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Editorial

The LaGuardia Review is intended chiefly as a channel for communication and exchange of ideas among the LaGuardia faculty. The editorial board welcomes articles designed to stimulate our further understanding of the process and product of urban education. George Groman, Chairperson of LaGuardia's Language and Culture division noted of our first issue:

“If the tone of these essays seems urgent, even strident, it is also clear that the writers feel deeply about education and what it is yet to accomplish.”

We are not a journal for specialists. Rather, we seek dialogue on those aspects of our disciplines reflecting common tasks faced by all in an urban college amidst challenging populations during a desperate times.

LaGuardia Community College has been, during its relatively short existence, committed to the investigation of new modes of teaching and learning. It is a college committed also to the notion that teaching and learning occur in an arena wider than the classroom.

Some will ask “Why a faculty journal during a time of fiscal crisis?” A recent New York Times story marvelled over the rise of journals, films and literary criticism in the blighted city of Calcutta. Indian journalists indicated their creative output emerged not in spite of but because of the challenges and obstacles presented them in that neglected city.

The LaGuardia Review is one response to the sense of fragmented communication experienced by some faculty members at a community college. We believe an occasional whistle blast declaring “whence we have come and whither we are tending” essential for furthering faculty growth and development.

The editorial board welcomes all our colleagues to these pages. We are enriched by their work. Our survival will require an ever widening circle of friends from all segments of the College.

John David Cato
COLLEGE AS A MORAL COMMUNITY

C. Freeman Sleeper

This paper focuses on an essential but often neglected role which a college plays in society—namely, as a community which shapes the capacity for making moral decisions.

I have chosen to use the term “college” rather than “university” in order to deal with the diversity of higher education in America. From Flexner to Barzun to Talcott Parsons, there is ample evidence that the university has been a vital model and has, in fact, become the dominant one on the American scene. On the other hand, as Jencks and Riesman pointed out in their study of THE ACADEMIC REVOLUTION, to concentrate exclusively on the university is to overlook some of the other urgent issues in higher education. My concern here is with “college,” that is, with undergraduate education, particularly with the community colleges—which have become such a large and important sector of education within the past decade.

I have also chosen to focus on public higher education. It is clear that public institutions must perform a very direct set of services for the society. In terms of sex and drugs, if nothing else, there is a public awareness that colleges are somehow bound up with transmitting the moral standards of the society. It is also clear that public colleges must be more responsive to public demands and pressures, although I will not be able to explore this other dimension. They are more vulnerable to the political and economic whims of local or statewide constituencies. In principle, the same issues can be raised for the private sector, but that is not my main concern.

This paper has three sections. In the first, I want to suggest a typology for identifying areas of moral concern on campus. In the second, I want to look at some of the broader social trends which impinge on college life. By beginning in this way, I want to claim that there is a strong empirical basis for asserting that moral choices are forced on a college, both internally and externally. Without recognizing this dimension, we cannot have an adequate view either of higher education or of its role in society. The final section looks at some of the ways of approaching this topic, from a variety of disciplines, and suggests a thesis for further investigation.

MORAL ISSUES ON CAMPUS

Warren Bryan Martin, in an article on “The Ethical Crisis in Education,” gives a number of specific examples of decay in the groves of academe. In this first section, I will use his article as a starting point for developing a typology of the major areas in which moral dilemmas arise on campus. Without claiming that this typology is complete, I do think it can help us to understand the kind of issues which confront a college with the task of being a moral community.

(1) Martin gives several examples of FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY: e.g., the use of government loans and work study funds. Obviously, this is a major concern for public institutions, which must not only account for the use of funds but must evaluate program effectiveness, measure faculty performance, and maximize new opportunities for learning (to use the current jargon.). Given these pressures, it is no wonder that the bulk of administrative time is spent deciding not what to do, but how to do it. In good bureaucratic fashion, the most important concerns are at the levels of strategies and tactics (i.e., management), while the quality of the enterprise remains amazingly elusive. It is small wonder that much of the recent literature in higher education has dealt with this theme of accountability, but without exploring the broader ethical dimensions of that term.

(2) A second area is what I would call ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY. Martin mentions such matters as cheating and plagiarism; the obligation of faculty to give students a fair idea of their chances of job placement; a criticism of cheap degree programs. There are clearly many other issues which might be raised in this area; but I would simply affirm Martin’s central point that our greatest need in higher education is academic integrity, in the sense of conceptual clarity about our organizing principle. Whether or not we accept his distinction between “academic” and “educational” institutions, we need to engage in that process of institutional self-definition. I am arguing that “moral community” needs to be one component of that definition.

(3) Martin also refers to what I want to distinguish as PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. He specifies “threats to faculty integrity—those caused by administrative centralization, professorial cynicism, and intimidation by students” (p. 32), in addition to an underlying despair about the lack of an educational or social philosophy. This category can be extended in a number of ways. Many of the current discussions of teaching styles are, at heart, ethical dilemmas. For example, what are the secondary effects of learning through computer-assisted instruction? Conversely, what is a faculty’s responsibility toward a colleague who intimidates students in ways that may damage their personalities or their careers? This notion of professional responsibility also broadens out to look at research and the limitations placed on it by institutions, by professional associations, and by funding agencies. Finally, it includes the role of faculty and administrators in their non-academic capacities as consultants, practitioners, civil servants, and the like.

(4) In addition to these three areas, I want to suggest three other categories of moral decision-making not included in Martin’s analysis. One is THE QUALITY OF CAMPUS LIFE, an area which is usually delegated to the Student Affairs staff but which bears upon the instructional program as well. I refer not only to the perennial questions about regulating student behavior—sex, drink, and drugs—but to all of the other factors which set the campus ethos. What intellectual and cultural resources are provided? How do they reflect the kind of educational process to which the institution gives lip service? What social resources are available, particularly for minority students and commuting students, and what is implied about our educational commitment to those students?

(5) Fifth in my catalogue is an area which I designate as PERSONAL RIGHTS. To some extent, this overlaps with categories previously mentioned, but it brings together a set of issues which are fairly clearly defined, technical, and troublesome. Most traditional questions of academic freedom belong here. So also does a question such as the confidentiality of student records, which has been brought into focus recently by federal legislation. Certain personnel issues, such as affirmative action or due process in dismissing an employee, also fall into this category. The way these issues are handled re-
reflects the moral climate on any given campus.

Finally, colleges are involved in a variety of ways in PUBLIC POLICY issues. This is apparent on those policy issues directly affecting higher education. On these matters of self-interest, colleges have not hesitated to play the lobbying game, not always very successfully. Within their local communities, colleges have often had a significant impact, whether deliberate or not, on patterns of housing, schools, and health services. Usually, colleges have not seen this as a legitimate area of responsibility, except as individual faculty and students have been involved in formulating public policy through their research or their service activities. Nevertheless, it remains an area in which ethical issues can and should be raised, out of self-interest if for no other reason.

My purpose in suggesting this typology has been to identify the areas which concern a college as a moral community. The six areas, again, are: (1) fiscal and administrative responsibility; (2) academic responsibility; (3) professional responsibility; (4) quality of campus life; (5) personal rights; and (6) public policy. Problems in all six of these areas arise on our campuses all the time. Usually they are dealt with routinely, by people who do not reflect on the ethical implications of the routine. The way in which the problems are handled, however, tells us something about the underlying moral commitment of the institution. Periods of turmoil expose those commitments and demand that they be clarified, but most colleges are ill equipped to handle that kind of process. In other words, it is easier for them to act IMPLICITLY. In good Socratic fashion, one of the roles of a sensitive teacher is to help to make those commitments explicit.

COLLEGE AND THE CHANGING SOCIAL CONTEXT

The current debate about the future of liberal education makes it clear that part of our dilemma has been forced upon us by a changing social context. For the past two years, I have been involved in some major writing projects to contribute to that debate. In this section, I can offer only a brief summary of five major social trends directly affecting collegiate education.

The empirical data and the examples to support these trends are voluminous, but there is not space to include them here.

(1) The ECONOMIC PINCH, through a combination of rising prices, declining enrollments, and budget deficits by state and local governments, is the trend which causes most of us the immediate concern. For public institutions, it is usually not a matter of survival but of cutbacks in the size and quality of programs. Based on enrollment projections, we can expect this retrenchment to last for approximately the next fifteen years.

(2) A second major trend has been toward EQUAL ACCESS to higher education. The data is overwhelming.

(a) The percent of the population, ages 18 to 21, attending college has jumped from 1.7% in 1870 to 7.9% in 1920, 26.9% in 1950, to 47.6% in 1970. By the year 2000, projections are that as many as 72% of that age bracket will attend college.

(b) The number of community colleges nearly doubled between 1960, when there were 656, to approximately 1200 in 1975. They now enroll about 40% of all college undergraduates.

(c) The percentage of college students attending public institutions has risen from 64% in 1961 to 75% in 1971, and may go to 83% in 1981.

Patricia Cross, in particular, has written of the "new students" who compose the changing clientele of higher education: women; minorities; adults; and academic low achievers. For many public colleges, we can no longer refer to "student" as someone between the ages of 17 and 22. Rather, as we know at LaGuardia, we are referring to housewives, policemen and firemen, Viet Nam veterans, blue collar workers, and various kinds of paraprofessionals -- even college graduates coming back to be retrained for different careers. "Adult education" is rapidly moving from the status of a distinct program having to pay its own way, and is becoming a central focus of our educational task. Because of the financial crunch, it is virtually certain that this trend toward equal access and the search for new constituencies will continue for the foreseeable future.

There is absolutely no doubt, however, that this trend has caused some dislocations and even conflict in our traditional notions of the liberal education which many of us equate with undergraduate college. (a) For example, there has emerged a continuing tension between egalitarian social goals and more traditional meritocratic notions. Issues such as open admissions and affirmative action reflect this tension, as do the debates in the larger educational context over such a study as Jenck's book on INEQUALITY.

(b) A second kind of challenge or conflict as a result of equal access is a more pluralistic notion of culture. The popularization of culture, even what has been called a "mass culture," has been widely debated by humanists in recent years. The trend has been exaggerated, I believe; but there is no longer an easy consensus about the responsibility of college to transmit a "high culture" defined in fairly homogeneous, Western European terms. What we are experiencing, in the quest for ethnic identity and elsewhere, is a struggle to appreciate the diverse roots of American culture.

The cumulative impact of this trend toward equal access, then, is to create a more diverse, pluralistic, and exciting context for collegiate (and particularly liberal) education.

(3) A third trend has been toward CAREER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. The best illustration of this, of course, has been the recent shift in Federal nomenclature from "higher education" to "post-secondary education," to include the technical and proprietary schools. The vocational thrust has been significant in America since the founding of the Land Grant colleges, but it has now received a boost with the competition of students for scarce jobs.

There is an important aspect of this trend which we should not overlook. Manpower planning -- identifying new careers well enough in advance to train persons to fill those jobs -- has been notoriously haphazard in this country. Ivar Berg called attention to this is THE GREAT TRAINING ROBBERY, and since then there have been a number of attempts to rationalize the planning process for new career and program areas. The difficult challenge facing us is to prepare students for a series of careers - for the obsolescence of jobs which now exist, and for the creation of new jobs which we cannot now imagine. In this context, what is the relation between learning as com-
petence and learning for its own sake?

The other aspect of this trend, and the one which creates the greatest possibilities for liberal education, is the responsibility pointed out by Thomas Green in his provocative work, LEISURE AND THE AMERICAN SCHOOLS. That responsibility is "how to think about work in a leisure society." If the current economic scene is any indication, this will involve some major reconceptualization.

(4) A fourth trend is that toward TECHNOLOGY AND URBANIZATION and its prospects.

At one level, this has meant a revolution in educational technology - not just "A-V" and learning machines and computer-assisted instruction, but an extension of college education itself via television and other media. It has meant the availability of new tools for research as well as for teaching and learning, even at the undergraduate level.

More important, however, are the changes occurring at another level. Increasingly, our task as educators is to explore with our students the impact of science and technology on our cultural values and on our patterns of social life. From the scenarios of the year 2000, and the controversy over THE LIMITS TO GROWTH, from Heilbroner's pessimism about THE HUMAN PROSPECT to Daniel Bell's prognosis for THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ERA, from the inescapable data on population growth and world hunger and scarcity of natural resources and bio-medical research, it is clear that we must prepare our students for a world which may be significantly different from the one in which we have been educated.

One of the functions of college, in this new social context, is to engage in the transformation as well as the transmission of cultural values.

(5) Finally, I want to mention briefly a trend toward COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL DEMANDS on the colleges. Robert Nisbet, in THE DEGRADATION OF THE ACADEMIC DOGMA, traced what he considers the prostitution of the university -- selling its research and service activities for the sake of power and prestige. As a result, he argues, we are experiencing a decline of the university comparable to that of the churches since the Reformation. Even if we do not share his nostalgia for medieval institutions, it is apparent that we may have taken on obligations which are not consistent with our educational mission. In a recent issue of the JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION, for instance, Joseph Stetar warns against community colleges which have become over-zealous in their concern for older adults, to the point where they are providing a complete set of social services. Public colleges must learn to say no, but they will constantly be asked to provide services -- educational and otherwise -- which are presumed to be in the public interest.

To summarize, then, I have mentioned five social trends whose impact on higher education will continue: (1) economic scarcity; (2) equal access; (3) career and vocational education; (4) technology and urbanization; (5) comprehensive social demands. Each of these trends raises moral as well as technical dilemmas for the college which wants to serve its students and its public conscientiously. An adequate model must deal with college as a moral community. In the final section, therefore, I want to look at some of the resources for working out such a model.

MORAL COMMUNITY

There are a number of different sources for thinking about the concept of moral community as it applies to public higher education. The term also has another kind of usage in theological circles, where it is applied to voluntary religious groups as communities of moral discourse. I.e., it assumes that there is shared a set of values out of which the group can reflect on moral issues within the congregation or within the world. I will not try to deal with that here, because it is not directly applicable.

1. The major effort to clarify this concept has been in sociological theory, particularly among the functionalists, who are most apt to be concerned with stability and order and equilibrium in the society. Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of modern sociology, was for much of his life professionally concerned with the problems of education in France, actually completing an historical study of the topic. In 1902-1903, he delivered a series of lectures at the Sorbonne, which were published in 1925 as MORAL EDUCATION. In this volume, his goal was to establish education as the vehicle for transmitting a secular, public morality. In the place of appeals to religious or universal ethical norms, he posits society as the source and end of morality.

According to him, the educational task must address itself to three aspects of morality. (a) Discipline consists of regularity (a system of rules of action existing in the society) and authority (a quality of group relationships, through which the individual learns to depend upon these socially determined norms.) Through a proper use of discipline, the teacher can teach moral dependence upon the society. (b) "Attachment to social groups," the second element, specifies the content as well as the form of normal behavior. Since society is, in Durkheim's view, a being sui generis -- a "collective personality" -- morality cannot consist in actions performed for individual ends, but only through devotion to collective ends. In practice, this means teaching patriotism. (c) The third element is autonomy or self-determination. A rational morality means accepting social constraints as our own, to the point where we can act freely and not simply in conformity with external rules. As he says, "to teach morality is neither to preach nor to indoctrinate; it is to explain" (p. 120.) It is rational because it depends upon understanding.

