# A Critique of Deschooling

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Juris Robert Gerve
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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is "deschooling", a concept and a movement which has grown partly out of the crisis in education of the last twenty or so years. Unlike reformers in education, deschoolers demand a paradigmatic shift in the way we view the world. The thrust of their argument is that compulsory schooling, as we know it, is anti-educational and evil in its effects. Schools, even reformed ones, have a hidden curriculum which creates a mental set of dependence on institutions and a propensity for consumption of what the institutions produce. All manipulative institutions must eventually be abolished if mankind is not to squander its finite resources and if man is not to be reduced to a state of psychological impotence through becoming dependent on institutions from birth to death. The school is the key institution in all societies, irrespective of ideology, because it fashions our imagination through the hidden curriculum and because it controls entry to all other institutions. Schools create and perpetuate poverty and inequality, and determine our life chances on irrevelant grounds. Hence the school is the prime target. Without abolishing the schools, there can be no true revolution. The deschoolers propose the creation of convivial institutions. Learning webs where people would be in complete control of what and when and with whom they learn, would replace the compulsory, age-specific, and teacher manipulated structures we have today.

The intention of this thesis is to outline the deschoolers' case and to explore the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underlying the concept of deschooling. The manner in which the deschoolers present their case for the abolition of schools, disguises a spectrum of issues which apparently unbeknown to them, philosophers of education have agonized over centuries before the concept of deschooling was coined. Deschoolers raise many arguments against aspects of schooling as if they are breaking new ground. What really is new, is that a number of key philosophical issues (in different terminology) have been marshalled and organised into

a cohesive theory about man's nature, the nature and function of mass schooling, and their relationship with a new vision of society. What is also new in a sense, is the solution - the abolition of an institution men have long regarded as unquestionably essential to the survival and growth of present-day civilisation. Certainly anarchists have proposed the liquidation of all institutions, unlike deschoolers who do subscribe to convivial ones, but their respective motivations and views of social reality differ markedly.

Beneath the iconoclastic imagery and emotive expressions, the rhetoric and the many seemingly extravagant claims, there is a vision of man and society that deserves to be seriously considered. There are a number of insights which, even if one ultimately rejects deschooling, can be illuminating and which in a sense do fundamentally alter how we view schools.

A further aim then of this thesis is to disentangle the empirical issues from the philosophical, so that attention can properly be rivetted on the latter. As mentioned earlier, the issues are certainly not new - they range over the notions of freedom and authority in education, the relationship between teaching and learning, democracy and equality of opportunity, the concept of education, the nature of man, children's rights, the nature of institutions and of schools, the relationship between schools and society, and the nature and limitations of reform as opposed to revolution.

The deschoolers' case cannot be justified or invalidated on philosophical grounds alone, for the simple reason that they draw upon a wide base of interwoven sociological, historical, psychological, political and economic arguments to present their conclusions. To dismiss or accept their case according to a strict philosophical analysis would be grossly unfair, for they do not pretend to be writing philosophical works. Consequently no attempt is made to explore all facets of the traditional philosophical concerns deschooling touches upon, but rather to indicate their presence and delineate the philosophical boundaries of the theory.

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this thesis was suggested by Dr. Graeme Bassett. An initial examination revealed that two New Zealand reports on education acknowledged they considered deschooling but rather summarily dismissed the theory.

Very little has been written on the subject in New Zealand although some educational texts make brief reference to it. Consequently it was felt there was need to consider the theory in greater depth and to provide a cohesive critique of it, for it addresses itself to a considerable number of seminal issues in education. The theory has much wider ramifications however, in that the analysis of and solutions for education are set in the wider perspective of the deschoolers' concern for the state of modern technological societies and the assumptions about man's nature on which they are based.

It became apparent in the course of examining the theory, that within the scope of a thesis, complete justice could not be done to any one particular issue in the all encompassing spread of the deschoolers' canvas. Of necessity, and at the expense of perhaps greater depth it was decided to sketch in all the main areas and issues from a philosophical perspective, in order to provide an equally necessary guide to any subsequent studies, empirical or otherwise.

Appreciation is expressed to Mr. Alan Cooper for his invaluable comments in the writing of this work. I wish especially to acknowledge the help of my wife, Jan, who has provided the encouragement which enabled me to perservere with this demanding task.

