characteristics of the conception of knowledge and work in a "unauthentic community." When the basics were in progress, the importance of the work was decreed from outside. When the "enrichment activities" were in progress, the importance of the work was decreed from the inside. As a result, the students were detached and estranged from the product of their labors.

The school board, teachers, parents, and students thought of curriculum as a course of studies, wide in scope, and graded in sequence. A first-grader expressed this view clearly: "French is harder this year because we're getting older and more capable things." The concerns of the school board, as presented in a letter, reflect a similar view.

1. What are the middles and olders doing presently?
2. Where does this fit into plans for the rest of this school year and the future years?
3. Is there a guide or scope and sequence to which she is referring?
4. What preparation, if any, is there for the C.A.T.. scheduled later in the semester?

This definition of curriculum, which is in keeping with the work of an "unauthentic community," caused great anxiety among the parents.

I want to know the children have covered everything they should cover up to the sixth grade.

We want to know that she knows all she should for the junior high school.

I want to know what they have done so that they won't do it again later on.

At the parent meeting, I brought up that Jo was not having enough homework. I like them to get lots of homework. It's good for them.

Peg is doing nothing new in school. She's bored with the easy stuff. They've been reviewing since school started.

I was afraid the teacher was taking too much time off from the work, spending time telling the kids how to behave to each other.

This view of curriculum forgets that students have body, mind, and spirit. It stifles critical consciousness and separates individuals from the product of their labors.

The children in the study did not ask why they were in the world. Instead they viewed the "important" morning activities as fated and unalterable. This played into the hands of those with a vested interest in the prescription of the learning tasks. The children did what they were told "for in this school, there is no choice, you just take what they give you." As a result, school work took on a quality of instrumentality. It resembled the relations between things, rather than between humans. The persons became objects to be manipulated. Some parents shared the belief that school work was about things rather than people. A parent explained.

When I was in the kindergarten class the other day, it took the teacher 40 minutes to read a short story because of the many interruptions to discipline the children. "Meg, stop touching Pat!" Pat, stop touching Meg!" The story would have only taken a few minutes without these interruptions.

The children interviewed saw schooling as having two functions. They saw it as a place "to learn about other things" and a place to "know about other people and socialize a bit." When asked what was important in school, they were in agreement that the "learning about things" was top priority. Those things, like the work and knowledge of an "unauthentic community," were decreed from outside.

I think reading and writing and the basics in math are the most important so you'd be able to understand.

The most important thing is to read and read the words correct, and to write and spelling, to take little by little until you get bigger words, get higher grades.

Reading is real important. You'd start slow and when you get faster it'd get easier.

I think it's important that you learn to behave yourself like for homework. If it's due on Friday, you have to organize yourself.

Like in class, not talking and drawing. If you do you'll get punished.

I think reading is the most important, because if you're in high school and can't read and you get a car and you can't read the signs . . . or you can't read the newspaper or books, I think that is most important.

What is also important is to learn to organize yourself, like Ann said, because you need to do your homework if it was due Wednesday. You need to organize yourself. If maybe you don't have anything to do one day, just goof off that day and get it over with.

Unfortunately the time required to complete the school work was determined from outside also. Instead of the work and knowledge being creative and personal, it became rushed, chaotic, activity. The children spoke urgently about coping with the crowded unbending agenda.

We rush up the stairs.

Get out of my way!

Go faster!

After being pushed a couple of times, I successfully get into the math room.

Oh, no, late again!

Oh, how will I make it to class on time?

I heard lots of people coming near to the room. Whew, I got out quickly without being clobbered.

Let's goooooo!

Move it!

Don't push.

Get out of my way.

Another day of kicking and trampling at the school. As usual we start off with math. Mrs. Graves said, "Finish your math sheets first and work on your scale drawing of the classroom.

After we finished and 10:00, we tried to make our way up to the upstairs cubby room. Another, "Let's goooo!" followed and we went to Mrs. Wood's room. There we read a book called Secret of the Andes and enjoyed it.

11:50--Lunch

Och.

Hurry up.

Guess what I have to drink.

As we came down the steps and went into the L.A. room we stepped on each other.

Defining, implementing, and mastering a course of studies in a short space of time was often seen by the staff as an "overwhelming task." The teachers spoke freely of the enormity of this burden.

I feel I have to keep all the content of the program in mind daily. I say, "I need to get this done today," and I feel badly if I can't get it done. There's only so much time and so much to cover.

A lot of good things have been happening in this school over the years. Now all these things are expected to happen in each school year.

I am concerned, not with method, but with assuring that nothing is left out, that there are no gaps in the program. I'm concerned about scope and sequence.

I'm embarrassed to say, "I can't do this."

Many of the activities were a fragmentary list of rules and procedures. These activities, like the headless woman of the workbooks, the long, short, or controlled vowels of the 6-year-old, or the counting of zeros and the placing of a decimal point resulted in alienation and isolation. In this banking model of education, the students were detached and estranged from the product of their labors. Many times the tasks seemed far removed from the real life of the participants. The following activity was typical.

In the foyer three children were trying to paste cut-out pictures on a chart which had, as its heading, "Long, Short & Controlled--r." A picture of Jackie Kennedy's face was in the column marked "short."

Parent: Why is Mrs. Kennedy in the short column?

1st Grader: Because of "head." Is this a controlled-4 sound, "World"?

Parent: I don't know what a controlled-r means, let's ask Mrs. Low.

Parent: I don't know either. Let's ask Mrs. Speak.

Parent: I know nothing of controlled-r's either. Let's look in the dictionary.

The parents consulted the dictionary but did not understand what it meant.

1st Grader 2: It is controlled. Listen, Mrs. K. "World."  
Do you hear that R?

Parent: I surely hear it, but I don't know anything about it.

1st Grader 2: Let's ask the teacher when she's finished teaching her group.

Instead of relating to their world, the children adapted to it. The following interview is an example:

Child: I've had a good week. I got 100% in a French test and 12 out of 12 in a vocabulary test.

Int: What were your vocabulary words?

Child: Democracy, preventive . . . .

Int: Do you know the meaning of democracy?

Child: Yes--a mess like . . . I came home this morning and the house was in a democracy.

This student had not experienced democracy, neither had she reflected on its significance. She had, instead, learned to associate the correct response with the sound of the word. Knowledge, in this case, was completely divorced from any creativity, subjectivity, or self-awareness. It was downright boring.

The classroom climate, in the mornings, was one of repetition and frequently boredom. Much time was spent with pencil and paper, filling in blanks, working on work sheets or in their textbooks. One child captured this atmosphere:

We started to work in our folders. We worked, and we worked, and we worked, until finally she said, "Put your folders back on the shelf."

On one occasion, when the students had spent a half-hour on quiet, repetitive tasks, the teacher described the activity to follow. It seemed like more of the same. Instead the students accepted the challenge and exclaimed, "Oh, good."

These students constantly complied with someone else's wishes and standards. They knew exactly when they were doing "work." Consequently the teacher had to use few words.

Is there work being done?

Let's do the work, Tim.

In the morning, work was concerned with the routine, the exact, and the completion of compulsory tasks. It was rarely personal.

As soon as we got done with that we checked our Basic English books. I checked Tom's book and he got all of them right. After that we had our first day of cursive. We had to do a's, o's, and e's. After that Mrs. Cape came in. We had to finish our poems about Stingray.