Durkheim correctly underlines the way in which individuals define and refine their morality through participating in social groups. He also calls attention to one function of public education, which we generally call socialization -- the process by which we learn to act as members of the society by internalizing at least some of its norms. But his model is not pluralistic enough to help us deal with the pace of social and cultural change which we and our students experience. Also, we need a model which pays greater attention to potential conflicts between personal and social morality.

Talcott Parsons, for many years the most influential sociologist on the American scene, explicitly took up Durkheim's notion of "moral community" in his study of THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY. In a methodological chapter, he argues that the role of a moral community is to explore, develop, and maintain rational standards of behavior; it performs an integrative function within the social system. Moreover, it thus belongs to the "cognitive complex" as one of the
major functions of the university. Other aspects of the “cogni-
tive complex” are: knowledge, in the cultural system, which
Parsons limits to that which can be expressed in propositional
or conceptual forms; in the behavioral system, intelligence,
which is treated as a generalized medium of exchange rather
than a biological characteristic of individual actors; in the
personality system, cognitive learning and competence, or the
application of knowledge to particular skills.

As with Durkheim, there are a number of problems which
we cannot deal with here. For example, the notion of moral
community is applied to the social system as a whole (the
internalizing of norms). When Parsons deals with personality,
he focuses on competencies and skills, and moral questions are
raised only peripherally. Nevertheless, he does drive home the
fact that higher education is concerned with the formation of
more rational criteria of action. It is an appropriate function
which a college must play, at that point where the society and
its cultural values interact.

In other respects, Parsons’ model of higher education is
not very helpful for undergraduate education. For him, the
core of the university lies in research and graduate education.
Undergraduates are dealt with under the heading of “studen-
try socialization.” The fourth aspect of the university, its pro-
fessional schools, also need not concern us here.

From this branch of sociological theory, then, we have
the beginning of a model; but it needs to be developed in a
context which more dynamic, pluralistic, and which gives
greater attention to personal as well as social morality.

2. Many of the great philosophers have explored the
connection between ethics and politics. Socrates, for example,
was convinced that virtue was to live in conformity with a
higher principle of reality. To know this truth it was necessary,
in the words of an even older Orphic saying, to “Know thyself”;
all that could be communicated through the usual kind of
instruction was the opinions of other men. In other words, he
asserted a distinction between two orders of knowing, that of
the masses and that of the educated elite. He was followed on
this line of inquiry by Plato (whose Academy was specifically
established to train statesmen who would be more capable
of running the State) and by Aristotle.

Rousseau, who incidentally considered Plato’s REPUBLIC
the finest treatise on education ever written,” challenged the
assumption that human beings are essentially rational and social.
Instead, he viewed society as corrupting. In his own ideal view
of education (in La NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE and EMILE and in
other writings), human beings should be reared as creatures who
are good by nature. Their natural impulses and curiosity should
be encouraged, limited only by the forces of necessity and not
by social constraints. This, of course, requires careful manipu-
lation by a tutor. Only when reason develops for the first time,
after the age of twelve, should children be exposed to disciplined
learning through books and formal instruction. At the same
time, Rousseau developed the notion of THE SOCIAL CONTRA-
ty, by which individuals surrender their own freedom for the larger
freedom of humanity.

Despite the influence of both of these traditions in educa-
tional philosophy, it remained for John Dewey to begin to think
out systematically a view of education which would take account
of scientific knowledge, modern technology, and democratic
social processes. Against the classical tradition, he argued for the
unity of facts and values. This meant rejecting any appeal to a
transcendent source of truth and accepting a thorough-going
historical relativism. Against Rousseau, he insisted on the fact
that all of our knowledge is inescapably social. Furthermore,
Dewey was the first person to think through the meaning of
mass education.

Obviously, all three of these positions start from a differ-
ent set of presuppositions. Just as obviously, I feel that Dewey
has provided us with many insights which we have not used.
He believed that authoritarian classrooms cannot train students
for participation in a democratic society, although he did not
sanction the “Do as you please” attitude adopted by some of
his less perceptive followers. He insisted that effective learn-
ing occurs only when we take advantage of the experience
which students have so that they can continue to grow intelli-
gually as well as socially. In addition, he thought carefully
and critically about the ethical basis for decision-making,
about culture, and about creativity. All of these, I want to
argue, are indispensable contributions to a theory of the
public college as a moral community.

3. A third source of insight comes from those de-
velopmental psychologists who have studied the stages in
moral reasoning, especially in young children. Jean Piaget,
whose main concern was with the growth of the process of
reasoning in all of its forms, included this as one of his
concerns. Recently, Lawrence Kohlberg has pursued this
with a series of articles: The limitation of this approach
is that it is biased toward formal systems of logic and
ethics— that is, toward abstract conceptualization—and
does not take adequate account of the kind of moral
judgements which most of us have to make on a day to day
basis.

Without being able to substantiate that charge, or to de-
velop an alternative in any detail, let me just suggest that I think
moral reasoning must occur in a highly pluralistic context. The
implication is that, as a moral community, the public college
does not have much of a consensus on the values to be trans-
mitted, preserved, or changed. Instead, we are dealing with a
variety of ethnic and religious and cultural value systems.
About all we can take for granted is a process for conducting
debate. In addition, I would argue that there is an underlying
consensus about the value of human beings, although it
would be defended from many different points of view. In a
pluralistic context like the community colleges, for instance,
the role of liberal education is to make clear those humanistic
concerns which we have in common.

Unlike traditional liberal education, rooted as it was in
concepts of mental discipline and transfer of training, liberal
education for the decade ahead will increasingly use current
individual experience and the contemporary problems of
society as the medium of education... Helping students cope
with pluralism and relativism becomes the norm for redefining
liberal education.

4. A fourth set of resources can be found among those
advocates of what can be loosely called “humanistic psychology.”
Some of them, influenced by Gestalt psychology and Esalen
and group processes, have concerned themselves primarily
with “affective” or “confluent” education—i.e., with re-
discovering the emotional aspects of the learning process and
re-integrating them with reasoning. In the search for human
wholeness, this becomes an important contribution alongside
the approach of Parsons, Piaget, and Kohlberg.

Although it represents a different thrust, this is probably the appropriate place to mention the "values clarification" approach. Like the humanistic psychologists, disciples of values clarification believe that the most important part of education is helping students to affirm their own self-worth, through a process of prizing, acting, and choosing. It is pluralistic to the degree that it even refuses to engage in debate about abstract ethical principles, but simply reflects back to the child the implications of his or her own choices. At this point, I believe, it has committed the error of trying too hard to establish a position of neutrality, without being willing to spell out and defend those values which the position itself presupposes.

All of these approaches have developed a number of exercises suitable for classroom use. Pedagogically, they have opened up new approaches to teaching and learning which are important for college students. Psychologically, they have illuminated the dynamics of the learning process in a way which traditional educational theories simply ignored. Above all, they insist that public education, including college, is one of the most vital social contexts for exploring value questions.

5. Beyond this point, the range of possibilities simply becomes too great to handle. Not only is there a growing body of literature in the social sciences on the character of social and cultural change, but there is beginning to be some serious investigation in the value implications of research in these disciplines. Natural scientists have for a long time worried about the applications of their work, but recent developments (particularly in bio-medical research) have led a number of colleges and universities to focus on the value implications of work in this area for social policy and social action. What I am suggesting, then, in light of where I began this paper, is that our most urgent task is to define what it means for a college to be a moral community, so that we can then tackle the difficult and burning social issues confronting us.

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PARAPROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PRE-PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND
PARAPROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
IN MENTAL HEALTH

Lorence A. Long

If a person wishes to enter the field of mental health, two well-established routes are open.

One is that of the professional. The person who intends to become a mental health professional must complete a post-high school pre-professional education which ranges from four years in length for the social worker, counselor or psychologist to nine years for the psychiatrist. Then he or she may enter the professional school.

During all of the pre-professional academic programs mentioned above, the student would not expect to work with clients in a helping relationship. Actual work with clients which the student arranged on his or her own would be interpreted by a graduate professional school as an indication of the student’s interest in the field, but would not be officially recognized by credit or waiver of required field experience.

One lesson which might be drawn from this pattern is that working directly with clients in the field of mental health requires such sophisticated skills that it must be reserved for those who have a substantial educational background. A person drawing such a conclusion would be confounded by examining the other well-established route to work in the mental health field: the paraprofessional route.

One becomes a paraprofessional through being hired by a mental health agency. A high school diploma is recommended, but not mandatory. Once hired, the paraprofessional may go through a training period of several weeks. In any case, he or she is expected to train on the job, and begins working directly with clients in a relatively short time.

Paraprofessionals are usually found working for public agencies, with a clientele that tends to be difficult, disturbed, dangerous, deprived, inarticulate and involuntary. Clients are usually located either in understaffed institutions or in overwhelming, depressed neighborhoods.

The professional’s clientele tends to be those persons who function better, are less disturbed, more articulate and motivated. The professional sees his clients either in a middle-class, sheltered setting, or, when the professional is the administrator of an institution, sees them hardly at all.

Thus, those workers with the least training are charged with treating the most challenging clientele. This curious arrangement flows from a mental health system which reflects the economic, social and racial patterns of the larger society. Within that system, professionals tend to be of one racial, social and economic group while paraprofessionals and clients (especially in public agencies) tend to be of another.

It is possible for a paraprofessional to aspire to move from his or her lowly status to that of the professional. In order to do so, he or she must start at the same place as would the fresh high school graduate. He or she must cross the pre-professional academic buffer zone which protects the exalted social and economic status of the professional.

The paraprofessional’s experience, however relevant to the academic or professional course, will offer no tangible advantage in completing the established sequence ahead of the person with no experience.

A small number of programs have modified the situation slightly to accommodate the experience of paraprofessionals.

In so doing, they fly in the face of the trend in professional education, which is to erect barriers under the guise of raising standards.

Pre-Professional Education

The tendency of professions to extend the length of required training is well established. It is easy to forget that what is now a profession may once have been performed by lay persons who may have been volunteers. Nor was it self-evident from the beginning that professional education for mental health workers should be located in universities at the graduate level, as it is now. Often, forces within the developing profession strongly resisted the pre-professional requirements which were imposed.

Freud himself opposed the decision by the American Psychoanalytic Association that every analyst must first become a physician. This requirement was adopted in order to guarantee for the new profession the prestige that doctors commanded. If rigidly enforced, it would have ruled out the significant contributions of Erik Erikson and Anna Freud, as well as other non-physicians.

Social workers were at first wealthy volunteers who were briefly trained by the social agencies they served. Their primary qualification was that of superior economic and social standing, which, it was presumed, entitled them to advise the poor.

Professional schools of social work were originally established by social agencies to train the volunteers. As the course grew from a few weeks to a year or more, the graduates began to press the schools to loosen their ties with agencies and to find an alternate source of support with universities. University affiliation lent the schools the independent prestige their graduates desired to counterbalance the bureaucratic control agencies wielded over workers. The conflict between the agencies and the emerging profession for the control of professional education was not resolved for decades. For example, the New York School of Philanthropy, originally a creature of the Charity Organization Society, did not become the Columbia University School of Social Work until fifty years after it was founded.

By making a bachelor’s degree the prerequisite for professional education, social work tended to guarantee the social exclusiveness which had once been its only requirement. The content of the degree itself is not central. To this day, social work schools recommend, but do not require, an undergraduate concentration in the behavioral sciences.

A lengthy pre-professional education not only protects the social status of the mental health professions, but also has another function for those students who wish to enter the field directly from high school. Dr. Michael McGarvey, Vice Provost for Health Affairs, Hunter College, has said:

In the education of physicians, for example, one of the reasons that medical training programs are so long is the hope that students will mature a little bit during the time they are trained. We can all point to the fact that somewhat more mature persons, when working in therapeutic relationships with other individuals, are usually
better at doing it than younger people. Life experience and just growing up as a human being have a good deal to do with one's ability to relate in a therapeutic way to another person. And this may or may not have anything to do with what one learns in a course on Balzac or Voltaire.

While this perspective may be justified in the case of the recent high school graduate, it does not make sense for the mature paraprofessional.

One could even argue that long schooling, without an accompanying work experience component, impedes the development of personal maturity. One need not characterize the usual academic world as an ivory tower to recognize that it represents a very selective exposure to the wider world of experience.

In the 1960's, the New Careers paraprofessional movement was developed to provide fresh sources of manpower for the human services as well as to develop closer links to client populations. Persons hired in this capacity would, it was hoped, understand the world of the poor because they were in it themselves. Paraprofessionals would bridge the communication gap between helper and client which had always been present but was now seen as a problem.

Paraprofessionals, instilled with an awareness of the limitations of the fragmented and class-bound professional helping system, were instruments of change within social agencies. They were found to be more adept than professionals at solving certain kinds of problems. Concepts of agency practice expanded as paraprofessionals went into the neighborhoods where clients lived, acted as advocates with other agencies and represented the client population within their own agency. Some paraprofessionals rose to positions of great responsibility, especially within agencies that served client populations which had traditionally been immune to professional intervention, e.g., drug addicts.

Some agencies developed high-quality in-service training programs for paraprofessionals. However, because these training programs were not accredited, paraprofessionals leaving one agency for another found their training unrecognized by the new agency.

The situation has become more critical as government funding has shifted away from the drug-free type of drug treatment program and as the mental health job market has tightened in the economic recession of the mid-1970's. Professionals have begun to compete for the administrative and treatment positions which paraprofessionals had won as they came up through the ranks. Job cutbacks in large public mental health agencies jeopardized the positions of paraprofessionals working "temporarily above grade" in responsible jobs usually reserved for professionals.

As the funding crisis intensifies, we may expect to see two contradictory trends emerge. The first will probably be the exclusion of professionals from many new service systems because they command higher salaries and are often fussy about the sort of work they do. This trend will be especially visible in service vendor and proprietary agencies which will be used by public administrators to save costs by getting around the usual professional and civil service requirements.

A companion, contradictory trend will consist of the traditional agencies and professional associations emphasizing the need for pre-professional and professional education before one can begin to work with clients. Examples of this trend may be found in recent attempts by registered pharmacists to have paraprofessionals who distribute medication in mental health settings charged with violations of the narcotics control laws, and of the nursing profession's campaign, now near success, to drive the hospital diploma schools out of existence.

In an effort to find a means to reduce the number of paraprofessionals, some agencies have even begun to require that paraprofessionals attend college. If they do well, the students retain their jobs; if they do poorly, they are laid off.