J.R. Gerve
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# CHAPTER ONE

## The World Crisis in Education

While there have always been critics of schools and public education, the 1960's saw the growth of an increasing disillusionment with conventional education, particularly in the Western World, but increasingly in the Third World as well. Some critics began to perceive of an "unfolding world crisis in education". [1]

Some economists at first noted the escalating expense of public education in "underdeveloped" countries [2,3,4] and then began to ask similar questions about Western education and the ability of those societies to provide ever-increasing funds. A national crisis erupted in France in 1968 with revolts in schools and universities. It has been predicted that "the fundamental crisis in all educational systems will last for many years to come". [5]
John Searle, in analysing a crisis as far apart as Kent State and Krakow suggests that

> members of each new generation inherit an institutional framework for conducting their lives that was created by earlier generations... we are living in one of those periods, like... at the end of the 18th century, when traditional forms of authority are being challenged everywhere . [6]

Bantock sees any general educational crisis as a reflection of a crisis in the culture.

> If we are honest, we have to admit that a great deal of our popular education is an almost total failure... The school has come to take its major role in the distribution of life chances... The school can stand as a conservative force (literally conserving) in a disintegrating world . [7]

The peasant children of Barbiana when protesting against the Italian educational system, undoubtedly touched upon other causes of the world-wide crisis when they argued that schools were

> cut to measure for the rich (and)... For people who can get their culture at home and are going to school just in order to collect diplomas . [8]

Charles Silberman in his classical work, documented some of the sources of the crisis in the United States.

> It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere - mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, in sense of self. The public schools - those 'killers of the dream'..... are the kind of institution one cannot really dislike until one gets to know them well. Because adults take the schools so much for granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joyless places most American Schools are, how oppressive and petty are the rules by which they are governed, how intellectually sterile and aesthetically barren the atmosphere... [9]

There are others who view the crisis in terms of the school being a structural part of "capitalist" society, and any weaknesses or crises that this society has are reflected through its institutions, of which school is one. [10]
An erstwhile advocate of the school system in Sweden, Torsten Husén, was awakened to the evolving crisis in his country. [11]

Others chronicle the growing disillusionment with how little schools can change things. Bruner states that

> children start school in the American system with matching I.Q.'s and end up after a decade of schooling with the black child or the poor child ten or more points down. [12]

Roszak advanced the idea that the crisis might be related to an "insecure" culture.

> Let us postulate a law: the less secure the culture, the larger the educational establishment. All of us readily recognise that a society in need of heavy policing must be in serious trouble - for the laws have surely lost their power to command respect. Similarly, a

> society that professionalizes and anxiously aggrandizes its educational establishment - its cultural cops - is also in serious trouble, for the culture has surely lost its capacity to command interest and involvement. The new chronic top-to-bottom state of emergency in our schools does not exist because the educational establishment is not good enough and needs repair. The crisis is that the culture is not good enough . [13]

The list of critics and their targets have become innumerable in the last decade, but up until about 1970 no indictment of schooling suggested that any faults or weaknesses of the system could not be overcome in some way. Indeed it was argued that in many respects the education system was doing a reasonable job in producing so many articulate, incisive and unorthodox thinkers.

## A Radical New Direction

However since 1971 the criticism took an unprecedented turn with growing accusations that not only were schools inadequate, but that the crisis was more deepseated than suspected through schools themselves being anathema to "true" education. Because of their structure, schools could not be reformed under any circumstances. The crisis could only be resolved through the abolition of compulsory schooling. The term to describe this new movement, deschooling, acquired widespread currency, particularly after the publication of Ivan Illich's "radical reinterpretation of social reality" [14] in Deschooling Society, first published in 1971. The book followed a number of articles in the New York Review of Books.

Ivan Illich himself admitted to the rather bizarre origin of the term 'deschooling".