The children believed that these tasks were necessary evils.

The state-wide writing test was equally necessary. A sixth-grader wrote in her journal:

Oh no! the sixth graders have their writing test today. When we walked into school the fifth graders went to the math room for English with Mrs. Mons. The sixth graders went to the language arts room for our writing test. As we approached the door to the language arts room, you could tell everyone was nervous. Everyone was glad when 10:00 came.

Unfortunately, much of the work and knowledge in the morning classes was associated with stress and anxiety. It

was typical of the work of "unauthentic community." In the afternoons, when the students were more involved with the nonquantitative, they could respond, take initiative, and make meaningful choices. At these times, they experienced many elements of "authentic community."

### Love

In this setting there were many instances of warm, caring, and spontaneous affirmation of self and others. These moments were highly valued by the students, parents, and teachers. They were in line with the vision of love in an "authentic community." This vision is predicated on the ability of the human beings to responsibly name and rename their world. There were many instances of such acts of creation during the enrichment activities. At these moments the individuals overcame separateness and linked student and teacher together in pursuit of a single vision. Creativity flourished, and music, art, and poetry were everywhere.

This poetry was one result:

In the darkness the moon glittered  
 On the Shining walls  
 Just washed by busy nurses  
 This is the beloved Hughson Hall  
 Hughson Hall has been devoured by a machine,  
 But its heart is still there waiting  
     to beat again  
     within the walls  
 of the new auditorium.

Hughson Hall was a nursing school  
 Started in 1938  
 First it was small  
 Then it got big  
 But then they tore it down  
 Doesn't anybody care at all?



The pupils were particularly atuned to their own feelings and sensitive to those of their peers. They actively encouraged those who struggled. They rejoiced at ideas and accomplishments of fellow community members. They were pained at their sorrows and challenged by their problems. They questioned openly many taken-for-granted assumptions that were never queried in other situations.

When the students engaged in open and frank dialogue with their math teacher, they disclosed their fears, pleasures, and hopes. The teacher was caring and thoughtful. Freire (1983) feels that such dialogue is an "existential necessity" (p. 77). Without it "there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (p. 81). It was moments of dialogue that prompted the students to write about the nurse's home "devoured by a machine . . . doesn't anybody care at all?" or about the death-like pain of facing the rest to "take the test." Such dialogue was an act of creation. The students and teachers who engaged in this dialogue with the word, in no small measure, transformed their world.

Love, in an "authentic community," is both the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. As such it is the prerogative of responsible subjects and cannot be associated with any relationship of domination. The following incident is an example of this dialogue:

The Middles (3rd and 4th graders) are really enjoying their literature class. The teacher sits cross-legged on the band room floor. The children lie around on the carpet. The story is Tolstoy's Peter the First and the Peasant.

Teacher: What do you think he is saying?

Eawan: Always be nice to your parents. I think that is his moral. Be nice to them when they're old for they were good to you and I think he is saying that you don't throw away money by breeding girls.

Marc: He's also saying that ladies can work just as hard as a man in a field.

Patty: And a person can sometimes not see something right beside him.

These instances were highly valued by the student body because the participants "took time to share themselves." This is the essence of liberating love.

Love is always a bridge to community. Thankfully, there was no absence of it in this setting and its presence inspires hope for future change. I have no doubt that the teachers, in this school, cared deeply for their students. The children sensed this concern and returned this warmth.

I value Mrs. Mons because she makes everything happen for us and she organizes field trips . . . and I love her.

Unfortunately, the business of schooling is a powerful enterprise and this community recognized that there were important goals to be achieved during the school day. This situation left little opportunity to celebrate good feelings.

However, the teachers tried to do what was best for their students. On many occasions they struggled to

empower them. Unfortunately, their intentions were, sometimes, misinterpreted by the parents:

Mrs. Woods asked us to work at home on Jack's speech patterns. His mother, his grandmother, and all his kin are from this county. That's the way they all talk. I just ignored it--she'll have to accept us the way we are.

I am sure that this was not a question of nonacceptance. Mrs. Woods, a kind and caring individual, was instead trying to provide Jack with the tools which she knew were the prerequisites for "getting on" in American society. It is a sad statement that, in so doing, one has to leave behind that large chunk of self--the way in which one names the world. This can never lead to the formation of a truly liberating community.

Parental involvement in this school setting was an effective bridge to "authentic community." The children fondly referred to their school "family" and derived strength from this relationship. The parents, often at great personal inconvenience, gave many hours of volunteer work to the setting. A board member explained:

Lots and lots of parents are willing to come in and give you time, 18 regular volunteers every week . . . they really are at your disposal. They'll do whatever you ask. They realize the importance of their role. . . . We have some wonderful, supportive, and capable people.

Although parental involvement worked toward the establishment of "authentic community," I saw instances when a patronizing atmosphere prevailed. On these occasions, there was a

feeling that the children were under a separate authority and protection, while at the same time there existed an illusion of liberality. At other times, the parents fostered an atmosphere of avid individualism. Nonetheless, on most occasions, parental involvement increased the spontaneous affirmation of self and others. On these occasions the children felt loved.

There were other times when "authentic" love was confused with instrumental love.

I feel left out too, like if you're talking with somebody and somebody else comes by and they say, "Oh, hello!" Then they just start talking to them. It's like you're not even there. Maybe they're just not interested in what I'm saying. I suppose they just don't really care.

If a person really likes a person and wants to have a special friendship with them, the person that they want to have a special friendship with sort of takes advantage of them and says, "Go, get my lunch" . . . to make other people jealous. I don't think it's right and sometimes I want to go up there and stop them, but I don't for I think they'll try to ignore me or something.

I think if you go up to a friend, one of your best friends, and you start playing . . . and they rule you and take advantage of you saying, "Go, get this and go, get that and give me" . . . I would do it just because I want a special friendship with them, I guess. . . . If I noticed that they were doing that to me I'd say, "No, it's not what I want." But if I didn't notice, I would do it for them because I'd want them to like me.

Some people try to . . . I know some people that take advantage of you and when there is someone else to play with them they just forget about you and play with the other person. You get really sad because you're not getting to play with them and you get really mad at them because . . . I don't like that feeling at all.

Nevertheless, a high level of genuine love prevailed in this setting. This spontaneous outpouring of affection gives great hope for future change toward a more liberating school community.

The following section examines changes that can be made to foster a more liberating school community in this educational setting.

#### Change Towards "Authentic Community"

The children in the study showed no awareness of a need for liberation, no real desire to change their educational institution. They suggested minor readjustments but no major transformation. This lack of interest in real freedom, justice, equality, and fraternity in the "important" areas was not surprising. Freire (1983) explains this phenomenon.

One of these characteristics is the . . . existential duality of the oppressed, who are at the same time themselves and the oppressor whose image they have internalized. (p. 47)

It was hard for the students to imagine a school which placed "importance" on the quality of lived everyday life in classrooms rather than one which prepared them for more school, college, or work. In this they reflected the beliefs, values, and meanings of the dominant ideology, which emphasizes the being rather than "the process of becoming" (Freire, 1983, p. 72).

Greene (1985) believes that the task of increasing awareness of new possibilities in education is a challenging one. It is accompanied with pain.