When a student enters college under these circumstances, it is easy to understand his or her ambivalence about the opportunity which has been afforded. Even under better circumstances, however, the paraprofessional often has misgivings. He or she has begun to work toward a status from which it is often difficult to communicate with or understand clients. To become a professional is not only to move toward high social status but at the same time away from that identification with the client population which has been one of the main sources of the paraprofessional's success. As Edward Brawley has commented,

The question is whether the new entrants to the human service professions can be socialized to the professional culture without negating the special qualities and skills they bring with them.

To compound the new student's dilemma, the courses in the pre-professional academic sequence tend to screen out present-oriented, goal-directed persons like himself or herself in favor of future-oriented persons who can tolerate the irrelevance of much of college to their immediate goals. Even the usual abnormal psychology course, which one would assume must be relevant, tends to be focused on personality difficulties treated by professional private practitioners rather than on problems addressed by public mental health systems, e.g., neurosis rather than psychosis.

Recommendations

An obvious aid assisting the paraprofessional student to relate positively to the pre-professional academic sequence is to integrate the student's work and classroom experience from the beginning of the student's academic career. If a college intends to prepare the student for further study, the integrated curriculum must be part of a liberal arts program rather than a technical program.

LaGuardia Community College's Human Services curriculum approaches this task from three aspects. First, relevant courses are offered from the beginning of the student's coursework. These courses provide a conceptual base, and discuss the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enhance the student's effectiveness in his or her work. Accompanying these Human Services courses is a sequence of liberal arts courses which provide the wider conceptual background in the social sciences, communication and the arts and sciences. Human Services courses reinforce the academic demands which are placed upon students in the liberal arts curriculum.

Second, academic credit is awarded, through the cooperative education aspect of the College, for a combined work and educational experience on the job site. Third, this educational experience at the job site is provided through a preceptor, appointed by the mental health agency, who conducts a weekly seminar connecting the College curriculum with the events at
the agency. Thus, the academic experience and the work experience are integrated into a whole.

A second, complementary direction would involve moving the timing of field-related courses and field experience from undergraduate and graduate academic programs back toward the Community College level. This involves a lengthy articulation process, negotiating with individual college and professional school programs so that basic courses already taken and at least some of the field requirement can be waived by the upper-class or graduate institution.

Field experience is the more difficult of the two areas, for several reasons. In most graduate programs, students are required to either arrange for released time or give up their employment with an agency in order to engage in field work with another agency. Since under the current economic stresses, released time is either reduced or gone altogether, and since most persons who support families cannot afford to give up their employment, the academic buffer again screens out the mature, less affluent person in favor of the person who can afford to quit work for several years.

While a paraprofessional student may benefit from exposure to work experience in another agency than the one he or she knows, the requirement must be measured by whether or not it is a necessity. It seems that a paraprofessional student could learn new roles and new skills in a cooperative agency-academic program, so that released time in large quantities or giving up a job altogether would not be necessary.

A third direction which should be explored is the development of competency-based measures which reflect what a person needs to know in order to function effectively in the field. These measures could be used at each academic level to discover what the paraprofessional has learned from his or her work experience, and exemption credit awarded accordingly.

A number of bachelor's-degree programs now award life experience, work experience or blanket credits. Examples of these are the Queens College ACE program, the Adelphi University NCYTI program, and the CUNY Baccalaureate program. A competency-based approach, rather than those above, is proposed here because in some settings paraprofessionals learn unsound skills, attitudes and concepts from their work experience. It is not good practice to give credit to a mental health aide who works in an institution for skills and attitudes which are part of a "warehousing" approach to patients. That student should be required to complete the whole course in order to learn new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Other solutions may suggest themselves to the reader. So long as they integrate the student's work and academic experience from the beginning, readjust field experience and field-related course work to an earlier time in a curriculum, and begin to provide academic recognition for appropriate knowledge, they will lead toward the goal of integrating the experiential strengths of the paraprofessional with the best of professional practice. Properly structured the pre-professional academic sequence can become a gateway, rather than a barrier, for the paraprofessional.

**SOURCES**

"Each profession has developed its own pattern of professional education. These patterns are continually changing, the most common change being the extension of the length of the training period." Lloyd Brauch, *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1972, v. 22, p. 632d.


THE SURVIVAL OF CREATIVITY: WRITERS AS CRITICS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

John A. Williams

This title suggests an interdependence, a relationship perhaps more sinister than it reads. To be forthright, it means that the survival of creativity depends upon how little a writer may care to criticize his society; it means, the more pungent accurate the criticism, the less chance of creativity surviving.

We live in a time when there is (and always was need for extensive constructive criticism, and in a time when the creative writing art is undergoing some change in content and structure which has been caused by diverse pressures being exerted upon the individual artist.

This is a time of great uncertainty and danger, for American writers, under attack since the founding of the nation, have seldom had to withstand the attacks directed at them during recent years. A great deal of this was initiated by an attitude of anti-intellectualism in high places, and some of it by people more concerned for the right politics in their particular establishment than for creativity. Filmmakers, the god-children of the arts to a degree unprecedented in our history. Is this a case of one municipalities. Writers of novels have been charged with writing art is undergoing some change in content and structure that the survival of creativity depends upon how little a writer may care to criticize his society; it means, the more pungent accurate the criticism, the less chance of creativity surviving.

We must understand also that governments need not interfere in the process of criticizing creativity; private agencies and little bands of people react the same way, given the sameness of the situation.

So then we ask, why so much counter-critical commentary from so many sources? What is it that writers are saying that requires so much opiniated overkill?

Before trying to answer that, let me first try to examine what the writing art does or should do. It reflects life, or should; it may be the vision which precedes the deed; it advises, enlarges, cautions and most certainly criticizes -- or should. It leads, or sometimes should. Without the life with which it grapples, there can be no art; and without art, too often propaganda, there can be no measurement of life.

Writing is an ancient and sometime honored field. From characters, some of which have not yet been deciphered; from that time when there was agreement on what a written character would mean to the members of the society utilizing it, writers have been commenting on their communities and the peoples in them.

With the notable exception of persons like Andre Malraux and Alejo Carpentier, writers rarely hold high government posts. The writer's role is usually the adversary, the outsider, the Rover in the croquet game. It takes, it seems, a special kind of person, to be a writer. No one knows what mysterious mix of body, chemistry, environment and experiences produce a writer. She or he just was a writer. We know, more or less, what goes into the makeup of a doctor or an astronaut or a minister. But we do not know what goes into the makeup of the writer.

Our schools in America have tried to correct that. Here, we try to produce writers just as we produce businessmen. No more than five of what the critics smoothly term "major writers" have emerged from such a factory, and American writing schools and classes have been around for about 30 years.

How are writers made? Do they come out of the forge of injustice as Joyce, Hemingway and Wright suggest? If this is true, we should have had no end to good writers, for injustice was inscribed in the Constitution and expanded by amendment.

We know they are born everywhere: in the foothills of the Rockies, as was Jean Stafford; the tenements of New York, like Jerome Weidman; the deep south, like Flannery O'Connor; heartland America, like Chester Himes.

Because they do not fit any of the moulds we know and understand, what we don't know about writers secretly terrifies a lot of us, and especially the guardians of government and those aligned with them. Yes, we know perfectly well how others come by their careers, but the putting together of a writer is unsee and unheralded, all this taking place in a dark, enchanted forest, if you will. Then one day there walks into the City of Mirrors a person young or old or middle-aged (the germination periods vary); they are black brown or white, and he or she will be charying a manuscript under the arm, and a halo of luck, which he will sorely need, around his head. Then there is made the unspoken but well understood proclamation, I Am a Writer.

If yes, we have a secret fear of writers based on the ancient concept that they, being priests of communication, could see beneath the surface of things -- there being things better off hidden than exposed -- we become delighted when some writers share their every thought, affair and deed with the public at large. We adore writers like this. We understand them. They are like the rest of us, and they seem to have almost no time for burroughing beneath the boards for hidden skeletons, for they need the boards to dance on. We also like the writers who turn out to have been working for the Central Intelligence Agency while we thought all along they were freezing in some atelier in France, drinking the rotenest kind of vin ordinaire; or if not in Europe, somewhere in Africa or South America slowly falling to pieces with palm wine or rum and the native women. We understand these people.

We do not understand the others, or pretend we don't. These most jeopardize the way we wish to live. They are the ones who, from some distance away, measured by their thoughts, typewriters and publishers' production schedules, are potshooting away at the dreams we've purchased, sometimes without having heard the cash register ring.

These are the men and women who tell us and have been telling us for nearly two centuries that ours is not the ideal society some people have believed it to be. And now may never be. For every author who buddied up to the powers of his time, nose to buttock, the way people ride up the escalators at rush hour in New York, there was always one who wrote: Not so. We can do better; we are obligated to do better.
A Hawthorne exploring the deeds of his fathers and steadfastly tracing the course of inherent evil; an Emerson distantly setting credos; a Thoreau bored with them all and drumming a different drum; a Douglass drawing an eclipse over the 4th of July; a Walker Appeal-ing so powerfully that a price was laid on his head; soldier-writer James Roberts mocking Jacksonian democracy before Jackson could get his feet away from the ramparts at the Battle of New Orleans; Jean Toomer, Richard Wright casting flame-filled visions on the darker side of what seemed to be our sun...These are the writer's ancestors and there are more. It is in our nature to be critical. And those works which have most accurately underlined the human condition are those that have survived, those that are called great, they satirical, realistic, existential -- whatever. They have remained with us.  

Now, no one likes to be criticized. The instinct of the animal, man, is that of, if attacked, attack, and I believe that is precisely why creative writing is today being subjected to severe bombardment from many quarters.

But creativity has survived. It can't be killed; man's nature, even animal-like, is that he must strive to build something, and in that striving his creativity is born and blossoms.

Let's look at some of the attempts to choke off creative criticism. We had a book burning in the Northern Plains a couple of years ago. Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse Five was the victim. This was a literal book burning, a high school furnace serving as the stake, and Vonnegut's photo on the jacket of his novel representing the effigy. Yes, there are people in this nation today who scoff at witches, but do to writers' works what they would do to writers themselves, if they could.

Then there are the figurative book burnings, witchhunts. These are subtle and modern, but they are just as effective. The simplest way to be rid of a book too critical is a blanket rejection by all the publishers. Or to publish it in silence. The Academy will follow suit. Both publishers and academicians tend to be like Victorian gentlemen; they attend the same clubs more or less, take steam in the baths, winter in the Caribbean and summer in the Hamptons. Even so, writers being tenacious if not insane people, merely run off to another country. James Purdy, Sam Greenlee, William Burroughs, Paul Bowles, William Gardner Smith. Their criticism of America is accepted once foreign publishers remove the initial sting, take the first risk of censure.

If there were no publishers as we know them, what then? Why pamphlets, leaflets and broadsides. We have them now, their pages filled with writers who are good. We take pretty much for granted the power of the written word, and therefore we underestimate its effectiveness. The measure of the power of the written word can be found during the time of slavery in the American South. Death was a possible consequence for slaves discovered trying to learn to read and write. Various state legislatures passed the most extreme laws forbidding the education of slaves. Andrew Jackson said, "never allow them to have a piece of paper with any writing on it whatever. You must examine your slaves very carefully, for the time is coming when the slave will get light; and if ever his mind is enlightened on the subject of freedom, you cannot keep him."

The Reconstruction failed because a foundation of it embodied the establishment of public schools by blacks and northern abolitionists. The planters had no school systems; they had not even educated the poor whites. But when the word was to become available to the freedman and poor white alike, Reconstruction was doomed.

Like the teacher (which he may very well be) the creative writer also wishes to utilize words, but with an additional urgency, real or fancied; to tell his or her view of society, why it is good or bad or, as in most cases, indifferent, which is worse. Above all he wishes to communicate clearly in order to move his society closer to the time when it is not reflected in the choice of a president it elects, when people can walk at night, when the civil defense signs can come down, when one man no longer fears another.

Such urgency does not endear itself to society, especially when bound between covers into a book. In this nation books were rarely prized as they were in other countries. (No big thing, however. Prizing books doesn't seem to have deterred certain nations from repeated attempts to destroy their neighbors). Let me say then that we never pretended to prize books for their contents. Look at our books; they're made to be discarded, like cardboard shoes after a rain.

Besides, we would rather be entertained than educated, it seems, and so we are. beaten down by entertainments, diversions which carry us away from what ought to be our major area of study: how to deal humanely with one another, a consideration to be found more often in books than in any other form of communication. But what's happening to book buyers? Thirteen years ago with just under 190 million people, there were 8,538 bookstores in the nation. Today, with well over 200 million citizens, the proportional gap has increased; we have only another two thousand-odd bookstores. On the other hand, entertainment outlets have shown signs of diminishing. We turn on television for the latest shows, or radio, and almost with the speed of light, strangers enter our homes; they might be in some cases, thieves swiping our will to think. We go to the movies, but we see, like television, only what is available. A book is another thing; they were almost always available, and there are no intermediaries between the words and your comprehension of them. You, the reader, framed the images, not a stranger. The author talks to you, and you have sought him or her out for just that reason -- so you could mentally talk -- so you could be ambushed by a thought leaping up out of the forest of printed words. With a book you stimulate yourself; with tube or screen you are stimulated.

We pride ourselves on the fact that America's founders conquered the wilderness with The Book in one hand and The Rifle in the other. Some have called this book The Good Book, but it's all in how you read it. If you were an Indian it was a bad book. If you were a slave, it promised you a reward in heaven, but not on earth. If you were a slave-master, it sometimes prevented the slaves, if you took the time and broke the law to teach it to them, from burning down your plantation and crops to the ringing of firebells in the night. High officials take their oath of office with one hand on this book. So we are familiar with at least one book, and that is the pity. Good books, all of them, are basically sets of laws or guidelines for getting along. That they also pose other significant statements is without doubt. My point here is that America began as a fading ripple of the Reformation, and creative writing under that burden was slow to develop. Even so, it may be that burden was the only reason why it had to develop at all, for we have rarely followed the precepts of that book.
I think that the essential force in the continuing survival of creativity has to do with many rules set down in that book. I don't speak from any religious point of view, but rather a universal and I hope, humane one. In the final analysis there can be no prouder way to live than bu a rule labelled as golden.

Returning to earth, I must cite other concerns that threaten the survival of creativity. One of the most important is the tie-in of creativity with big business. Million dollar contracts are not offered to writers because they are good writers; they are offered because the writer is good business. It is sad that publishing for the most part is just another business. But once you look around and realize how few places exist to showcase creativity, you have to conclude regretfully, that that kind of marketplace is better than none at all. But here lies a cancer: today creativity seems only to be affirmed when larger sums of money accrue to the author. We seem to agree that unless the writer has become rich, he has not created well. Sometimes, the author believes it, too.

Tremendous changes have taken place in publishing over the last 25 years. But less than a decade ago the big corporations started buying publishing houses. Time-Life bought Little, Brown; RCA bought Random House; CBS bought Holt Rinehart. Among writers there was some apprehension, of course. They always have a licked finger to the wind for changes with dangerous portents. Their suspicions that a certain censorship might prevail were scoffed at. They began to smile when their advances grew larger. But things began to happen. Grey corporation emminences began to say no; began to signal editors that certain passages in certain books were not alive. And so on.