> It is a ghastly thing, this coining of new words. I almost wish I had not spoken of de-schooling. Do you know where I learned it? There was a meeting in the Urban Training Centre in Chicago... I started to tease some of the people from the Black Economic Development Corporation because of the consumer orientation

> In their development plans. And when we spoke of school I wanted to try to get from them what people feel schools do... some guy said 'Yeah, you are right. Schools are made to screw you'. But I understood that he had said schools are made to school you. When I repeated this everybody laughed... In the afternoon we all showed up with buttons: 'School You'. We then began to speak of the deschooling of society . [15]

Illich elsewhere confessed:

> I am so sorry that I used that word in one of my sentences somewhere in my book. My editor said on the telephone that this is the title we will give the book. I said yes, leave me alone, I'm conducting a seminar on something else. And now I am responsible for an ugly neologism! [16]

While there do not seem to have been any deschoolers in Illich's terms prior to 1971, a number of the school critics had elements of deschooling theory in their arguments. In this sense Paul Goodman could be regarded as the forerunner of the deschoolers.[17] As far back as 1947 in Communitas, he explored man's relationship with his industrial setting. Later he contended that youth failed to grow up because their society was not one congenial to growing up in. [18] By the time he wrote Compulsory Miseducation [19] he was questioning the very usefulness of schools and suggesting alternatives such as learning from life itself.

Lister suggests that Goodman's work already contained some of the deschooling dilemmas - an ambiguity as to whether to deschool society or to turn all the society into a school, an uncertainty as to the extent deschooling involves an unrealistic escape back to a cottage industry society from a technological one. Goodman also expresses a faith in humans rather than the institutions they create, another deschooling tendency. [20]

Another prominent critic who initially believed in reform, John Holt, [21] asserted a deschooler claim that what occurs in the classroom is seldom what the teacher thinks is occurring. Implied

was the theme that children's failure can be attributed to poor schools and teachers, but not to the structure of schooling or society itself. His later works still confirmed that he was a reformer-critic. [22,23,24] However, by April 1971, he declared: "For the last year I have been completely convinced of the necessity for deschooling society." [25]

However, the two key figures in the deschooling movement in terms of detailed writing on and commitment to the subject, are Everett Reimer and Ivan Illich. The latter in particular has been prolific and articulate, and generally speaking, where deschooling theory is examined in the work, it will be Illich's version, although both writers have much in common. The two have of course, been in regular dialogue on the topic for more than fifteen years, and out of these and other discussions, the idea emerged that institutions, and particularly the school were the scourge of technological, as well as increasingly, underdeveloped countries.

Ian Lister suggests that apart from these, there are few deschoolers in the totally committed sense. A number of other educationists, intentionally or otherwise, espouse aspects of deschooling, either in theory or practice. For this reason Lister talks of deschooling lacking precision as a concept but possessing qualities of being "a general drift of thinking". Consequently it can make sense to talk of "the deschooling movement" if a direction and general drift can be perceived. By this means, Everett and Illich can be linked to these others who are not fully committed. [26] For instance, Paulo Freire who became known for his adult literacy projects in non-school settings in his native Brazil and through his writing, implemented some of the deschoolers' key ideas. [27,28] Michael Huberman's ideas place him in the deschooling movement also.

> The idea that the only way people get educated is by being enrolled in institutions is part of the unfortunate mythology that has complicated our educational crisis ... and...

> In the majority of countries, the university has created and through its control over certification for high-level jobs - strengthened the myth that no one can learn unless he goes to school . [29]

The Italian, Gastone Tassinari, in his analyses and work with the Barbiana School project, can be linked to deschooling. He takes as his starting point the assumption that there is a dominant culture oppressing the majority and that the school is a vehicle of this oppression. Alternatives, such as the "Scuola and Quartiere" movement, must be created outside of the school setting. [30] Jurgen Zimmer of Germany, with his deschooled curricula for pre-school children and his belief that the life-situation of the learner is the beginning point for any educational planning, can also be placed in the deschooling movement. [31]

Despite their paucity of numbers, the deschoolers have presented challenging criticisms and analyses of our education system as well as wider issues involving the way societies are organised, and the very nature of man. It has been suggested that all the reform movements as well as deschooling could themselves be part of the crisis in education, rather than as ways beyond it. [32] But we have no certain way of knowing at the moment. The deschoolers' claims and alternatives strike at our perception of reality in a way no other radical educational position has in the past.