There is no question but these are difficult times for those of us concerned about releasing human beings, empowering them to think what their lives might be, provoking them to move toward what is not yet. I have been trying to find . . . a way of making possibilizing meaningful. (p. 154)

I feel sure that some meaningful "possibilizing" can take place in this institution. It will require an increased awareness on the part of all participants. I am heartened by "the practice of freedom" in the afternoon schedule, but more so from the words of the third-grade student observed. When told that she was allowed only one chance she replied, "But it doesn't have to be that way!" She had another type of "community" in mind.

A major barrier to "authentic community" in this setting is the bureaucratic nature of this institution. Weber (1947) describes the characteristics of this bureaucratic mode in The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations. He sees the inclusion of specialists, rules, regulations, procedure manuals, and a hierarchy of relationships as inevitable components (pp. 329-333). All participants readily accepted the components inherent in this situation. Brubaker (1982), in Curriculum Planning: The Dynamics of Theory and Practice, offers alternative guidelines for living cooperatively in educational settings. He sees a bureaucratic form of organization as appropriate for overall governance functions in schools. Many such tasks, which are discreet and beyond question, benefit by being dealt with in this fashion.

These areas include the care of the building and grounds, the receipt and dispersal of funds, and health and safety regulations. The area of curriculum and instruction is not so clear-cut and deserves to be handled in another fashion, one that stresses the personal fulfillment and humanity of all the participants. Brubaker describes this "professional organizational model" (p. 114). It functions "on greater opportunities for personal choice, variation, ambiguity, diversity, and irrationality and sometimes less efficient forms of expression" (p. 116). Unfortunately, the hidden curriculum of schooling does not foster these forms of expression.

Because of the pervasive quality of the hidden curriculum of schooling, discussed in detail in Chapter VI, major change in educational institutions seems highly unlikely in the absence of major social transformation. Nonetheless we, as educators, have the duty to reflect on the question of Goodlad (1984):

Which way do we want it? Do we want schools and teachers to respond to the messages they hear, the messages telling them to work particularly on children's ability to read, write, and handle arithmetical operations? If so, we should not anticipate much change in what schools do now. (p. 243)

I envision an alternative way, one that advocates a more liberating climate for children. The following suggestions are made in light of this position.

1. Encourage the use of meaningful autobiographical statements to foster a vision of change, e.g., the life and career of the dancer Baryshnikov, whose life of control exposed the obstacles he had to overcome if he was to realize his dream (Greene, 1985, p. 150).
2. Encourage the staff to share their personal autobiography. "Engaging personally with each other, attending to the norms that govern their lives together, they may well be in a position to identify what each of them believes to be important where teaching and learning are concerned" (Greene, 1985, p. 147).
3. Encourage the reflective action (praxis) advocated in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1983, p. 75).
4. Encourage the staff to consider new ways of evaluation which maximize a sense of dignity in each individual and minimize a loss of worth.
5. Do not fear conflict; rather see in it the seeds of true progress.
6. Encourage risk-taking.
7. Encourage professionalism, workshops, and "keeping up" with the research and writings in the field.
8. Celebrate the intuitive, irrational, and creative aspects of life for "all matters that are beyond doubt, are in a sense, dead; they constitute no challenge to the living" (Schumacher, 1977, p. 3).



9. Look on knowledge, not as facts, laws, and theories, but as situational meaning and encourage personal forms of knowledge.
10. Encourage "seeing" in the real sense, not merely "looking." The former stresses a critical awareness lacking in the act of looking (Berger, 1972).
11. Encourage a sense of playfulness which Cox (1969) sees as important because "it puts work in its place" and it "is fantasy and social criticism" (p. 5).
12. Examine change in its many personal, organizational, and societal aspects including an examination of different ideologies and consequently a possibility of hope for change.  
  
"Surely the Second coming is at hand" (Yeats, 1981, p. 464).

Up to this point I have emphasized the particular characteristics that have emerged from the school in the study. In the final chapter of this dissertation I intend to examine these issues within the larger context of the culture of the United States. The chapter attempts to provide a more global understanding of the meanings and messages of community and interdependence.



CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSION: COMMUNITY,  
INTERDEPENDENCE, AND A  
QUESTION OF SURVIVAL

## CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: COMMUNITY, INTERDEPENDENCE, AND  
A QUESTION OF SURVIVAL

The school in the research mirrors American society. It also, unfortunately, reflects an outlook that is global. The dominant consciousness here, as in modern industrial society, fails to recognize the immense importance of living a life of interdependence. This chapter examines this problem and questions why we, as a nation, fail to foster the spirit of interdependence and interrelationship stressed by ecologists, in our dealings with the natural world. It questions, also, why we fail to foster this spirit in our school systems.

Ecologists believe that the earth is not a random number of unrelated particles but an interdependent whole. They look at the world in a wholistic fashion and speak daily of the manifold ramifications of needlessly chopping down a forest, draining a swamp, or spraying agricultural land with poison. They believe that:

Nature is, quite simply, the universal continuum, ourselves inextricably included; it is that which mothered us into existence, which will outsurvive us, and from which we have learned (if we still remember the lesson) our destiny. It is the mirror of our identity. Any cultural goods we produce which sunder themselves from this traditional, lively connection with the non-human, any thinking we do which isolates itself from, or pits itself against the natural environment is--strictly

speaking--a delusion, and a very sick one. Not only because it will lack ecological intelligence, but because, more critically still, it will lack psychological completeness. It will be ignorant of the greatest truth mankind learned from its ancient intimacy with nature: the reality of spiritual being. (Roszak, 1973, p. 7)

Ecologists, in very tangible ways, endeavor to come to terms with this reality.

It is eminently appropriate to use a metaphor of ecological community to emphasize the special relationships that take place in any school setting. Among all disciplines, ecology stands out in its attempt to view the natural arena in a wholistic fashion. It attempts to pull together diverse interests in an integrative manner. The metaphor is more appropriate when one considers the tension that has existed among ecologists "toward the two viewpoints--organismic and individualistic--that ecologists have adopted regarding the nature of communities" (Richardson, 1977, p. 60). This struggle is analogous to the present uneasiness that exists in schools when the banner of individualism is pitted against the cry for the interests of the collectivity.

In this dissertation, I subscribe to the organismic concept championed by F. E. Clements and his followers, rather than the individualistic concept espoused by H. A. Gleason. This stance argues that each community is

integrated so tightly that the whole is not simply the sum of its parts but requires those parts to persist. . . . Proponents of the organismic concept also emphasize the special relationships existing between species in a community, particularly relationships in which

the species derive benefit from one another and appear interdependent. A cohesiveness is implied here, one that suggests that a community is more than just the sum of its parts. (Richardson, 1977, p. 60)

To ignore this cohesiveness is to ignore the innate potentialities of our global interdependence.

Unfortunately, we, as a race, tend to ignore this interconnectedness. We wait for some international catastrophe to startle us from our complacency. The oil crisis of the 1970s is a case in point. At times like these, we tangibly acknowledge the significance of seeking a harmonious relationship with nature rather than seeking a relationship of domination. At times like this, we are forced to consider alternatives that are more ecologically sound.