Fiction, these people seemed to say. What is the hell is that? The poor novel is finding it hard to survive the avalanche of non-fiction books - a situation created by publishers themselves who still manage to bemoan before literary meetings and on the way to the bank, the fact that good novels are no longer being written. That is a palpable untruth. They don't seem to make instant money for publishers and instant money is what today's publishers are in business for. The situation of the novel also reflects back on the short story. Where does one market a short story?

Magazine publishing has been decimated. There are so few places for a creative short story to be placed that it hardly seems worth the while to write one. Publishers certainly are less joyful about publishing collections of stories than novels. To be sure they publish Oates and Updike among others in the short form to keep them happy, and because they are two of the most widely read novelists today. Since there will always be novelists - of that I have no doubt - no matter stacked the deck is, the short story becomes viable as a training ground on the way to becoming a novel.

And no person worthy of the title writer is going to stop writing because everything looks so bleak. A writer just is.

Finally, I don't mean to be discouraging, merely honest, I am sure that the more young people know about the situation, the more effective they will be as fledged writers later on. For creativity does not exist in a vacuum; it is not of, by or for itself. It should be, after the digestion of experiences, after the meditation, after balancing the ego with some kind of humility, like a spotlight chopping down the darkness.

One looks at Solzhenitsyn and knows the man is a writer - and not merely because he sets down words; that he is another government, or rather was, and that, as a writer he had to sit in judgement of it as much as it sat in judgement of him. The American writers who have served this function for 200 years have been ignored that long not because their arguments were not moral, (indeed, they were often more moral than literary) but because they were not white, not WASPs. We have always had our Solzhenitsyns.

Nearly all fledgling writers move in his direction. Their topics are in the main directed at injustice, at society's failures, compromises, untruths, which indicates to me that deep within the enchanted forest, fires are still burning, and that in the smirch of our souls spirits are at work welding a human consciousness.

For a variety of reasons the student of the Community College knows more about these aberrations than do many four-year students. Both kinds of schools, however, have avoided coming to grips with the knowledge of the student and attempt steer him or her away from it. How? By the simple expedient of not genuinely being concerned with the student's view of a hostile, hypocritical world, by not departing really from tradition, and by assuming that the institution's impact upon the student cannot make one single dent in the armor he has had to wear. Few schools are adequately staffed or programmed to deal effectively with creativity, and this is understandable when we understand that it can frighten. Applicable here is the John Berger quotation: "Academism is an attempt to make art conformist and uniform at a time when, for both social and artistic reasons, it has a natural tendency to be centrifugal and diverse. In certain situations academism may appear to be progressive, but it is always fatal to art."

In short then, unless the Academy transforms itself, it will not help creativity to blossom, but will kill it. There are a few examples to the contrary, but not enough to change the entire picture.

A writer, whatever the situation, is going to write. He or she will run the risk inherent in the Hemingway statement: "We do not have great writers. Something happens to our good writers at a certain age." She or he will read Solzhenitsyn: "And a great writer -- forgive me, perhaps I shouldn't say this, I'll lower my voice -- a great writer is, so to speak, a second government. That's why no regime anywhere has loved its great writers, only its minor ones." They will read both statements and a hundred others between them and keep writing, confident that they have something to say and certain that they will come to say it well and loudly; they will do this with the knowledge that when they join the casualty ranks, there will be others to assume their places.
In a recent classroom discussion, a twenty-one year old student, an Air Force veteran, was complaining about the conflicts between himself and his parents over his independent lifestyle. When another student asked why he didn’t move out on his own, he replied, “Who’s going to do my wash?” While not typical of Vietnam veterans, this attitude of “who’s going to do my . . .” is not uncommon among beginning college students.

College teachers have often commented sadly on the passivity, the lack of initiative or spark of many students. It is as if, to these students, going to college means presenting one’s body to a particular place called college and expecting something to happen. College becomes a processing plant: one enters, steps on a conveyer belt and two or four years later out pops “an A.A.” or “a B.A.” There’s something almost magical about it.

This passivity or sense of self as object-to-be-acted upon doesn’t exist in a vacuum or emerge full grown at the time of entering college. The previous schooling experience of many students has prepared them to be “moved along.” Some have found that the strategy of “being nice” facilitates the process of being moved while standing still. The larger context of their experience in a consumer, packaged, hierarchical society is a powerful shaping force. Immediate experience in family and school infrequently provides background for self-determination, independent goal-setting, or participatory decision-making. Emancipating interests are hardly fostered by the scientific ideology and the centralizing power structures of advanced industrial capitalism.

A potentially fruitful approach to understanding and responding to the experience of the relationship between college faculty and students who present themselves as objects is found in the work of Paulo Freire. Freire provides both a theoretical systematic analysis and a sketch of a practical project based on his own experience in the field of adult literacy programs. He helps us move beyond laments and regrets about the passing of the “good old days” in higher education and beyond the trap of blaming the victim. He encourages a vision of social reality in which both faculty and students share different versions of a similar impotence.

Paulo Freire was born in 1921 in Recife, in Northeast Brazil. From as early as 1947 he has been interested in adult education, especially among the illiterates of that area. He taught as professor of the History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Recife until 1964. Between 1960 and 1963 he participated in the discussions of the Movement of Popular Culture where his theory and experience came together in a program for adult literacy. His theory and practice had become prominent by 1962 when Brazil, influenced by Cuba’s success in dealing with illiteracy, was looking for similar results. Initial results of his program were successful. In 1963 the Brazilian Ministry of Education committed itself to a massive literacy campaign along Freire’s lines; training courses for group coordinators were set up; projections were made for 20,000 “culture circles” in 1964, which would accomplish the teaching and “conscientizing” of two million people in a course lasting three months. There was opposition to the program in the right wing press, which called it subversive. In 1964 there was a coup by a military junta. Freire was in jail for 70 days. After release he left Brazil as a political exile.

Freire went to Chile where conditions were ripe for his program. The Christian Democratic party had just won power. Included in their development program was an attack on illiteracy. Through UNESCO his literacy - “conscientization” program was used by several agencies: the Corporation of Agrarian Reform, the National Health Service, the Service of Prisons, the Department of Community Development. Two years later Chile received an award from UNESCO as one of five countries most effectively overcoming the problem of illiteracy.

In 1970 Freire came to Harvard and worked with the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change and the Center for Studies in Education and Development. He is now working with the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. He has given seminars to community groups in the United States and at CIDOC (Centro Intercultural de Documentacion) in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Paulo Freire’s adult literacy program has two aspects. One is aimed specifically at the skill of writing. The other is the process of conscientization, defined as the “process in which men and women, not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives, and of their capacity to transform that reality.” I will focus on the “conscientization” aspect, though both are related. His program has two levels: literacy and post-literacy. On the more elementary level, the literacy program, Freire works with that he calls “generative words” - words that are significant in the people’s perception of themselves in the world, and that contain the essential sounds of the language. With the people who have learned the rudiments of reading and writing, i.e. in the post-literacy program, he concentrates on “generative themes” - complexes of significant ideas, values, attitudes, problems. A description of the various steps or stages in the post-literacy program will help set up an analysis of Freire’s key concepts and their relation to college education.

The teacher in this program would work with an interdisciplinary team, including an economist, a sociologist, a psychologist. Once the area in which they will be working is determined and they have acquired a preliminary acquaintance with it through secondary sources, the first stage begins. Here initial contacts are made with individuals of the area and informal meetings are held to explain the objectives and methods of the program. If a significant number of people agree to the program, then volunteers from the community are sought to be part of the team. Also the team members begin their own visits to the area, observing various moments in the life of the people - work situations, meetings of local associations and clubs, leisure activities, family situations.

The second stage consists in evaluation meetings by the whole team on their experiences, trying to draw out the main themes and contradictions. Codifications (sketches, photographs) of these contradictions are developed. These initially aid the team to have a “perception” and to make connections between various aspects of the themes.

Once the codifications have been prepared, the third stage is begun. This involves returning to the area to begin decoding dialogues in the “thematic investigation circles.” In other words, the people, in groups of ten to twenty, are confronted with their own life situations and begin to analyze what are the dynamics of their lives. These discussions, which take off from the sketches or photographs, are taped for subse-
quent analysis by the team.

When the decoding in the "circles" or groups has been completed, the team makes a systematic interdisciplinary study of their findings. Listening to the tapes and studying any notes of reactions from the sessions, a list of themes is made. These are classified according to the social sciences, not in an isolated way, but simply to specify the various angles from which to approach each theme. For example the theme of development could be dealt with from an economic point of view, a socio-logical one, a political one. Each specialist develops a breakdown of his approach to the themes, putting it into learning units.

The fifth stage is the final preparation of codifications and materials - photos, slides, film strips, records, tapes, books.

With all this done, the educators are ready to represent to the people their own thematics, in systematized and amplified form. The themes which have come from the people return to them, not as contents to be deposited in them, but as problems to be worked on and solved by them.

At the base of this process is a theory of human interaction and world construction which will be dealt with next. The important thing, from the point of view of education as 'conscientization', is for men and women to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their neighbors. This view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people.

At the base of Freire's theory and practice, as expressed in his definition of "conscientization", is a conception of the human person-world relation. His work with both peasant and urban populations indicated the need for movement from a static position to a dynamic one. In his essay Cultural Action for Freedom, he does a whole section under the heading "Every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world". A constant theme that emerged in his literacy programs was fatalism. The people perceived the world as given, fixed, and themselves in that world as determined, passive objects. For the peasants in Northeast Brazil, their conditions of poverty and misery existed because "it was God's will" or because of fate, or nature, or simply because "that's the way it is". The world and their relation to it were seen to be fixed by natural, necessary laws. Myth and magic were often important elements of their world view.

Freire's analysis of this kind of consciousness (which he calls semi-intransitive) was that the people were so immersed or submerged in their situation that the capacity for reflection was blocked. What he was trying to do with the codifications was to provide the opportunity for the people to look at themselves and their world with a certain distancing, to objectify their situation. He often contrasts the existence of animals who are "in" the world with that of human beings who are both "in" and "with" the world, i.e., who have the capacity to gain objective distance from it, to reflect upon it, to project upon it.

Conscientization then is the process by which the world and people's consciousness of it are de-reified. The world becomes a constructed world, historical and thus open to changes, a world in process, with social structures that developed historically. People are active in the knowing and constructing of the world and themselves, there is a dialectic, a reciprocity in the person-world relation, a tension between freedom and determinism (rather than a one-way, deterministic view); people are subjects, not just objects. Meanings are not just given or imposed, but are constructed and negotiated. Their conditions of poverty and oppression are not just "there", as a given fact of life, or of fate, or God's will, but have a history and are the result of social dynamic processes in which men and women are active participants. (Of course, since these realities have been constructed, they can also be "de-structed", and re-constructed - thus the "subversive" nature of conscientization.) The semi-intransitive consciousness can gradually become a critical consciousness.

Applying this conception of the person-world relation to education Freire contrasts two theories of education. One, which he calls the "banking" theory of education, was the dominant one previously used with the peasants and urban poor. According to this theory, the teacher has the knowledge which is to be deposited in the mind (conceived in a spatial way) of the student. The teacher has the knowledge, the student doesn't. The teacher is active, the student is receptive, passive. The teacher is the subject, the student is the object. Pedagogy then becomes the trickery used by the teacher to get the knowledge from his/her head into the head of the often unwilling or resistant student. In the case of previous literacy programs, the teacher, often middle class, with different experiences and background from the people, would arrive with his/her "package" - the curriculum - already prepared, often filled with words, events, experiences little connected with the lives of the students.

To this approach, Freire opposes what he calls the problem-posing theory of education. Here the teacher begins with the position that people have the capacity to become active in their knowing that the mind is not to be conceived of as a spatialized consciousness but as an activity of relating to the world and dealing with its problems seen as challenges. Here the participants are teacher-students and student-teachers involved in a world-mediated activity in which they collaborate to understand and to act upon the reality they face. Knowing is seen as reflection and action upon their real world (praxis). Dialogue, rather than prescription, becomes the educational process. The description of the post-literacy program in the previous section indicates one way of realizing this approach.

Freire analyzes the fact of the predominance of the semi-intransitive consciousness among the peasants and urban poor in terms of the economic political, social and cultural domination of those people. The colonialist socio-economic formations fostered a "culture of silence". Since the people were the objects of domination, they were not able to speak their own "word". Existing power relations blocked the legitimation of a social world construction that reflected their own conditions and aspirations. Religious and educational institutions fostered their dependence on the dominant class. The cultural apparatus in communications, the press, held up as models the ways of the dominant class. Now, in a new era of history, as explicit colonialism passes, the large numbers of people face the possibilities of either liberation or a new form of dependence, a neo-colonialism. Education will move in the direction of one or the other, it will not be neutral. Freire sees "conscientization" as a force towards liberation.

The implementation of a Freire-based program in many colleges would involve far more listening on the part of faculty than we are used to. Building the curriculum around the "generative themes" of students would reveal the degree to which we operate on the "banking" or digestive models of education. Focusing on the concrete social reality of students, in which we participate, would confront us with our own compromises and
accomodations, our own fatalism and passivity, our claims to neutrality in the midst of struggle and conflict. Education under the influence of Paulo Freire would point towards the experience of another educator who has said "If you want knowledge, you must take part in changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change it by biting into it."

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Feminizing the Traditional Curriculum: Bringing Feminist Materials Into A Remedial Composition Setting

Sarah Lanier Barber

Four years ago I co-designed and have subsequently taught rather predictable women's courses at my college, LaGuardia, a community college in the City University of New York system. These courses, which are electives, are "The Image of Women in Literature" and "The American Woman Writer." Although these courses have proved quite successful I have felt a need for another type of feminist course to better serve our female student population.

Given the Open Admissions policy of CUNY, the majority of our students arrive at LaGuardia with rather serious remedial problems. These students, because of the need for remedial reinforcement and the rather rigid degree requirements, neither have the time, luxury nor the reading skills necessary for elective literature courses such as the two just mentioned. Therefore, I found the most capable of our students, frequently women well on the road of feminism and self-awareness, taking the elective courses; the majority of women students, however, either could not or did not take these courses. To remedy this situation, I conceived of a method to introduce feminist materials into the most basic and remedial of our writing courses, a course entitled Fundamentals of Writing.

Fundamentals of Writing is a required course for approximately 50-60% of our entering freshmen. The exit criteria for the course is the ability to write a 300 word essay with a maximum of 8 major grammatical errors, such as run-ons, fragments, tense etc. The standard format of the course is an eleven week crash in essential, but very basic rhetorical strategies with continued drill on grammatical improvement. Forty to fifty percent of the students are unable to make the exit criteria and have to repeat the course again-and sadly for some, again and again.