Nowhere, on our planet, is interdependence and the ecological principle of interrelatedness more important than in the tropics. These regions, which environmentally are among the most fragile and important, are being subjected daily to an onslaught of technological pressure by Western society-- Odum (1983) deplores this arrogant treatment. "One thing is certain: Industrialized agrotechnology of the temperate zone cannot be transferred unmodified to tropical regions" (p. 215). To apply such techniques to the rainforests of the world, without large scale modifications, is a double tragedy. It ignores the complex interrelationships of the most productive terrestrial ecosystem on earth, and it threatens to destabilize our global climatic arrangements.

The complex interrelationships of the rainforests' system for cycling and storing nutrients differs greatly from the system that prevails elsewhere in the world. In the tropics the cycling reservoir for most critical elements is not in the atmosphere and the soil, as elsewhere, but tied up in the biomass itself. It is inextricably caught up in the lushness of the jungle. Much of the nutrient cycling is, in fact, quite independent of the soil. In fact, there are plants that live attached to trees which derive their nutrients from falling vegetation and rainwater caught in their extensive network of aerial roots. Others derive their food supply from the shallow litter layer in mutualistic relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. These fungi, in effect, short circuit the nutrient cycle and pass the elements directly into the plant roots. Often the soils are barren of nutrients, although the luxuriant vegetation disguises this fact successfully. This illusion of fertility has contributed, in no small measure, to Western society's ignorance of the complex mechanisms of interrelationship.

When the colonists first penetrated the Amazon Basin, in the 19th century, they failed to recognize the important interrelationships inherent in this set-up. Drew (1983, pp. 114-117) describes how they systematically exploited the region for lumber and agricultural land, just as they had done to their homelands. They transformed the area from neolithic to modern in an instant. As a result of their

extensive forest clearance, much otherwise productive land had to be abandoned. "When such forests are cleared for agriculture or tree plantations, these mechanisms are destroyed and productivity declines very rapidly, as do crop yields. When abandoned, the forest recovers, slowly, if at all" (Odum, 1983, p. 214). The assault on nature by humanity changed, at breaktaking pace, a highly productive terrestrial ecosystem into a barren wasteland. Today, the assault is not only confined to the land. This lack of awareness of complex interrelationships has potentially profound implications for the world's climates also.

Many of these implications are still at the speculative stage. Their devastating effects can only be fully ascertained over long periods of time, but to close our eyes to these dangers is, I believe, a mistake. Drew (1983) describes "the change in albedo (reflectivity) that would result" (p. 117) as a consequence of replacing tropical forest vegetation with scrub.

The forests reflect back 0.7 percent of solar energy, whereas a barren scrubland would reflect 0.25 percent. A computer study suggests that the surface cooling that would occur, together with decreased evaporation, would lessen the upward rise of air in equatorial regions and so cause cooling in the mid and upper troposphere and with steeper lapse rates prevailing. The model predicts 1.5-2.5 percent more precipitation between latitudes 5-28° north and south, and less precipitation (due to weakened connection) between latitudes 45°-85° north and 40°-60° south. (p. 117)

Although I am skeptical of the use of computer simulations for modeling complex natural phenomena, I am in no doubt

that to ignore the complex mechanisms of interrelationship in the tropical forests, as in the world at large, is to openly invite disaster. Such an attitude denies potential opportunities and profound responsibilities that are uniquely ours.

Society's environmental conscience is served responsibly when people begin to understand the interdependence of self and nature. Unfortunately, Americans of this decade are not wholly united in their concern for this interdependence.

In deciding how to manage a particular tract of roadless wilderness, many will agree with Thoreau that "in wilderness is the preservation of the world," and opt for preserving its wilderness character. Others will agree with then California Governor Reagan's comment (about the redwoods) that "a tree is a tree. Once you've seen one you've seen them all," and support unregulated economic development. These views may be honestly held and they are mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, some basis for a decision must be reached. (Clapham, 1981, p. 405)

The decision-makers can choose to mismanage their environment; however, they cannot prevent the untoward environmental impacts that stem from such mismanagement.

Although the subject of dispute, the environmental impact view of ecosystems has been one attempt to recognize the importance of considering complex interrelationships, when new projects are being proposed at home. Since the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969, the federal government has been required to document all significant environmental impacts of government actions "particularly when the impact is adverse and represents an



irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources" (Clapham, Jr., 1981, p. 402). This section 102 of the law calls for the provision of environmental impact statements.

The success of the environmental impact statement mechanism has been the subject of much controversy. There is evidence that it has been successful in incorporating environmental perspectives into government decision making. There is also evidence that it has had little effect in bringing about change in federal projects. It has also been cited as a disaster to the environmental movement by turning some of its best people to endless bureaucratic paper-pushers. (Clapham, Jr., 1981, p. 402)

Although the effectiveness of the law is much in doubt, I believe that its presence has increased awareness among peoples and contributed positively to a heightened ecological consciousness. Its presence is a daily reminder that we cannot treat the estuaries as junkyards, rape the land, or pollute the streams, without serious repercussions. Tampering with any part of our environment inevitably affects the rest.

Ecologist Barry Commoner (1971) stresses the interdependence of this world and its people in his first law of ecology. "Everything is connected to everything else" (p. 29). He uses the periodic fluctuation of animal populations to illustrate the elaborate network of interconnections that exist in this world.

From trapping records in Canada it is known that the populations of rabbits and lynx follow ten-year fluctuations. When there are many rabbits the lynx prosper; the rising population of lynx increasingly ravages the rabbit population, reducing it, as the latter becomes scarce, there is insufficient food to

support the now numerous lynx; as the lynx begin to die off, the rabbits are less fiercely hunted and increase in number. And so on. These oscillations are built into the operation of the simple cycle, in which the lynx population is positively related to the number of rabbits and the rabbit population is negatively related to the number of lynx. (p. 31)

The complexity of this network is only one of many examples that individual agents are not free to treat the natural world with reckless abandon. The ecological principle of interrelatedness embodies many constraints in the interest of present and future generations and non-human life.

Unfortunately, the spirit of interdependence stressed by ecologists is not fostered in our dealings with the natural world, or in our interpersonal relationships. Instead, the individual as an entity is placed above this spirit of community. It is my belief that three main factors which contribute to this development are the nature of the American character, certain interpretations of the Judeo-Christian ethic, and the technological rationality that pervades our capitalist society.

Part of the problem of lack of consciousness of interdependence lies at the very root of the American character. Historically, this land was settled and continually repopulated by a people who sought to get ahead in the world. These people fled their homelands, forsaking family and friends, in search of a new and better life. Slater (1976) attributes the fact that America was disproportionately populated with a certain kind of people to a type of "natural

selection" (p. 20). He believes that we have continued to stress the positive aspects of this selection without facing the stern realities. Although these people were energetic, mobile, daring, and optimistic, they "valued money over relationship [and] . . . put self-aggrandizement ahead of love and loyalty" (p. 20). Instead of leaning on, sharing and cooperating with one's neighbor, these people perfected avoiding, escaping, and evading. This consciousness centered on the truth of individual effort and the hope of the American dream. Much of the consciousness of America of the 1780s exists today in the 1980s.

The America of the 1780s represented a new beginning and each newly-arrived immigrant was the source of his or her own achievement and fulfillment. In many ways the new American had an idealistic view of this limitless land. Released from the rigid social customs and hierarchies of their native lands, they looked to their new land for richness and power. This belief in self-interest led to a measure of corruption in the American character. Reich (1971) describes this trait:

There was another side to the American character--the harsh side of self-interest, competitiveness, suspicion of others. Each individual would go it alone, refusing to trust his neighbors, seeing another man's advantage as his loss, seeing the world as a rat race with no rewards to losers. Underlying this attitude was the assumption that "human nature" is fundamentally bad, and that a struggle against his fellow men is man's natural condition. (p. 23)

The opposition to one's fellow man was not the only struggle. For the early settlers, life was also a struggle against nature, which was seen as the ultimate enemy.

A large part of the consciousness of the early Americans exists today: Nature at that time was seen as "beautiful but must be conquered and put to use" (Reich, 1971, p. 24). These early settlers were unaware of their interdependence with the world around them. They believed, instead, that the earth belonged to "the living, and that they need not be bound by traditions, customs, or authority from other lands" (p. 21). America was for their use and no higher community existed beyond an individual selfish appraisal of interests. Much of the consciousness of the early Americans lives on in the 1980s. Daily we become excited at rising Gross National Product, increased efficiency, and "high-tech" superiority. We forget that these benefits are bought at the expense of the treatment of human beings, their labor, and the world around them as expendable commodities that can be exploited and traded for monetary gain.

The Judeo-Christian notion, which is prevalent in American society, selectively stresses that man has been placed in a world designed for his benefit. This idea of man in the world has been fostered by a limited interpretation of the biblical description. In this interpretation, man who was created in the image of God is believed to have domination over the world.

God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

This idea of human beings as supreme custodians of the earth emphasizes the gulf between human beings and their external world. It contributes negatively to a spirit of interdependence.

White (1967) goes farther. He contends that the "distinctive attitudes towards nature which are deeply grounded in Christian dogma" (p. 1207) not only contribute negatively to a spirit of interdependence, but are at the very root of our ecological crisis. He sees the belief that the whole natural order was created for a humanity who shares in the transcendent nature of God as most damaging. Similar doctrines implicit in Western interpretation of Genesis are taken by White as justification for modern technology's "ruthlessness towards nature" (p. 1205).

He traces the rise of modern science and technology from the Europe of the 16th and 17th centuries. It was small wonder, White contends, that the natural world came under attack at this time. Christianity had recently overcome paganism and with this victory evolved a new order. "The spirits in natural objects, which formerly had protected nature from man, evaporated. Man's effective monopoly on spirit in this world was confirmed, and the old inhibitions to the exploration of nature crumbled" (White, 1967, p. 1205).

No longer were there souls in mountain, brook, or stream. In fact, "by destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects" (p. 1205). Independence and domination were the order of the day. There was no place for interdependence of mutuality in this new ethic.

This spiritual distancing of people from nature, which White sees as lying at the very root of our ecological crisis, has been carried over into other areas of Western thought. The relationship of individuals with nature is mirrored in the relationships which exist between individuals in this technological society. Just as nature is seen as an enemy to be fought, subdued, and overcome, so also our fellow humans are seen as forces to be fought, subdued, or overcome. This attitude contributes negatively to a spirit of interdependence.

Other writers, who, with White, denounce the deterioration of the natural world, deplore his attempt to blame the Judeo-Christian ethic for precipitating this crisis. Lutz (1972) surmises that "perhaps the environmental crisis is so acute on the continent of North America because of economic or political or legal reasons and only coincidentally because of the influence of Christianity" (p. xv). He contends that the Bible gives "a very clear mandate from God that environmental care, stewardship of His creation, and responsible usage of the earth's resources are of the essence of man's

role. Anything short of treating nature in this manner is sinful" (Lutz, 1972, p. xvi). He affirms the need for an ecological theology that recognizes the interdependence of all creation as fellow citizens of God's earth.

Bonifazi (1970) in This Little Planet violently opposes any anthropocentric Biblical emphasis. In an attempt to oppose the devaluation of the natural world, he points to the central religious concept of Incarnation as a profound example of the interdependence of people and their world. The religion of the incarnate word "wished to affirm that the God who is personal Love is indissolubly united not only with the human race, but also with the entire universe of matter" (p. 206). Just as the inhabitants of the earth are intimately connected with the living earth,

Earth's relationship to man is not that of a dead mass to living beings; the earth is partner in a covenant relationship which is not invariably dominated from the human side. (Bonifazi, 1970, p. 210)

It is my belief that this interpretation of the Bible, in which interdependence is not highlighted, meets the peculiar purposes of this dominant technological society. Modern America does not experience itself as a part of nature for, in so doing, there would exist the possibility of evolving a new life style, a new social order, and new patterns of production and consumption. Our capitalist society has no vested interest in such a transformation.

It is my contention that the technological rationality that pervades our capitalist society is the greatest

contributor to the lack of an ecological consciousness of interdependence. Modern society has built a system of scientific and technical production of immeasurable proportions. This system is accompanied by a particular outlook on life. The technological rationality, which permeates American capitalism, looks at the world positivistically and eliminates completely any spirit of interdependence. This is an utmost necessity if the present economic and social arrangements are to be kept in place.

Marcuse (1964) describes this climate of positivism, which maintains the status quo, in One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society. He contends that this positivism, which applies scientific principle to social conditions systematically, is a rationality of domination. In this society, human beings do not attempt to go beyond observable and measurable facts. This advance of science has not only affected theoretical views of society, but the practical arena of social structures and social relations as well. Marcuse believes that this way of perceiving the world eliminates the capacity of individuals to form and reform their social relations. Consequently, modern society is alienated and isolated, while establishing a strictly detached, technical, and objective knowledge base. In so doing, all personal dimensions of knowledge are eliminated and the human craving for interdependence discouraged. Criticism of the social and economic relations of this arrangement ceases to exist.



Philosopher and social theorist Marcuse believes that this spirit of positivism is no accident of fate. He has been most perceptive in revealing the subtle psychic stratagems used by corporate and state elites to foster this climate and cover up the discomfort of the resultant feelings of one-dimensionality. He offers an insightful critique of the many subliminal techniques of persuasion which are used to make the status quo seem as the only viable solution to our problems. These techniques include advertising, mass media, and public relations operations. They have a common denominator. All reduce humanity to a single dimension. There is no place, in this dimension, for the principle of interrelatedness.

The individual, in this society, becomes the helpless one-dimensional victim of astringent ideological pressures. He or she becomes totally annulled and "integrated into a repressive set of productive relations" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133). Marcuse sees repressive desublimation as part of the psychological underpinnings of this one-dimensionality. His theory views "all mental capacities as developing and taking shape in direct response to and conformity with social pressures and social requirements" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 184). Marcuse sees one-dimensional thought occurring as a direct result or reaction to a one-dimensional technical world.