In the fall of 1976, I formed a special section of Fundamentals of Writing; students elected to take this section. The class was composed of women from minority and ethnic backgrounds and low socio-economic groups with an average of 18-19. I began the course with 16 students and lost 2 students mid-way through the quarter--both students having personal problems which forced them to drop out of college. Although I was allowed great flexibility in deviating from the standard syllabus of a remedial course, my students had to meet the same exit criteria as all their peers in the 40 some odd other remedial sections. On November 29 they took their exit exam--the 300 word essay. Of the 14 women taking the exam, 13 passed! I attribute this very high rate of success to the feminist approach the course took.

Rather than a traditional grammar text, the text for this special section was Eve Merriam's Growing Up Female in America, which is a collection of 10 journals written by women of different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds covering the time span of the late 1770's to the early 20th century. The journals are relatively short, and the readability level of the majority of the journals was well within the grasp of my students. We read a journal a week and spent 1 class period discussing the journal and sharing with each other significant sentences and ideas of the writer. Students then suggested their own topics for their weekly in-class essay. These suggested topics had to demonstrate the common experiences and feelings of the journal writer and the women students' own lives. Although the major goal of the course was the required improvement of writing skills and one period a week was devoted to grammar review, a corollary, but I felt equally important goal, was to help my students appreciate differences in terms of ethnic racial and cultural difference along with the commonalities of their experiences as women. Discussions of the journals were supplemented by newspaper articles pertaining to women brought in by students themselves. Each student was required to present orally to the class two articles before the end of the term. The combination of journal readings from Merriam's book, class discussion and the shared newspaper articles produced some of the following student theme topics:

1. Discussion of Elizabeth Cody Stanton's concern with temperance, an article from the New York Times on the rise of alcoholism among women and student themes on their experiences with heavy drinkers. An interesting aside, there was an extremely high commonality among the students of living with fathers who drank too much.

2. A journal by an Indian, Mountain Wolf Woman, which contained a description of her traumas with her first period, a series of articles from the New York Post on menstruation and myths, and student themes remembering their first periods and the myths they had been told.

3. Elizabeth Gertrude Stern's rebellion against her orthodox Jewish family and its beliefs, a newspaper article about her difficulties of women wishing to enter the ministry, and student themes on their early religious training and experiences with nuns in parochial schools.

The final week of the course I asked the students to write a final essay evaluating their experiences and feelings about their 11 weeks in this special section of Fundamentals of Writing. The evaluation instrument I used contained the following four areas I wished the students to bear in mind as they wrote their essays:

1. You have spent 11 weeks in a class of all women talking about women's issues and experiences and reading journals written by women. How do you think this approach has influenced your success in improving your writing skills?

2. How did having a feminist as a teacher influence your interest in this course?

3. The success rate of this class on the Exit Exam was very high compared to other sections whose average failure was 40-50%. How do you account for this difference?

4. Has this course made any differences in your feelings about yourself as a woman?

I wish I had time to share with you all 14 of the women's essays; however, because of limitations of time I will summarize the findings and give examples from the
In response to question 1, students were unanimous in their evaluation that this approach was most helpful in improving their writing skills. For example: "Taking this Fundamentals of Writing course was very helpful to me. I feel that writing about women is very important because I can relate to women. Writing about something that involves oneself is much better than writing about something that has nothing to do with you. I also feel that I have improved my writing skills because I have been writing about something that interests me." Or as another student stated: "To combine the issue of women with teaching grammar is a great idea."

As to having a feminist as a teacher: "Having a feminist as a teacher did interest me in this course. I myself was able to open up and express my viewpoints in ways I thought could never be possible. I myself being the shy person I am wouldn't start talking in the classroom about my menstrual cycle. When I saw how the other women were speaking out and my teacher talked openly about it, I could also talk freely about it." And another student comments: "I have never heard a woman English teacher really tell it like it is."

As to the last question regarding did this course make any difference in my feelings about myself as a woman, one student concluded her essay with the following: "My feelings about being a woman have changed. My ideas and goals are much stronger. I can't change the world, but I can change the people and friends around me. I will tell the men I know that I am a woman, and I am equal, if not better."
Towards Transpersonal Education

Judith Gomez

Introduction

“What was wrong with you when I saw you, and what is wrong with you now is that you don’t like to take responsibility for what you do.

“When a man decides to do something he must go all the way, but he must take responsibility for what he does.

“Everything I do,” said Don Juan, is my decision and my responsibility. For you, the world is weird because you’ve been complaining all your life. If you’re not bored by the world, you’re at odds with it.

“For me the world is weird because it is stupendous, awesome, mysterious, unfathomable; my interest has been to convince you that you must assume responsibility for being here, in this marvelous world, in this marvelous desert, in this marvelous time. I wanted to convince you that you must learn to make every act count, since you are going to be here for only a short while, in fact, too short for witnessing the marvels of it.”

Journey to Itxlan
Carlos Casteneda

In college classrooms in every part of our country, we, as educators, are faced daily with the bored, “at odds,” expressions of our students. Life seems to overwhelm them; they move from day to day as automatons, doing assignments (sometimes), going to work, (resentfully), looking for partners (too often). Nothing seems of sufficient importance to capture their imagination, spark their hearts into action, to feeling, to decisive movements towards others. Neither the deep tragedy of war, famine, pollution, nor the more personal crises of poverty, unhappiness, frustration evoke from them the fire of response that would shake them from their passivity into a more active, concerned, penetrating commitment to both the difficulties and strengths of their daily lives. What is it that is lacking in their lives? What is it that is lacking in our approach to them as teachers and as friends?

Is it possible that their boredom, their “at oddness” stem from the fact that they really don’t know who they are, they really don’t know what is the meaning of their lives, they really have not learned to be responsible, to life’s moments as they experience them?

Can we shape our commitment to them, as educators, and as human beings into one that will help them to overcome this limited, unhappy state of being, in which we find them? Can we become concerned with raising for them the concrete possibility of breaking through to a more fully human way of living, a more active responsive relationship to the world? Can we find the way to light the spark of life within them? Can we discover the tools to help them awaken to a more meaningful, more active, more purposeful existence.

In our classrooms, in our relationships with them, we can choose to consistently introduce these tools to them, and, with the example of our own lives, stimulate them to unfold their potential to become all that they are capable of, stimulate them to leave the passivity and be responsible for their own lives. Isn’t our greatest challenge to help them more from boredom to enthusiasm, from passivity to responsiveness, from indifference to responsibility. Isn’t it our challenge to become the catalyst that ignites the possibilities of transformation in the hearts and minds of each of our students? How can we stimulate them and support them, in the difficult day by day task of discovering and becoming themselves?

To teach with this goal in mind is to introduce into our educational philosophy the basic presuppositions of transpersonal education – an education that stresses the discovery and development of the higher potentials, the higher conscious, the higher meanings of each human being. It is to explore a method of integral education which will not only encourage the development of various abilities, but will also help a student to discover and realize his true spiritual nature, and to build under its guidance a harmonious, radiant, efficient personality. Transpersonal education rests on the exploration of depth psychology, certain spiritual disciplines, and humanistic educators into the possibilities of human unfoldment and integration towards a higher synthesis.

What are these basic presuppositions of a transpersonal education? What is the conception of the human being on which it is based? And finally, what is the implication of this conception for our professional responsibility as educators?

The Holistic and Transpersonal Self

To begin with, to explore a more holistic approach to education, one must first accept a more holistic understanding of man – of the human being himself. According to Ira Progoff, a depth psychologist committed to the development of the authentic self, it means that the psyche of man, the underlying organic processes of growth, can be understood not in terms of conflict, or merely as the balance of separate segments within each individual, as thought by many psychologists. Rather, man is driven by a single dynamic principle that is present in the seed of the being and is working always within him, unfolding towards synthesis at ever higher levels of authenticity. New developments in the field of psychology seems to reaffirm that hidden within man are potentialities of growth, of integration, of universalization, and these potentialities, if discovered and actualized, can set the direction for human unfolding. If we approach the realm of the inner world of the human being from an affirmative and constructive point of view, then we are able to perceive the wholeness of the human personality, with its fullness of spiritual and creative capacities that lie hidden in the depths of the incomplete human being, silently waiting for an opportunity to emerge.

Man is a unity, and the central frustration he experiences is from the inability to find a way to respond to these urgings toward unity that he feels as a call from deep within his being – the call to realize himself as a creative spiritual organism.

“From a still wider and more comprehensive point of view, universal life itself appears to us as a struggle between
multiplicity and unity - a labor and an aspiration towards union. We seem to sense that - whether we conceive it as a divine Being or as cosmic energy - the spirit - working upon and within all creation is shaping it into order, harmony and beauty, uniting all beings (some willingly, but the majority, as yet blind and rebellious) with each other through links of love - achieving - slowly and silently, but powerfully and irresistibly, the Supreme Synthesis. 2

Alfred Adler has said that “man knows more than he understands.” 3 This implies, in a sense, that each human being can move spontaneously, with an unfolding of his consciousness, towards a purpose that is inherent in its nature, “a purpose contained in the seed of what it is its nature to become. That purpose, is something that is non-personal in the individual, it is there generically by virtue of the fact that he is a human being and that natural processes, universal in mankind, are working toward fulfillment in him.” 4

“The synthesis of all the capacities of a human being around his deeper inner center can also be considered as the individual expression of a higher principle, a general law of inter-individual and cosmic synthesis. Indeed, the isolated individual does not exist, every person has intimate relationships with other individuals which make them all interdependent. Moreover, each and all are included in and part of the spiritual super-individual reality.” 5

Within each being is the possibility of a deep synthesis of all of what he is - the possibility of the harmonious coordination and unification of all dimensions of his consciousness, his will, his energy, his imagination - his total mental, biological, emotional and spiritual capacities, and this includes not only lower and elementary functions, but also his higher aspects - his higher consciousness, his transpersonal consciousness, his universal will. 6 This process of integration and synthesis is a potentiality within people to harmonize their lives at ever higher levels. It is a process that occurs in each person, but due to the contrary emphasis and values of our society expressed particularly in our educational system, it is a potentiality that is all to often unfulfilled. It is necessary to have a strong personal discipline, supported by an environment conducive to its realization in order for an individual to undergo the far-reaching task of breaking away from patterns of passivity and indifference. To fulfill this potential is to accept the challenge of harmonizing one’s life with the higher human purposes that lie as a seed within.

If there is, as Albert Szent Gyorgi has said, “a drive in living matter to perfect itself” then each individual has both the call and the responsibility of drawing forth in himself the potentials of a more universal awareness, and of synthesizing within his own life and experience the human idea of the unity of man’s highest potentials for love, responsibility, union with other men. Observers from many different disciplines and backgrounds have recognized the same process at work in humanity as a whole - the slow birth and gradual integration of man’s highest capacities - love, caring, wisdom.

Viewing the human being as a whole, as a unity, one recognizes the transpersonal essence in each individual, and to discover within oneself that the highest purpose of life is to manifest this essence in the world of everyday life - in the

family, at work, as a teacher, lover, neighbor, employer, parent. What is this transpersonal reality reflected in man that becomes perceivable at higher stages of personality development?

“Man is not made bending toward the earth as are other animals, but rather standing upward in the direction of heaven.” 8 Does this imply a transpersonal aspiration common to all human beings? The human species, says Ira Progoff, is different from all other animals in one respect; its capacities for self-transformation, its ability to perfect itself, to develop beyond a primary evolutionary form and redirect its existence through the development of its highest, more transcendent resources. The life of many great beings throughout history reflect the actualization of the transpersonal dimension to the degree that their thoughts, feelings and actions were no longer merely personal, or even interpersonal, but reflected a deep sense of oneness with and responsibility to, all human beings.

The sense of harmony and wholeness that one discovers when one is able to deepen one’s self-understanding and enter the realm of the transpersonal is not given to man complete and final. Rather, it is a possibility, which can become an actuality if man is able to find the resources of growth and inner expansion within himself.

Just as the fullness of the oak tree is latent in the acorn, the fullness of man’s more universal potentialities are not yet always visible because they have, not yet become manifest in all men.

“The modern person tends to think of himself as though he were a thing, determined by the same mechanical laws that govern his TV set. Let us instead conceive of man as inherently creative. There is a living seed in man, a seed of growth, a seed of divinity. The primary problem that is consonant with the rich possibilities of its nature. This is an urgent need of modern man, to find a way he can achieve a larger experience of meaning in his existence, a psychological awakening of his spiritual force, a stirring of presently unused potentials of awareness. When this is made actual, then the meaning of each individual’s life as a spiritual being in the natural world and in history is fulfilled in his individual existence. Lacking an integrative identity of this kind to give cohesion to his life, the individual splinters into segments, and this condition of segmentation is what gives the pain and confusion of modern life. Only a sense of unity, wholeness, that establishes a deep sense of universality within him can give him an intimation of a new relationship to reality.” 9

We have been influenced through the commonly understood ideas of traditional psychoanalysis to recognize a primitive and lower unconscious, the source of our biological drives. What Progoff, Jung, Frankel, Assagioli, Maslow (see bibliography) and others allow us to see is the existence also of a higher conscious a transpersonal realm from which originate our more highly evolved impulses - altruistic love, humanitarian action, artistic and scientific inspiration, philosophic and spiritual insight and the drive for purpose and meaning in life. They are indicating the existence of the Transpersonal Self - the deeper all inclusive center of identity and being where individuality and universality blend. 10 It is this center that we are concerned with. The following pages are an effort to provide the tools with which we can reach that center, and learn to live in harmony with it.
Maslow and Unitive Consciousness

According to Maslow, when a person has sufficiently gratified his basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect and self-esteem, he is then motivated primarily by the need for self-actualization (the ongoing actualization of his potentialities, capacities, talents, the fulfillment of his mission in life, of fuller knowledge and acceptance of his own intrinsic nature, and an increasing tendency toward inner unity and integration.)

In becoming sufficiently free of social conditioning and sufficiently in touch with his own inner potential, he is able to become more self-sufficient, and more aware of what he really is, of what he really wants, of what is his call, his vocation. He is motivated primarily by a sense of confidence, of control over his life, and his actions and perceptions tend to be ego-transcending, self-forgetful, unselfish. "The whole of the being is good, and the experience of a person who is self-actualized can be impersonal, egoless, unselfish, one that is organized around the object as a centering point rather than being based on the ego." 12 As he gets to be more authentically himself, he is more able to become one with others. As Carl Rogers has said, "It happens that the deeper we go into our individual identity, the more we find the whole human species." 13 It is to be responsible, active, master of his own life, yet at the same time experiencing the whole of the world as a unity, as a single rich live entity. "He is capable of living with an attitude of wonder, awe, reverence, humility, surrender, and he becomes godlike in his loving, uncondemning, compassionate approach to others. As the essential Being of the world is perceived by the person, so also does he concurrently come closer to his own being." 14

This capacity to live one's fullest most integrated possibilities is what Maslow calls Unitive Consciousness. 15 When one perceives univitously, universally, one is able to perceive both the sacred and the profane aspects of a person - to accept him in his totality. To perceive in this way is to experience, as a personal reality, the transcendence of one's self and to discover in others the same potential for universality. This is to become one with the person, or the situation one is experiencing. Some of the characteristics of experiencing life in this way have been described by Maslow as the transcendent qualities of the peak experience. These occur, he claims when one is able to devote oneself fully to some task, call, vocation, when one is dedicated to a task outside oneself, and is passionate, selfless and profound in the feelings devoted to one's life task.