Marcuse recognizes technology to be a crucial feature of every modern society. Capitalism, National Socialism,

and Soviet totalitarianism, he contends, have all held this technical base in common. Even though politically and ideologically there may be vast differences, in Marcuse's eyes, all these regimes have a similar social mentality. This technological mentality has resulted in perfect domination in each case. He argues that, at the more advanced stages of capitalism, society becomes totally enclosed and exhibits the following characteristics:

1. all material and intellectual sectors of the society are organized to conform to a central ideological dynamic, a repressive rationality of material productivity;
2. all structural contradictions and antagonisms can be managed and contained, perhaps indefinitely;
3. individual hopes, needs, fears, and aspirations are scientifically determined and coordinated with the society as a whole;
4. the great majority of people are comfortable, enjoy and are completely unaware of being manipulated, such that a smooth, efficient, nonterroristic, and democratic unfreedom prevails;
5. absolutely no genuine and effective opposition to the social order is discernible;
6. qualitative change can be prevented for the foreseeable future;
7. critical discussion, where it occurs, is shaped by and limited to the norms of the established social system;
8. tendencies eventually come to dominate that extinguish the vital mental space for the development of individual autonomy and critical capacities;
9. alienation among men, of man from nature, and from his labor has become total; and

10. the entirety of social relations has been hammered into a totally administered, completely integrated, perfectly uniform, pleasant, and hermetically sealed existence to which there is no challenge and from which there is no escape. (Schoolman, 1980, pp. 132-133)

At this stage, the state becomes totally assimilated "to the universal rationality of technics" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 149) and depends, for its stability, on the "effectiveness of technical reason" (p. 149). At this stage, all sectors of society conform to the demands of technical logic.

School systems, in large measure, have assimilated this technical logic and depend for their stability, also, on the demands of technical logic. Unfortunately, there is no place in this mentality for the inclusion of a spirit of cooperation and interdependence.

Why do students buy into the isolation of this social world when there is such an obvious need for human connection? The concept of hegemony offers an answer. This construct implies that the fundamental patterns in society, as in schools, are held together by tacit ideological assumptions. These rules, beliefs, and moral and aesthetic judgments, which are not usually conscious, serve to organize and legitimize the interactions of individuals. Unfortunately, there is little place in this hegemony for the celebration of interrelatedness.

Phenomenological sociology has asserted that there is no "out there" social world. Two of its most distinguished

proponents, Berger and Luckman (1967), in The Social Construction of Reality, remind us that all our institutions, including marriage, schools, and family are part of a socially constructed network. But, more important, he who decides the reality is he who holds the power. This unalterable reality, this hegemony, is created and recreated, daily, in our classrooms. This reality of everyday life becomes a taken-for-granted reality. It is fixed, unchangeable, and unproblematic. If in doubt individuals are expected to suspend their doubt and continue with the routine of living. In so doing, they unwittingly, for the most part, join in the deception while buying into notions that the dominant ideology holds dear.

Goodlad's (1984) 8-year investigation of 38 of America's public schools is the most recent extensive report on the state of education in the United States. The report points to the prevalence of the technological mentality of the dominant ideology. In A Place Called School Goodlad stresses the depth and pervasiveness of the "explicit and the implicit curriculum" (p. 197) and questions throughout this report "whether or not what these schools appear to be teaching is what they should teach" (p. 198). He points to the gap that exists between our highly idealistic rhetoric and the practices condoned and supported in our schools. In fact, he looks on the norms and values of the technological mentality, that are taught, as the critical issues of American

education. However, the popular issues of raised SAT scores, merit pay for teachers, or "back to the basics" are the concerns with more media appeal. He stresses the need to restructure our entire educational system.

If we approach the challenge as most nations, including our own, have approached wars, for example--with the expectation of winning, despite the formidable difficulties, I remain optimistic, perhaps because there is to me a contradiction in being simultaneously pessimistic and an educator. Whatever our individual experiences with a place called school, to think seriously about education conjures up intriguing possibilities both for schooling and a way of life as yet scarcely tried. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 361)

To think seriously about education also involves the dispelling of many myths that, of necessity, surround this dominant technological Rationality.

In schools the prevalent fictions which reinforce the universal technical rationality are those which characterize any "unauthentic" community. Daily these elements contribute, often at an unconscious level, to the maintenance of a consciousness that negates interdependence. These myths are:

1. Human nature is innately wicked.
2. God, if He exists, is repressive.
3. Freedom is understood individualistically.
4. Human beings are not born equal.
5. No real fraternity exists.
6. The value of work and knowledge is decreed from the outside.
7. Love is patronizing. There is no real affirmation of self or others.

Each myth is considered separately in order to understand how schooling has embodied the technical rationality. It is assumed "that understanding schools is prerequisite to improving them" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 17). This examination is much indebted to the Goodlad study.

Human nature is innately wicked. In educational settings this belief increases the sense of anxiety, powerlessness, and insignificance of the student and leaves him or her capable of unconditional acceptance of the meanings "hopes, needs, fears, and aspirations" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 132) of a "scientifically determined" (p. 132) society. In schools children learn the fixed rules of this society. These rules have no place for human beings as intensely significant creators--free agents who make choices and act upon their world. Goodlad (1983) sees

little in the curriculum, explicit or implicit, likely to promote keen awareness of humanity. . . . Particularly lacking in our data is anything to suggest the deliberate involvement of students in making moral judgments and in understanding the difference between these and decisions based on scientific fact. (p. 242)

Schools, he suggests, have little place for the affirmation of moral judgments, critical awareness, or creativity. They are places of flat, atemporal existence. They lack the joy that comes from a powerful sense of wholeness and humanity.

Goodlad deplores the lack of wholeness which is characteristic of most classroom life. But most of all, he deplores the rationality that believes

that human existence can be segmented, that part of it can be left outside the classroom door. The whole come together again in hallways, on the playground, and off the school site. But to bring the whole person into the classroom and to attempt to deal with him or her there, in large numbers, is to threaten the very existence of this partial ecosystem, which is neither abrasive nor uncomfortable. Deviant behavior, such as excessive fear or unbridled laughter, might destroy the balance. (Goodlad, 1983, p. 243)

He makes a passionate plea for raising, to consciousness, issues that have great potential for the interpretation and transformation of this world--a world which lacks the intense significance of the humanity of each.

One can see how the circumstances of schooling inhibit movement, small group work, and even overt expressions of joy, anger, and other feelings. It is far more difficult to understand the relative paucity of vicarious experiences designed to connect students in some more passionate and compassionate way with the wholeness of human existence and especially with such existential qualities as hope, courage, and love of human-kind. These qualities are portrayed particularly through the humanities and especially through literature--myths and fairytales, novels, drama, and poetry. These early years of schooling appear to me to be shockingly devoid of fairytales, with their extraordinary ability to symbolize through dragons, heroes, and caring for another the challenges, problems, and opportunities life presents. There are dragons yet to slay--poverty, disease, senseless violence, and prejudice, to name only a few. (Goodlad, 1983, p. 243)

Unfortunately, society at large has a vested interest in the suppression of these "dragons" and the maintenance of the dominant technical rationality.

God is repressive. In educational settings, children learn that situations are predetermined from above and things are unalterable. They become aware, at an early age, that some "overwhelmingly strong power" (Fromm, 1969, p. 260) is

in charge. This unbearable situation offers limited opportunities for transformation so students become urgently involved in frantic activity instead. The assumption of predestination serves the purposes of the dominant rationality of technics most effectively for:

- absolutely no genuine and effective opposition to the social order is discernible;
- qualitative change can be prevented for the foreseeable future
- critical discussion, where it occurs, is shaped by and limited to the norms of the established social system. (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133)

In this system students learn when to question, when discussion is permitted, and, more importantly, how to avoid conflict.

Schools are not places which embrace wholeheartedly the literature of anger, struggle, or revolution of oppressed peoples, for society has a vested interest in quietening the murmurings of change. Bateman (1978) reminds us of this fact.

One could cite William Butler Yeats's poem about the Easter Rebellion in Ireland in 1916, a poem that is read frequently in school. What was a matter of life and death to thousands of peasants and workers is reduced in the poem to an aesthetic moment in which Yeats says, "A terrible beauty is born." It does not matter who wins or loses, whether the political ideas are right or wrong, but "whether individual heroism and aesthetic beauty are the products of their struggle." How different this poem is, that leads us away from the harsh verities of revolutionary struggle as perceived by a member of the aristocracy, from Bertolt Brecht's poem "To Posterity," which is never read in school. Brecht after hitting hard at the details of the personal



sacrifice of revolutionary combat, ends his poem "by looking ahead with absolute confidence to a time after the revolution, when people will have changed, when circumstances will have ceased to require that there be as hard and purposeful as they needed to be. This is what is important to him, that the quality of life will change, and that people will cease to have to be deformed by their environment. (Bateman, 1978, pp. 161-162)

It is little wonder that radical literature is censored. It does not have as its fundamental purposes the making of personalities that fit the existing society. It encourages a dialectic between the individual and the environment. It might even put students in touch with their developing visions. Their world might seem merely limiting and therefore worthy of challenging. The dominant ideology of capitalist society does not welcome this challenge.

Freedom is understood individualistically. In educational settings this belief is characterized by a complete surrender of the individual into the new dependencies and conformities of the classroom situation. Not only do schools produce these behaviors but they strongly support

"right" answers, conforming, and reproducing the known. These behaviors are reinforced daily by the physical restraints of the group and classroom, by the kinds of questions teachers ask, by the nature of the seatwork exercises assigned, and by the format of tests and quizzes. They are further reinforced by the nature of the rewards--particularly the subtleties of implicitly accepting "right" answers and behaviors while ignoring or otherwise rejecting "wrong" or deviant ones. Only in the "less important" subjects and the advanced sections or academic courses are there evidences of some significant cultivation and reinforcement of more creative or intellectually independent behaviors. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 241)

These behaviors may smother young minds but they perform a useful function. They successfully eliminate the struggle for "authentic" freedom and leave the student with a sense of false security. Schoolman (1980) describes this mentality. "The great majority of people are comfortable, enjoy and are completely unaware of being manipulated, such that a smooth efficient, nonterroristic, and democratic unfreedom prevails" (p. 132). There is no challenge to the status quo.

McCarthy (1980), in "Why Johnny Can't Disobey," attests that schools have a similar plan. Their goal is to produce "quiet submissive children" (p. 38)--children who do not threaten the established order. She recalls the Milgram experiments at Yale University in the 1960s to show how quickly we, as a people, buy into the mechanism of unquestioned obedience.

Henry (1970) believes that "every culture has its own way of creating the mechanism of docility" (p. 241). His personal research has led him to describe the docility of school rooms as "a kind of cloying paralysis, a sweet imprisonment without pain" (p. 249). He feels that this conformity "is not based on authoritarian control backed by fear of corporal punishment, but rather on fear of loss of love" (p. 249). The subordinate in this relationship, as in all "unauthentic" community, eliminates conspicuous suffering and associates "love" with being caught or blocked in the desire for true freedom. There is no hope of escape from

this silent unhappiness without major transformation of the dominant technical rationality.

Human beings are not born equal. This myth is perpetuated daily in our school systems. From their earliest school days, children learn that there are classroom norms. The person who is well adapted to these norms is seen as more valuable, while the student who is not as well adapted assumes the stigma of being less valuable. This myth justifies the necessity of reading groups, tracking, and classes for the gifted and talented. In school, as in life, "tendencies eventually come to dominate that extinguish the vital mental space for the development of [the] individual autonomy and critical capacities" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133) of some. These students are being prepared for lives of conformity, obedience, docility, and the routine of their future employment in a one-dimensional technological society. Others, whom society deems as successful, are being tracked towards lives of autonomy, initiative, personal assertiveness, and creativity. Unfortunately, the successful are usually of the same class, color, and sex.

This wretched arrangement is deplored by Goodlad (1983). He describes how some are favored at the expense of their peers.

There appear to be in our data, then, clear evidence of tracking's differentiating students in regard to their access to knowledge, and, further, doing so disproportionately for minority students, especially poor minority students as compared with white students. (pp. 156-157)

He regrets the fact that those who have savored failure for years have begun to believe their inadequacies. Goodlad contends that all students do not have equal opportunities for "all come to school with varying degrees" (p. 158) of cultural capital. Unfortunately, this plays a significant part in their future schooling for "attainment is influenced by the advantages children carry into school from their homes" (p. 158). He sees the situation as part of a larger socioeconomic problem.

Schools mirror inequities in the surrounding society and many people want to be sure that they continue to do so. Consequently, it is not easy to adjust inequities inside of schools. There is in the gap between our highly idealistic goals for schooling in our society and the differentiated opportunities condoned and supported in schools a monstrous hypocrisy. (p. 161)

However, these "idealistic goals" act as an effective smoke screen to mask the real inequities that exist.

No real fraternity exists. As schools daily legitimate the dominant ideology of capitalist society, students become more alienated, isolated, and disconnected. They feel more like objects than like people. As such they can be sieved, sorted, and categorized for the limited places on the academic hierarchy. Although this life of total alienation, lack of connectedness, and despair is acutely destructive both to the student and to the community at large, it is a characteristic of the dominant rationality of modern society. "Alienation among men, of man from nature, and from his

labor has become total" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133). This alienation assures that the students neither give nor gain strength from their solidarity, their interrelatedness, their interdependence. It keeps them truly unempowered and unable to deal critically and creatively with their worlds.

Goodlad (1984) finds the lack of a consciousness that promotes fraternity most obviously in the teaching of social studies and science.

One finds little of activities likely to promote an understanding of the basic interdependence of the biological and physical resources of the environment or of the manner in which heritages and traditions of the past are operative today and influence the directions and values of society. Yet it is to goals such as these that such subjects supposedly are to be committed. (p. 236)

He finds little evidence of any spirit of cooperation that is based on respect, trust, or personal caring.

There is little to convey the legitimacy of students helping each other with their individual assignments. Rather, our data suggest that to seek help is to run the risk of "cheating" and to give help is to give away some of whatever competitive edge one enjoys. The most charitable view one could have of this is that schools do not deliberately seek to promote antisocial behavior. On the other hand they appear to do little to promote the prosocial behavior many of our goals for schools espouse. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 241)

On the contrary, schools thrive on competition.

Slater (1976) links this competitiveness of schools to our technological society. One of the major goals of modern-day technology, he contends, "is to 'free' us from the necessity of relating to, submitting, to, depending upon" (p. 34) other people. Unfortunately, the more we have

perfected this art, the more "we have felt disconnected, bored, lonely, unprotected, unnecessary and unsafe" (p. 34). Unfortunately, these feelings are very evident in our classrooms.

An individual, like a group, is a motley collection of ambivalent feelings, contradictory needs and values, and antithetical ideas. He is not and cannot be, monolithic and the modern effort to pretend otherwise is not only delusional and ridiculous, but also acutely destructive, both to the individual and to society (p. 36)

Those that accept the myth of the individual as monolithic legitimate the claims of the powerful to their exalted position on life's hierarchy.