Most self-actualized people tend to have a cause they believe in - a vocation they are devoted to. When they say "my work", they mean their mission in life. They do what they do for the sake of ultimate, final values, for the sake of principles intrinsically worthwhile. They tend to go beyond polarities to see the underlying oneness of all life to try to integrate experience in a more meaningful way.

People motivated by these kinds of transcendent, or universal values, live with a sense of offering of themselves, of dedicating themselves to something not merely personal and selfish, but a task or cause that is in itself universal and transcends the small confines of the personal self. In people who have chosen to give their lives to a universal purpose, these universal values are also expressed in a new approach to daily life, -- the sacred in the ordinary act with one's neighbors, friends, family, colleagues, the act done with an intention that is transcendent, that issues from a unitive consciousness. "The empirical fact is that self-actualized people are also our most compassionate, our great improvers, reformers of society. The best helpers are the most fully human persons. One necessary aspect of becoming a better person is via helping other people." 16 The acts of a person who lives and acts with transcendent values can be characterized by the following qualities:

1. self-forgetfulness
2. transcendence of time
3. transcendence of culture - universal man as a member of the human species
4. transcendence of one's past
5. transcendence of ego and selfishness
6. transcendence as mystical experience
7. transcendence of the opinions of others
8. transcendence of one's own weaknesses and dependency
9. to become divine or godlike, beyond the merely human
10. transcendence of individual differences
11. transcendence of one's own values, prejudices. 17

Transcendence for Maslow, is a real human potentiality. It is the highest, most inclusive or holistic level of human consciousness. It is expressed in people who struggle to behave and relate in a way that is more loving, more responsible, more universal.

The Will to Meaning and Universal Values

Are we free to choose to develop ourselves in this universal direction?

Victor Frankel, in a moving description of inmates of the concentration camps during the Second World War, describes examples of men and women, who, under the most adverse circumstances, were able to give testimony with their lives to the fact that they could choose to "do differently", that they did not have to submit to the apparently almighty concentration camp laws of psychic deformation. They chose to be responsible to life, to seek a higher unity within themselves, to care for others, in a situation in which every external human freedom was denied.

"Probably in every concentration camp," he reports, "there were individuals who were able to overcome their apathy and suppress their irritability. These were the ones who were examples of renunciation and self-sacrifice."

From them we learn, says Frankel, that freedom is not something we "have", and therefore can lose, it is what we "are". It is our deepest essence, only needing to be called upon. In every situation, the human being has the freedom and possibility of deciding for or against the influence of his surroundings. Although we may seldom choose, it is open to us to do so. We must ask then not what we may expect from life, but rather understand that life expects something from us. The past, the present, the circumstances of our lives can be a stimulus to conscious responsible action, for at any moment we may select out of many possibilities a single one, we can answer to life by answering for our life, by choosing to be responsible, and thus, free, in the face of our environment.

In fact, according to Frankel, this "will to meaning",
Is our most human attribute because as animal is not conscious of the meaning of its existence. Responsibility and universality of being, arise, he claims when we take seriously the question - what is the meaning of my life? We have instincts, but they do not determine us. We are not merely a product of heredity and environment because we have the capacity to decide. Being human, according to Frankel, means being conscious and being responsible, and this responsibility implies the obligation to give of oneself to a higher purpose. This is what it means to be fully human, since this potential for a more universal life is clearly rooted in our biological nature. 

This human responsibility is one that springs from the singularity and uniqueness of each man's existence, the unique potentialities he has to become fully himself. "His reality is a potentiality. What he is, he is not yet, but he ought to be and should become." In Actualizing this potential through consciousness and responsibility he discovers the meaning of his life. His consciousness of this meaning arises out of his awareness of his personal task, his mission, to fulfill his own meaning in the values he holds, in the work he does, in the way he loves, in his attitudes towards life, death, joy and suffering.

Human freedom is not "freedom from", but "freedom to", and it is the central task of each person's life to use their freedom to unfold the transpersonal dimensions of meaning in their lives, a dimension that can be discovered best through responsibility and giving of oneself to others.

I can only fulfill myself by serving someone or something apart from myself. The nature of a life integrated through caring is that it provides a center around which my activities and experiences are ordered and integrated. This results in a harmony of the self with the world that is deep-seated and enduring. We are "in place" in the world through having our lives ordered by inclusive caring. Something fundamentally new has occurred in our lives, like the change that occurs in a man's life when he comes to take full responsibility for it.

Through caring for others I discover and create the meaning of my life. In caring I discover selflessness, because only by focusing on the other am I able to be responsive to him. In this selflessness I am more myself, and discover a heightened awareness, a greater responsiveness to both myself and others, and a fuller development of all my distinctive potentialities.

This is a task that requires discipline, patience and dedication. There is a wide gulf between the advanced development of man's external powers, his impressive power over nature and technology, and the under-development of his sensitivity and responsibility to the inner being where the seed of his authentic meaning is to be discovered. Individuals often lack the resources to cope with the difficulties, and may crumble in the face of external demands, confusions, frustrations. They become the victim of their own achievements. Resistance to the prevailing negative directions of modern life call for much determination, much perseverance. If they want to fulfill their "own will to meaning", they find it is necessary to find a way to strengthen that deeper transpersonal dimension of being, and to make it the center of both active and contemplative aspects of life.

This can be done, according to Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis, by giving priority to the tremendous unrealized potential of the will, particularly, to the universal or transpersonal will which exists within every person.

At a given moment in each person's life, he becomes conscious of the existence of the will - perhaps during a crisis or at a moment when he is able to be decisive in action. In this experience he realizes that his self, and his will are intimately connected, that because of his will he has the power to choose, to relate, to bring about changes in his own personality, in others, in circumstances. Although this "awakening" and vision of new potentialities for inner expansion and outer action emanating from a strengthened will give a sense of wholeness and joy, it can easily get lost in the constant surge of drives, desires, emotions and ideas from the external world.

Assagioli, in his works with patients, discovered that it is possible to integrate the self around a clarified and strengthened will, so that one's life is centered and synthesized around an aspiration toward universal values. Through the will, which gives us the capacity for choice, energy, concentration, persistence, patience, decisiveness, initiative, synthesis, each human being can create within himself the unitive consciousness of which Maslow speaks, or the Law of Synthesis that Teilhard de Chardin writes about as the law towards convergence at the basis of all evolution...

"each individual consciously and responsibly participating in humanity becoming conscious and moving toward a superindividual and cosmic center, the Omega point. Through the will an individual experiences this movement toward synthesis as an intelligent energy directed toward a definite aim, giving a purpose and meaning to his life." 24

Assagioli stresses the urgent need for the integration and unification of love and will, as the means to the expression of the universal values. Human love is not simply a matter of feeling, or sentimentality. To love, calls for all that is demanded by the practice of an art - discipline, patience, perseverance - it calls for a transcendent act of the will. If the human being can be helped toward the integration of both love and will at the higher levels of his being, he will discover the universal will which is directed toward purposes devoid of egotism and egocentric content. Higher needs will emerge, drawing the person towards a fusion of love and will that expresses itself in a profound sense of communion with, and responsibility to, others.

Love and consciousness are one and the same thing. So as you get into a higher state of consciousness you come closer to being in love. That doesn't mean in interpersonal love. It means Being-Love. We start to understand that what love means is that we are sharing a common state together. That state exists in you and it exists in me. You would say that an enlightened being is totally in love with the universe, in the sense that everything in the universe turns him on to that place in himself where he is love and consciousness.

Remembering Frankel's examples of love and meaning in concentration camp inmates, and Maslow's observation that once the
lower levels of the hierarchy of need are satisfied, one experience boredom, emptiness, meaninglessness, we can move to the exploration of the possibilities of transcending the limits of personal consciousness, what Jung describes as the call of the Higher Principle or Transpersonal Will.

What in the last analysis induces a man to choose his own way and so climb out of his unconscious identity with the mass. It is what is called vocation. Now vocation, or feeling of vocation is not only the prerogative of great personalities, but also belongs to every man. 26

The special gift of the human being is that he can consciously join and work for the whole, and embody in his own life the purpose of the whole. The two elements of selfhood - uniqueness (eachness) and universality (all-ness) grow together until at last the most unique becomes the most universal. As the 13th Century mystic Meister Eckhart has said, "The truth is that the more ourselves we are, the less self is in us," 27 (quoted by Tolbert McCarrol in Exploring the Inner World). The harmonization of our entire life with the meaning given to it by the transpersonal will is the deepest aspiration, the highest, if often unrealized, need of humanity. It means tuning in on, and willingly participating in, the rhythms of the evolution towards universality of all Beings, the universality that one discovers not as a theory, but as a joyous reality within oneself. As this reality grows, a new atmosphere penetrates every dimension of the person’s life, and radiates outward to influence others, even without a conscious communication. When it is experienced and lived by a sufficient number of persons, the quality of life in the human community will certainly be transformed.

Education Towards Humanness

If to be fully human is to discover within oneself the potential for meaning, for responsibility, for universality, for love, then our goal as educators must be to find the ways within our educational systems to foster and support the unfolding of this potential. As Maslow has said:

"If we were to accept as a major educational goal the awakening and fulfillment of transpersonal (B-values) values, we would have a flowering of a new kind of civilization. People would be stronger, healthier, and would take their lives into their own hands to a greater extent. With increased personal responsibility for one’s personal life and with a rational set of values to guide one’s choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they live. The movement towards psychological health is also the movement towards spiritual peace and social harmony." 28

The goal of education then, must be to aid each person to grow to his fullest humanness, to help him to become actually what he is potentially, and this necessitates an active commitment to the search for meaning, to the exploration of universal values and to the discovery and strengthening of the transpersonal will. Every individual, as Paolo Freire has stated in explaining his educational philosophy, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence, (silence here is used by Freire to imply unconsciousness and oppression) is capable of looking critically at his world. Provided with the proper tools for such an encounter he can gradually perceive his social and personal reality, as well as the contradictions in it, and, becoming conscious of his perception, deal critically with it. Education can become a means by which men and women discover how to participate in the transformation of their own lives, and of the world. 29 This transformation will be possible only when we help students to ask the questions that will help them to see a new reality, to ask what is the meaning of their lives, to ask to what degree are they responsible for the world around them?

Although Freire’s emphasis is on the transformation of social reality, his conception of transformation is relevant to our discussion. It is an effort to help men realize the degree to which his consciousness is conditioned by society, and to awaken him to the concrete possibility of becoming free from a deterministic form of existenc to the freedom to discover and become what he is. 30

If the world is, as Freire says, a “theater of possibilities”, don’t we need to help our students to act in that theater according to their highest, most universal possibilities? Shouldn’t we strive to help them find their “vocation to be free creative subjects who can separate themselves from the world in their consciousness, be critical of it, act upon it, and transform it . . .” 31 This implies that we find opportunities to help students unveil their world - both the inner world and his outer world, and to penetrate to the essence of its meaning so that the possibility of being fully human becomes a reality. We can do this by caring for our students in a way that reflects our sensitivity and commitment to the seed of potentiality that lies within them. We can affirm for them that there is another reality, another way to live, that rather than living resigned to an unfulfilled existence in a confusing world, they can shape their lives into an example of transformation, universality, responsibility.

To do this requires, I think, that we seize every opportunity, both in the classroom and out, to encourage them to ask the following questions of themselves:

1. What is the meaning of my life? What is my vocation, my mission, reason, purpose for living? How can I discover it, and what changes do I need to make in my daily life to be able to live it fully?
2. Isn’t the real freedom of the human being the freedom to be responsible, to care about others in a responsible way? How can I be more responsible, how can I be more . . .
free of social conditioning, roles, expectations and values? How can I be free to be myself?

3. What is the deepest essence of the human being? How can I discover within myself the dimension of universality and love? How can I strengthen my will to be able to act as an expression of the deeper more universal levels of my being?

4. What would it mean for the world community, if I were to center my life in the idea of caring for others, being responsible, offering love to society in each moment of my life? What would be the effect of my transformation on the world around me?

And once we have stimulated them to open their lives to these fundamental questions, is it not our responsibility to provide the materials, time, and environment where they will be assisted in finding their own authentic answers. In committing ourselves to them in this way, we too will have walked many steps on the road toward a unitive consciousness - our communion with them will be expressed concretely as the faith, and love we feel towards the unfolding of their deepest most human possibilities.

the cops, pleas

the cop was unblemished
the papers said
the cop was unblemished
the t. v. said
the cop was unblemished
the radio said
the cop was unblemished
his buddies said.
SO, he shot Randy in the head
and poor Randy lay and bled
on his mother's breast
just like all the rest
Randy was blemished
like Jimmy Powell, 14, was blemished
like Ricky Beden, 10, was blemished
like Clifford Glover, 10, was blemished
like Claude Reese, 14, was blemished
that they were all blemished is a fact—blemished in being young, blemished for being black.

Umoja Kwanguva
How many times have reading teachers asserted that all teachers are "teachers of reading" only to acknowledge that no one, especially teachers, takes the premise seriously. Most teachers consider their own subject first and that any other academic skill, while laudable, is secondary. The idea of becoming a reading teacher or incorporating any other content into one's own lessons is foreign to teacher behavior. It's not practical and there is not enough time to accomplish any productive results are the complaints heard most often.

During the winter quarter, 1975, however, there was another kind of mathematics class in the Middle College High School. This class peddled the traditional wares of mathematics; numbers, operations and graphs. But besides presenting these topics the teacher was trying to sell other items such as spelling, vocabulary, and reading skills. Many students wondered often aloud, whether the teacher was teaching mathematics at all. Such behavior caused students to ask questions about the nature of this mathematics course and discovered it had in fact evolved into one's own lessons is foreign to teacher behavior. It's not practical and there is not enough time to accomplish any productive results are the complaints heard most often.

The veteran teacher will immediately recognize this behavior as another attempt to inject into the high school classroom a dose of the interdisciplinary curriculum. The students perceived this behavior quite accurately also. "Why are you teaching spelling?" and "I thought that vocabulary was only in the English class," were some of the more correct observations of these 11th grade students. This was gratifying to hear because it showed that students do perceive what happens in a classroom and react to it accordingly. It was the abrupt change in classroom methodology that stirred the students and initiated their questions about the teacher's behavior. Their reaction, while not negative, was mildly resistant. Few students like to be jarred from an established routine. From their point of view one English or Social Studies lesson a day is more than enough. However, the deficiencies that plague many high school students demonstrate that one English lesson is not nearly enough. The Middle College High School was established to identify and remedy these deficiencies. One such attempt has been to incorporate into the Mathematics class the use of other skills that are associated with Mathematics. Two skills in particular are reading comprehension and writing.

If the English teacher were to incorporate allied mathematical skills into the English lesson student reaction would probably be similar. Most students were satisfied with a brief explanation of the purpose of such lessons and agreed to try this approach and attempted to do their best on different procedures that were used. They readily acknowledged and recognized that other skills are necessary in order to understand and comprehend mathematical topics. The essential parts of this experimental instruction were twofold:

1. to teach a subject (Mathematics) by consciously using other academic skills (reading and writing);
2. to teach students how to read mathematics and comprehend it more effectively by adapting a technique called "structured comprehension".

Some preliminary observations about the Middle College High School and some remarks about its student population might be appropriate. The Middle College High School, an integral part of LaGuardia Community College, was started in September, 1974, and presently enrolls a total of 201 students in grades 10 and 11. The reading and mathematics scores of many students are below grade level by two or more years as measured by the California Achievement Test administered to all students who attend LaGuardia.

One objective of the Middle College High School is to remediate such weaknesses in the three years that the student will spend in the Middle College. At such time when the student enters the college it is expected that students will not need any remediation now required of many students now entering LaGuardia.

One successful attempt to remediate such reading weaknesses has been the use of what is informally known as "structured comprehension". In a short series of workshops Marvin Cohn of Adelphi University introduced this concept to the Middle College staff in September of 1974. The concept is basically a technique designed for students who have difficulty with literal comprehension because they lack certain internal and conventional criteria to interpret and understand what they read. The use of this technique has been extensive in some Social Studies and Reading classes at Middle College during the last two years. Now it is being attempted in the Mathematics classes in the 11th grade. This technique demands a classroom methodology that involves students to a large degree and projects a teacher role that is somewhat unconventional. Consequently, unusual reactions from students can be expected.

The quest for the true interdisciplinary curriculum has in some cases been futile because teachers assumed that this ideal curriculum be comprehensive. The purpose of structured comprehension was not to build an interdisciplinary curriculum. The limited curriculum that resulted was purely an unexpected result. The goals were not concerned with presenting many aspects of mathematics but merely to teach a fundamental skill. This skill was the ability to recognize and interpret data presented by charts, tables and graphs. The use of structured comprehension required that students write one or more questions about the data presented. Since the reading level was in many cases poor the corresponding writing level were also inadequate. The technique of writing questions was the adaptation of structured comprehension to mathematics. This limited adaptation was utilized in the following manner. The students were shown the following graph.
Teachers often proclaim and advocate the assets of developing an inquisitive attitude by more often demand and are satisfied with accurate answers to predetermined questions. Few student formulate questions that deal with the assumptions, conditions, or source of the data. One student did write the following. He asked, "What is the name of the graph?" This kind of question is logical but awkwardly phrased. Many students wrote such "questions" where the words "what", "when", "how", and "where" were last words in the sentence. Such grammatical errors not only indicate poor writing skills but also an assumption in thinking that what is desired in the educational process is not questions but answers. This is especially true in mathematics. The questions, therefore, start out by sounding like answers.

In summary we can state that the process of increasing reading comprehension as taught by Cohn has three components. First, the questions must be formulated and asked verbally. Second, they must be formally written and lastly, they must be correctly answered. But there is a previous stage that most teachers overlook and which can be a source of much misunderstanding. Prior to the formulation stage it is necessary to explore and understand the vocabulary that is used. Graphs, tables, and charts have a specialized set of words which enable the reader to understand the data presented. This vocabulary of graphs should be known in order to formulate a question. Students alone composed very few questions about the dimensions of the date. When confronted with the question, "What does the vertical axis measure?" some students did not know the meaning of the word "vertical". Now "vertical" is certainly not a word whose meaning is restricted to mathematics. It has scientific and descriptive meanings as well. This is another indication that the reading level of some students was really low and had an effect on their ability to write questions. Their writing level was limited because their vocabulary was limited. Such limitations will affect their comprehension in other academic areas as well. Other words that were discussed were "horizontal", "axis", and "origin". Other phrases which were explored were "range of data", "interpolation", and "extrapolation". Questions like "How many tonkels were sold in 1972?" (interpolation) and "What is the number of tonkels that will be sold in 1974?" (extrapolation) while perhaps too complicated to be initially composed by students might be answered by them.

The last aspect of mathematical reading comprehension discussed is the ability to make deductions with the given data. Students usually become fairly proficient in these kinds of questions. "What is the difference in the number of tonkels sold in 1971 and 1972?" and "In what year was the number of tonkels sold double those sold in 1971?" are common types of questions. These questions are also seen on many of the recent standardized tests. Such questions are asked to determine if the students can not only read and comprehend data but use this data to make other true statements. In a word, can the students create additional data? It is a skill to be able to decide something about given data and what it implies. Such skills are more necessary in our society where the proverb that statistics don't lie but liars use statistics is much in evidence.

This technique of structured comprehension unveiled some forgotten student attitudes. Students seem to be initially as antagonistic toward other disciplines as they are toward one's own. Perhaps it is the fear of failure that makes the student recoil from delving into a subject more than he is required. This initial reaction is short-lived and put as roe when brief intentions and short range goals are understood and accepted. Most students at Middle College have realistic conceptions of their lack of certain skills and are willing to remedy this gap in their education.

Such an approach as structured comprehension can easily be used in Social Studies or English. Further thought and study can assist in adapting this technique more efficiently in mathematics. The strength of such adaptation will be that structured comprehension can be used in the social sciences in two different ways. It can be used in a traditional way (reading skills) and it could also be used by incorporating into the social science class those topics that make abundant use of mathematical data. Graphs, charts, and schedules are an integral part of many topics. To approach these topics via their mathematical expression using a structured comprehensive approach will prove valuable for teachers who seek to learn the level of their students' skills in vocabulary, writing, and comprehension. It will also be valuable for teachers to teach and explore social science topics from another different but important viewpoint. It will impress upon students that one area of competence is both useful and necessary if one is to understand the complexity of today's society. Lastly, it will demonstrate that academic disciplines are truly interconnected and rely on each other to provide the most complete and comprehensive picture of reality.
Imagine opening a classroom door at midnight on the last day of classes at one of the most conservative of New England's small elite liberal arts colleges to confront the following:

- 85 People, some 75 of them wearing T-shirts emblazoned across the front with the word "BOMO."
- 17 telephones, each manned by a student.
- 5 intercom phones linked to those at the phones.
- 2 stereos, with headphones insulating the listener from the mass of activity that swirled about him.
- A rack of 500 comic books, alphabetically arranged.
- A file of 1300 song information cards, also catalogued and arranged alphabetically.
- A dozen books of sports and movie information within easy reach of an equal number of students.

Finally, dominating the entire scene, a 4' x 5' yellow flag with BOMO centered thereon in 2' high purple letters.

It all began in their freshman year when four members of the class of '74 shared an "entry" in which they perceived themselves to be complete misfits. Fortunately, all lived in the same suite. Forced into isolation upon discovering that their interests were completely at odds with their neighbors, they developed an extremely close friendship. They ate, studied, played, and relaxed as a group.

Early in the term they discovered a common interest in "trivia." obscure facts related to "classic" or old movies, T.V., comics, sports, and "oldies" (5 p.m. records considered "greats") -- all the essence of the late fifties and early sixties teen-culture. When the routine extra-curricular trivia contest rolled around their first December together, they took no interest in the team their entry was fielding, but played independently as a group. Though racking up an insignificant score, they were henceforth absolutely "hooked" on trivia.

The initiation of one of the four into the wonderland of marijuana had not yet taken place, the only activity threatening the unity of their otherwise tight-knit fellowship. Finally the three already indulging convinced the fourth to at least give it a try. Soon the once skeptical member had been completely won over. In fact the ritual nature of the initiation (the dark room, music, a pipe to pass from hand to hand, the aura of adventure and danger associated with mind expanding drugs) served to strengthen their unity even further.

In the course of the evening, as the four became progressively more intoxicated, they began discussing food, with the talk turning to candy. Suddenly John blurted out the word "Bonomo," a brand of Turkish taffy that all remembered fondly from their childhood. BOMO was immediately seized upon as the symbol embodying their unity in the face of their out-group status and was soon scrawled defiantly upon bathroom walls, exams, books, and mirrors to signify that unity and their unremittent dedication to trivia.

From these obscure, indeed ridiculous, beginnings BOMO grew from the tiny group of semi-outcasts it had initially been into the huge "team" it is today. The original conversation-including "the Word"-- was preserved on tape, since they had decided to make a memento of the final member's initiation into the "fraternity" of those who smoked marijuana (a tight "fraternity" in this case since the activity was rare in the entry). However John, who had first uttered the word, later erased the tape when his commitment to trivia waned the following year. This destruction of the concrete evidence of the event, however, simply served to raise it to the status of a legend: though it might have been recounted with perfect accuracy by the surviving three, it was amenable to embellishment as it was passed along by word of mouth. Thus, it could be shaped to the psychic and social need of each teller. Entering the status of an "oral myth," it became the common but flexible property of all who joined the burgeoning community, linking them intimately with its original founding moment. Now, through there are full or partial tape recordings of the part played by BOMO in eight subsequent trivia contests, there exists no positive record of that first night in which BOMO was born.

It has, then, achieved the mythical standing that would appear the necessary foundation of all viable communities.

Twice a year since 1969 a trivia contest overwhelms all other activities upon the campus, curricular or extracurricular. From midnight until 8 AM at the end of the last day of classes yet prior to exams each semester, teams gather to answer questions pertaining to movies, T.V., advertising, sports, and comics, and to identify those "oldies but goodies" - the great songs of the fifties and sixties. The winning team from the previous contest draws up questions, picks out songs to be played, and handles the phone-answering and scoring. The contest is marked by a high pitch of excitement, team spirit, and the occasional detonations of megatons of nostalgia that mark the truly superb piece of trivia. The teams are all very different; the truly great ones each have their distinctive character and approach to the semi-annual bacchanal, though all share certain features in common.

Why would the contest be held just when it is? It is a time when there is a fairly complete atomization of individuals under competitive academic pressure. There has been great preoccupation with personal concerns to that point: getting that paper written, studying for hour exams, etc., etc. Even if a student dislikes competition per se, if he wishes to "do well," to get a good grade, he must inevitably displace a few others on the way up. Why is this moment particularly appropriate for the apparent denial of all the substantive knowledge associated with his academic experience? Why will serious students spend immense amounts of valuable time and energy preparing for and participating in an orgy dedicated to literal trivia?

One reason is its cathartic effect. There is an annihilation of normal consciousness, a suspension or even reversal of the usual rules and norms of the college. Students are reacting against the syndrome of studying that which the academy demands of them. The reversal allows them to invert the structure as it normally stands. An apparent denial or mocking of that structure provides a release of the frustrations and hostility built up against the educational "establishment" and its pedagogical policies. After retaliating against the system in a massive, complex, and scathing parody of it, one is able to return to the system and function in it all the bet-
The trivia contest symbolizes all of this. It is an arbitrary dedication to "useless" facts. It recognizes trivia as trivia, but by paralleling many of the structural aspects of the college, it makes an implicit statement about the nature of the regular semester's work, i.e., that the latter is also essentially trivial.

After mocking the traditional structure, one is satisfied at having been able to lash out, to assert oneself in some way. One doesn't ever again take academia quite as seriously as one might have without such an experience, since its basic arbitrariness and triviality has been symbolically asserted and affirmed. The trivia contest is a supreme celebration of all that which "authority" deems functionally useless. One knows that trivia will never land you a job, selection by a graduate school, or help you solve mundane problems in any concrete way--the very traditional character of the "liberal arts," now honored so thoroughly in the breach. The very fact that the event is put within the larger context of the most intensive work period during the semester, when the library has been and is again about to be crammed with students unearthing obscure "facts" and frantically inventing dubious "distinctions," forces the analogy upon the student. It enables him at least momentarily to laugh at it, making it ultimately "easier to take." Indeed a number of students contend that the trivia contest is all that makes the semester bearable.

But what is it that makes trivia so marvelously entertaining? Why is it the rallying point for close friendships as well as such a well-coordinated and unified team effort?

It is because trivia brings back in concentrated nuggets those feelings, experiences, hopes, and dreams of childhood. It sends the student back briefly and harmlessly to that last golden age of pre-adolescence. The contestants are all individuals who, though not quite fully absorbed into the adult world, will never be children again--and are just beginning to realize what that has taken from them. The nostalgia evoked by a first rate trivia question is devestating. Much as the brief whiff of a characteristic odor can release a flood of memories the good trivia question transports the student back to the moment he first heard that song, saw that home run, or read that comic book--to a time when, at least in the memory's eye, each day was simple and self-contained. This untrammeled nostalgia and regression is a highly therapeutic experience for the poor benighted soul who has been traveling for eleven weeks far into the steaming jungles of apocrypha with little or no assurance that what he has been doing has any meaning to him beyond the grade doled out at the end of the semester. It is a refreshing and revitalizing experience since it puts him back in touch with the sources of his personal identity, the tributaries that bubbled into the mainspring of his psyche and made him what he was.

And, since all participants shared many commo on child-

hood experiences--after all they had been the first generation to be caught firmly in the "electronic web" with its T.V., electric guitars, stereos, slot cars, walkie-talkies, etc.--there was the basis for the discovery of a communal identity, a common glorification of the lost youth they all shared. They were discovering their mutual psychic headwaters. All those things assumed to have been but private experiences are suddenly, surprisingly recognized as near-universal. Rather than diminishing their value, the discovery strengthened it by providing a firmer basis for identification with others. The new bonds had the aura of childhood secrets somewhat bashfully revealed, and a secret revealed to a sympathetic listener will strengthen a relationship like few other things will.

But the parody that was taking place had more than one focus. Not only is it an opportunity to focus upon material one doesn't study in college, but it is also an opportunity for excellence to put into practice all the skill in cramming for examinations that one does acquire in the academy. Books full of movie and sports information are pored over, segments of movies with high nostalgic value tape recorded, hundreds of comic books and song titles filed and cataloged. By using the actual skill honed to a fine edge by their education in the "liberal arts" for consciously trivial purposes, a devastating critique of the academic treadmill if offered.

While the contest does allow for a real release from the atomizing effects of individual grade competition by bringing together a tightly-knit, highly organized team, even "team spirit"--upon which much of the College's sponsorship of extra-curricular matters is grounded--is subject to lampoon. The yellow T-shirts with BOMO boldly emblazoned on the front and the individual's BOMO nickname on the back is the "athletic uniform" or "academic dress" demanded for the occasion. The uniform--as non-sexist as the traditional academic gown--with its affirmation of BOMO as the institution of primary importance is vital to the spirit of the community. The individual's BOMO "nickname" is often completely different than his/her real name. Placed on the back of the shirt, it affirms that one is a BOMO first and an individual second. The loss of ego-identity that results is remarktable. There are no leaders except insofar as seniority is likely to identify greater expertise and knowhow. There are no badges or awards: everyone who is a BOMO is a full-fledged BOMO. No hierarchy of power exists to impede the almost organic sense of unity. And, once a BOMO one is completely accepted. This allows for easy assimilation of new members, a vital task as the prospect of the graduation of the original founders is faced.