Goodlad (1984) finds some evidence of teamwork and cooperation in the physical education programs of schools but even these

activities were pervaded by stress on competition. My argument is not against competition. It is against the near-absence of anything designed to deliberately cultivate the values and skills of constructive social interaction and group accomplishments which we extoll as a characteristic of our people but neglect in the breach. (p. 241)

The rhetoric we extoll does not meet the aims of our one-dimensional technical world.

The value of work and knowledge is decreed from the outside. This myth is perpetuated daily by school work that frequently obscures or misses the first order meaning structures of lived educational experience. Instead it concentrates on the second order structure of facts, generalizations, laws, and theories. It does this in the name of

"objectivity." In so doing, it rejects subjective and personal constructions of knowledge. These constructions would provide students with an opportunity, firsthand, to come to some understanding of the interrelatedness of their world of being, the lived world of people. These constructions would firmly locate students in the process of inquiry within the larger possible realm of meaningful experience. The dominant ideology of capitalist society has no interest in this location. "All material and intellectual sectors of the society are organized to conform to a central ideological dynamic, a repressive rationality of material productivity" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133). The dominant ideology has no interest in situating the student in the subjective roots of the classroom experience for this knowledge would give energy to the lived experience and threaten the very relationship of the person to the closed system that is called "school." This would challenge an important characteristic of our technical rationality.

The entirety of social relations has been hammered into a totally administered, completely integrated, perfectly uniform, pleasant, and hermetically sealed existence to which there is no challenge and from which there is no escape. (Schoolman, 1980, p. 133)

The status quo depends on this uniform closed system for its continuance and stability.

Education is indeed a closed system where goals and objectives are stated, selected, and sequenced. Goodlad (1984) finds the medical model of diagnosis, prescription,

and treatment much in evidence. In fact, the culture of positivism which is characterized by a preponderance of mechanistic, technological teaching, and learning situations is very much the order of the day. The wide acceptance of empirical research, the bell-shaped curve, and predictability leaves schools in the business of processing people and knowledge, and school children come to believe that their place in society comes justly by a tight formula.

Merit = Intelligence + Effort

This is just not the case. Rather, the socioeconomic realities are predicated on schools producing their large share of failures. In the present system there is not "room at the top" for all.

There appears to be little to debate in the observations that schools reflect the surrounding social and economic order. Likewise it seems obvious that the home, in spite of its steadily declining influence, advantages or disadvantages the child in enormously significant ways--especially the acquisition of language, attitudes towards others, social and economic values, physical stamina, health habits, and the like. The school, with its small percentage of time available, can seek realistically only to modify or shape slightly the areas of home dominance and to be of greater influence in just a few selected areas. Also it can seek, deliberately and consciously, to avoid reinforcing inequities inherent in the role of the home. This last is not easy because teachers reflect their status in the culture. Consequently, if the school is to be anything other than a perpetuator of whatever exists in the society, states and local school districts must set--if they have a mind to--school policies that to some degree transcend and minimize the role of the classroom as reproducer of the culture. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 161)

At the present time, this would mean an enormous upheaval in our thinking about the nature of school work and knowledge.



Love is patronizing. There is no real affirmation of self or others. The flat, unemotional process of schooling perpetuates this myth about the nature of "authentic" love. The students find security and comfort in being protected, cared for, and often controlled by a system that keeps them from real empowerment--a system wherein "all structural contradictions and antagonisms can be managed and contained indefinitely" (Schoolman, 1980, p. 132). This system, on occasion, introduces benign notions of "Sharing" and "Cooperation" into the process. In fact, there is just enough cooperation to make the institutional package more palatable but "never so much that it will threaten the system in any fundamental way" (Shapiro, 1985, p. 28). It is just enough, nevertheless, to assuage the vague guilt about our insensitivity, indifference, and lack of "authentic" love for others.

Goodlad (1984) finds the lack of affirmation of self and others prevalent in the responses of American school children.

There was little about human relationships in the form of statements either about satisfaction in working with others or about learning the ways of other people. One might have expected the latter in a course entitled "Our Modern World," but it was dates, places, political entities, and the names of leaders of the French Revolution that students reported. (p. 234)

This lack of affirmation of self and others produced students whose responses were vague and flat.

There was, in general a lack of intensity--and particularly pleasure, enthusiasm, or sheer fun--in what students said about their classes. For many, it

appeared, even being asked to respond to a question about the most important thing they had learned in a class came as a surprise. They often answered this question very much as they might answer a question about their country's major cities--as if the subject was something just beyond their domains of real interest and involvement. (Goodlad, 1984, p. 235)

Life, for these students, was totally removed from world, people, and "authentic" love. It was about isolation.

This dissertation is about wholeness: a wholeness that recognizes the futility of living lives of isolation; a wholeness that sees the individual in dialectic relationship to society; a wholeness that criticizes the existing order in the service of a higher unity. Thankfully, and perhaps increasingly, many individuals lend their voices to such criticism.

Americans, as a matter of dread biological necessity, have begun to visualize another way. Threatened daily by the blighting of the atmosphere, death of the oceans, and the horrors of a thermonuclear armageddon, they have begun to develop a consciousness more appropriate to these stern realities. As life has become increasingly more complex and more alienating, many powerful human forces have grown in intensity. The desire for a cooperative life style, the desire for real democratic arrangements, the desire for ecological awareness, have emerged as appealing concerns. "The most seductive appeal of radical ideologies for Americans consist in the fact that all in one way or another attack the competitive foundations of our society" (Slater,

1976, p. 17). The new consciousness recognizes that our world and our people are interdependent. They can only pretend not to be.

One of those who provides the shrewdest critiques of our alienated existence and the brightest hope for living a life of solidarity is Pierre de Chardin (1964). His book, The Future of Man, expresses passionately a vision of unity which, for me, firmly establishes the individual in the larger social order. He sees humanity as cells in a greater organism which is slowly moving towards the ultimate reality, the Omega Point. The work superbly captures the joy and hope in life and gives existence a meaning and possibility. He envisions a state of interrelatedness which he terms "complexity consciousness" (p. 231). He describes this condition:

The whole process takes on a convergent aspect: the phenomenon of man, seen in its entirety, appears to flow towards a critical point of maturation, (and perhaps even of psychic withdrawal) corresponding to the concentration of collective reflection at a single center embracing all the individual units of reflection upon earth. (de Chardin, 1964, p. 231)

For the non-Christian his proposition rests here, for the Christian he goes beyond this earthly realm. Because it is my belief that the spiritual energy of religious renewal provides the greatest hope of sociological regeneration, de Chardin's final proposition is of great personal significance.

He pictures the church as neither an epi- nor a para-phenomenon in the growth of the Human Social Organism. He contends, rather, that it constitutes the very Axis (or Nucleus) about which it forms. He bases this belief on the doctrine of the mystical body.

The belief that the human individual cannot perfect himself or fully exist except through the organic unification of all men in God is essential and fundamental to Christian doctrine. (de Chardin, 1964, p. 232)

This doctrine arouses an awareness in all of us of our spiritual interdependence while, at the same time, giving rise to a desire for reason and action. It inspires us "with a fundamental sense of obligation and a precise system of moral tendencies" (de Chardin, 1964, p. 234). It provides justification and sustenance in matters of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It offers alternative arrangements for the survival of the human race.

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