On the other hand all this dedication to the team and articulation of its mores and folkways, goals, modes of thought, and even a distinctive jargon is almost too perfect. The atmosphere is slightly tongue-in-cheek, as if the bubble of rah-rah was being consciously overblown. The imitation of the "jock's" do-or-die commitment to his team is just one more small poke at the institution that is the object of parody of the entire enterprise. BOMO simply attempts to unveil the true nature of certain central academic and college-sponsored extra-curricular preoccupations, with a delicate balance maintained between real commitment and mimicry.

The BOMO mystique has a strong element of the "sacred" within it. Ritual is certainly an integral part: marijuana is a kind of "holy" element which almost all partake of during the contest. The esoteric language associated with BOMO is quite

*As Kierkegarrd noted, one "tranquilizes himself with the trivial."
opaque to non-members. The preparation for the contest is intense and commitment to it is unreserved, typically taking precedence over all other obligations. There is a one-hour preparation ceremony directly before the contest itself comprised of a reading of history (scriptures?) of BOMO and a recollection of the now almost “mythical” origin of “the Word” by a founder of the team; an exhortation to victory and to dedication to the BOMO “principles,” and an invocation by a senior religion major, the team “chaplain.” Then throughout the elaborate ritual that is the contest itself, the demon “work’ is excorized: either banished by victory or recognized as harmless by defeat.

BOMO is a curious mixture of commitment and cynicism. If the latter were all, the team members would hardly carry their efforts to the extreme that they do. They might instead, if they had won, decline the championship or simply refuse to accept the winner’s responsibility for administering the next contest. No, for all the acute awareness of the arbitrary nature of the concerns of the academic world, there is yet the recognition that some commitment must be made, some responsibility shouldered. The implication, of course, is that they recognize that all choices are arbitrary and that one must be willing and ready to laugh both at the situation in which society places one at a given moment and at one’s response to that predicament.

The only element of tragedy that lies behind all of BOMO’s irreverence and cynicism, its immense investment in time and energy to “mere trivia,” is that BOMO represents the closest thing to a completely dedicated “intellectual community” one of the nation’s finest institutions of higher learning—dedicated as it is in the public, parental, and faculty mind to “the community of scholarship”—actually provides.

Assassination and the generation gap are the crucially intertwined themes in this recent French film which opened in New York City during mid-Summer. The father, Michel Descombes, (Philippe Noiret) is the clockmaker of the film's title. When we first see him, he is trading stories and political banter with his friends over dinner and drinks at a local restaurant. They joke about politicians and elections, the way Americans do about celebrities and sports events, with a mixture of contempt and caution, familiarity and humor. Drunk, Descombes is helped homeward by his left-wing friend Antoine, (Jacques Denis); home being an apartment above his shop. Descombes lives alone; he shares the apartment only with the memories of a wife who left him decades ago and the books and posters of a teen-aged son he seldom sees. While opening the shop the next morning, he is visited by two detectives who inquire about his van. They already know he had been dining with friends last night, and he tells them in all honesty that his son probably borrowed it. They tell him that the van has been found near the scene of a murder and want to speak with him. Descombes' slow realization of the reasons for his son's act and his own recognition of his own attitude toward the murder, the victim, the police, lawyer and his own son serve as the major elements in the film.

The victim was a factory supervisor, but before that had been a paratrooper in Indo-China and Algeria. The police find evidence of his right-wing allegiances, while a reporter and photographer cynically discuss what shots will appeal best to their sentimental readers. Although the victim had been shot indoors, his car had been burnt by the murderer. The burning car, in fact, is the first scene in the film and becomes a satirical symbol, since many people are shown outraged more by this wanton destruction of an automobile than the murder of a man who, by all accounts, was a wretched human being. It is the father, however, who must piece together the mystery of his son's role in the murder. The detective assigned to the case is also interested in the son's motivation. Inspector Guibond, (Jean Rochefort), is no ordinary cop; he is cynical about the nation which he serves and has more of the active deed of the son and the passive refusal of his father, the victim's police, lawyer and his own son serve as the major elements in the film.

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A Note From The Book Review Editor . . .

In developing this first issue, we invited contributors to consider the Book Review Section as a kind of “round table.” The “round table” should encourage brief and informal discussion of primarily new books, ranging widely in topic, but nontechnical enough to be accessible and of general interest. The result of our initial solicitation is four reviews—two that are brief and two that are longer, more analytical; two on fiction, two on nonfiction. We see this section as one that will evolve according to the tastes and interests of our readers—and writers! Please let us know your reactions. . . .

-- Sheila C. Gordon


Hot off the press from Jossey-Bass is a book of importance to LaGuardia. Important because we have contributed to it—not only because I personally have an article on it, but also because LaGuardia’s maturing educational philosophy has already had impact on the conceptual and programmatic evolution of experiential education. The book is also important to us because it is, as its publishers see it, “the first complete statement of the case for granting college credit for learning gained from . . . experiences . . . (and which offers) a convincing analysis of its benefits to education and society.”

The book focuses systematically on the “why,” “what,” and “how,” of experiential learning. It describes its historical and intellectual framework; it discusses the characteristics of the field and how it is distinguished from formal instruction; and it grapples with the task of assessing what students learn from experience.

The book is an outgrowth of the efforts of CAEL (Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning)—a project of the Educational Testing Service and some 200 colleges and universities, of which LaGuardia is one of the most active institutions.

Sheila C. Gordon


On re-reading ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST, after seeing the movie twice, I liked the book better. This is not your typical bibliophile’s jab at America’s top award-winning movie. I liked the film, too, but the more complex novel has a richer texture. The raw, evocative power of Kesey’s prose does not flag with repeated exposure. Even though the book is seriously flawed by blatant racism and sexism, we cannot dismiss its challenge. Like its hero, Randle P. McMurphy, the book ingratiates itself, cons us and assaults our sensibilities while raising in vivid parable form questions of the individual versus society, of doing good versus autonomy, and freedom of acquiescence and rebellion.

The book has all those liberating moments which the movie audiences cheer. But its metaphorical power is enhanced by Chief Brondem’s mind-blown schizophrenic visions which Kesey brought to his night attendant duty at Menlo Park VA Hospital—where he researched the book—from his daytime stint there as an LSD guinea pig.

Kesey’s novel drew the monster Big Nurse and the hero McMurphy larger than life-size. Published in 1962, the book forecast what we were to learn: the devastating effects of authority’s blind zeal and the self-destructive drive of the savior-rebel. The mid-seventies movie scales the characters to a more human dimension. Like our dreams, it tells us what we already know, with no surprises, only a sense of foreboding. Both rebel and ruler have overreached, and left us with a sense of living on the Ward after McMurphy passed through.

Larry Long
The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism

Throughout his professional career, Daniel Bell has been an astute observer of historical and contemporary social forces. A number of years ago, I read his The End Of Ideology and admired the author's ability to feel the pulse of social thought put attitudes and opinions into a perspective, and pose clear questions for his students and readers to consider.

In his earlier writing, Bell's search was for an idea or conceptual view which would explain social thought and action of the 1950's. In reading his present work, one finds that the search continues, albeit with the broader view of thought and action over much of United States' history. In Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, Bell somewhat laconically relates how America attempted to choose "modernism" for an integrating social theme, but quickly found that modernism's call was not a satisfying one. The lack of satisfaction, according to Bell, stems from the underlying value orientation that the modernistic view implies, namely, the values of the secular world of "experience in and of itself," of more rather than enough, of bigger rather than better.

If we have not found modernism and its values as an acceptable geist, we also have been unable to find a commonly acceptable substitute. Thus, in the absence of a unifying social ethics (such as those of the religious oriented Middle Ages or our own early Puritan notions) our society has developed segmented social realms which often have contradicting goals. We have for example, the tension that exists between a "techno-economic" realm whose values are hierarchical, bureaucratic, role-specializing, and cost-conscious and a cultural realm which values self-gratification and the development of the "whole person".

Rejecting the notion that common beliefs will soon resurrect out of America's puritan heritage, Bell (in true liberal fashion) proposes the establishment of a "public household" sector of society which would balance these diverse forces. The guiding principle of such a sector would be the "recognition of public character of resources and needs . . . ." , long standing socialist aspirations.

Bell's work gives us pause for reflection on several levels. On substantive grounds, the author's argument is a strong one. Many of us, particularly in the last ten years, have no doubt on more than one occasion felt devoid of widely held national norms and disappointed over modernism's less than satisfying secular tugs. If, however, modernism has opened wide social chasms and has been less than a satisfying philosophical view, it also, has one must admit, built the nation on a physical, if not moral, plain and improved at least the material lot of its citizens. There remains, of course, the intriguing question of whether we may have achieved the same economic growth under a more morally conscious ethic. Could we have perhaps accomplished the same achievement with puritan ethics and frugality; or, in light of recent declarations by the Club of Rome and other ecology groups, the better question may ask whether a philosophy other than modernism would have exposed to us the limits of growth earlier in history. Queries of this sort, however, are easy with hindsight and only lead us to that ancient question of why didn't we choose a different view of nation building. One answer, of course, is "why, indeed!"

At the level of practice, Bell's observation about modernism's value of "experience in and for itself" has immediate relevance to us as an experiential learning community. From the onset, we have been careful to view experiential learning as a means rather than an end - a view which the T.A.R. program reinforces. In view of Bell's remarks about the unsatisfying nature of things that can occur when this perspective is lost, one may only hope that we can maintain it.

Beyond the level of substantive arguments and institutional philosophy, Bell's remarks seem to bear a subtle reminder to us in the classroom. The perspective that there are principles which mankind has discovered and sometimes followed may seem to be an obvious notion to us. One might ask, however, it it so obvious to our students? The majority of our students have come to "intellectual maturity" in a time where the tone of education has been one of dissent rather than affirmation of time tested principles. We have, after all, been able to build great buildings and bridges and to explore the hemispheric and molecular worlds because of discovered principles of mathematics and science. Man has, in addition, been able to organize governments and execute justice based on principles of law. And, the emotions of love, trust and hope, the philosophers tell us, stem from that which transcends time and space and makes us human. These principles have not only permitted the human race to survive and to develop but have also allowed us to weather recent disorders without self-annihilation. After the past decade of discontent it may be refreshing for our classroom dialogues to reflect on this obvious but perhaps too quickly discarded view of human progress.

Joel C. Millonzi
In her most recent book, Doris Lessing has created a future world of fate and reflection that can only be described as a tour de force. Not until the last paragraph do we glimpse the scope of her intent, and then the reverberations of meaning echo in memory as they did for the survivor with whom we have visited in Memoirs of a Survivor.

The structure of this latest novel of Ms. Lessing is undeniably unique and compelling. We visit a middle-aged woman living alone in a time when society has failed and, in frightening vision of the future, gangs of children come to control, migrating like predatory herds across what were once cities and suburbs, creating social structures that are at once horrible and reminiscent of our own present institutions, destroying them or allowing them to disintegrate in ways that are different, only in their rapidity, from our own political exercises. If children have become us, then perhaps we can only truly view ourselves as children.

There is an episode that comes to mind. It is early in the era of the children. The gangs have formed, but seem to gravitate to what remains of adult concourse as if in faint remembrance of direction. The survivor's intercessor-companion, Emily, merely a teenaged girl who moves as a pendulum between this new society of children and the remnants of the adult order of the survivor, with her equally young lover, attempts to "civilize" a group of the children. They liberate a house, set up gardens, husband small flocks of animals. But while the young man leads the children where they will, often into marauding ventures, she will lead them where she wills, into a communal, agrarian life where cleanliness can be a social goal and blood on the soles of feet is disapproved. Eventually the children attack them both. He is unable to raise another children's army without her organization. She is, of course, unable either to subsume or overcome the violence of the children. The children then lead themselves and tolerate the two only insofar as they suit the unarticulated urges of the children - a short but chilling parable on political leadership.

The leadership must spring from among the children. And it is the leader who emerges, who provides the key to the epistemological level of the novel.

It is time now to pay more attention to the character of the survivor. She has no name. None of the characters, but Emily, are named. Yet she and all the characters have undeniable and quite precise personalities, or rather personality characteristics.

The survivor is watchful, observant, and accurately so. She seems to know exactly what is taking place in the heart and mind of her young companion; and, in addition, she is patient in her affection for and acceptance of this young pendulum person. She understands the unpredictability and power of the children and even seems to recognize and nod sagely at their evolution into a force that lives above her head, but upon whom her life, in truth, depends. And she reacts to her companion's young lover, not as a competitor, but with a kind of pitying prescience of the weakness that will inevitably diminish him in the eyes of the young girl, while making her in maturity love him more honestly. It is almost as if she had previously known these things.

And perhaps she did. For she has the ability to pass through walls - the physical walls of her apartment, yes, but more, the walls of memory. She continually passes through these walls, carrying us into a kaleidoscopic, Kafkaesque world of shifting rooms and persons, that is as bizarre as it is real. She is remembering and her remembrances take form outside the walls in the world of the children. She remembers a house in which she was continually scrubbing walls. She remembers a room in which gay events that she could never again find, transpired. She remembers parents: a father paralyzed by his own myopic vision of manhood, and a mother who reacted rather than responded, and thus cauterized her own emotional life. She remembers a day in her infancy when she dirtied her diapers and happily played in her excrement, smearing herself and everything she touched. And she remembers an eternity of maternal horror and scalding baths in caustic chemicals. And she remembers the birth of a younger brother whose coming seemed to make her an alien presence in her own home, but with whom she can remember contentedly playing ... whom she can remember teaching.

It is the image of this brother who becomes the leader of the children above her head.

And when the children do visit her that night the wall opens once again. This time, however, it is not she who passes through the wall into memory. Memories are over. They are dealt with. The wall opens with a gigantic stain of water, water breaking in birth, and a woman beyond the wall summons the children, the young girl, her lover. And we realize that this survivor is actually her own memory, that all we have seen are aspects of that memory, and that the end of the novel is actually the beginning: a woman's integration of past and present, in coming to terms with the violent children of her childhood's painful but definitive memories, with the disappointment of love based on idealism and a desire for the loved one to impose his own order on her memories.

Once the wall of the womb is broken, memory and present action are integrated, are whole, are understood, and the survivor (memory) is left on the wrong side of the wall, the outside.

John O. Stevenson, Jr.
We invite articles of general educational interest including but not limited to the following areas: (1) Current thinking and research in the disciplines offering insight into the teaching process. (2) Edited transcriptions of informative divisional and departmental conferences. (3) Reports concerning experimental courses and other innovative efforts within school and community. *The LaGuardia Review* does not feature articles of the critical variety appropriate to specialized journals. Footnotes and scholarly apparatus are not required. Manuscripts or abstracts may be sent to the Editorial Committee, *The LaGuardia Review*,
Main 114, 31-10 Thomson Ave.,
Long Island City, NY 11101.
The deadline for receiving material is February 15.