Illich himself admits to some degree of apprehension:

> I feel very badly about this whole thing frequently. I know that our criticism is destructive of one of the great creations (mass schooling) of the last two generations. It pulls the rug out from under the only ritual which at this moment keeps stability. It calls for a radical alternative which we cannot imagine, because I do not know how one imagines the sense of the future. It therefore opens the gates in a very much more subtle way than a politician would do to something as horrible as Jacobinism. The ideas which we profess about education are no less dangerous and destructive than the political ideas of the Enlightenment. I think the whole argument stands and falls on our understanding of learning. If learning be the product of treatment we would end up with the totally taught society which almost necessarily leads to Vietnam. [33]

Subsequent chapters will endeavour to show that the deschoolers' case stands or falls on assumptions far deeper however than our understanding of learning.

In some respects the deschoolers' criticisms of schools are similar to those of other earlier critics. The former, however, mount a more cohesive and widespread attack and their solution involves a transformation of the entire society. In a sense their diagnosis and remedy mark a complete departure from traditional dissent, against unsatisfactory features of schooling. What are some of the central tenets of their case?

## Illich's and Reimer's Deschooling Theory

Unlike other reformers, the deschoolers advocate the abolition of schools and compulsory schooling because of what they do to children and the "evil" effect they have on society. Schools have become geared, together with wider society, for consumption. Children learn to confuse "process and substance" and come to believe that "the more treatment there is, the better are the results". This inevitably leads to the misconception that going to the doctor is a way of improving health, having social workers results in better community welfare, and so on. All our human needs are deemed satisfiable through corollary institutions, and that the more resources the state allocates to the institutions, the better the results.

The deschoolers however, contend that "institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization and psychological impotence: three dimensions in a process of global degradation and modernized misery... this process of degradation is accelerated when non-material needs are transformed into demands for commodities". [34]

Institutions exert a monopoly over influencing how people view reality.

> This monopoly is at the root of the modernization of poverty. Every simple need to which an institutional

> answer is found permits the invention of a new class of poor and a new definition of poverty. Once basic needs have been translated by a society into demands for scientifically produced commodities, poverty is defined by standards which the technocrats can change at will. Poverty then refers to those who have fallen behind an advertised ideal of consumption in some important respect . [35]

This reliance which all people acquire, particularly the poor, on institutional care, leads to the last dimension - psychological impotence. The modernization of poverty is universal, is the source of today's underdevelopment, and cannot be cured by allocating more money to eradicate it. Only an institutional revolution can overcome it. An institution is first created by an idea and sustained by money - it can be disestablished by removing the money.

Compensatory educational programmes have often failed despite great influxes of money.

## The Rising Costs of the Schooling Panacea

The deschoolers argue that no country in the world, including the United States can afford the education its people might want through schools. It has been estimated that it would cost eighty billion additional dollars to provide the sort of schooling parents in the U.S. desire for their children. [36] Vast sums of money spent in the Third World tend to benefit the children of the affluent, for only they utilise all levels of education. Most of the children in the world do not even go to school, [37] (Five hundred million out of one thousand one hundred and fifty million). [38] Illich notes that

> educators appeal to the gambling instinct of the entire population when they raise money for schools. They advertise the jackpot without mentioning the odds. And those odds are high indeed for someone who is born brown, poor, or in the pampa. In Latin America, no country is prouder of its legally obligatory admission - free school system than Argentina. Yet only one

> Argentinean of five thousand born into the lower half of the population gets as far as university. [39]

According to the deschoolers, those who do, and in particular the vast majority who fail in schools, are worse off than those who do not get the opportunity to go to school.

Everywhere school costs are rising much faster than G.N.Ps and enrolments. In the technological countries, increased expenditures simply do not give the returns anticipated, e.g. in the United States three thousand million dollars was injected into a compensatory education programme, yet no significant improvement could be detected.[40] In effect, schooling raises people's expectations, but apparently cannot satisfy them. Hence, any problems in education receive the traditional treatment of more money. As Illich says: "a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results".[41] Macklin notes that children have become a "natural resource", and their education "an economic asset".[42] The world's population increased from three thousand million in 1960 to three and a half thousand million in 1968 whereas the world's total school-age population (five to nineteen years) rose from nine hundred and fifty-five million to one thousand one hundred and fifty million - a rate almost twenty per cent higher than the world population expansion rate.[43] Because of the unequal distribution of age groups, those countries with smaller financial resources had the larger proportion of their population in the school-age category. The demand for schooling is growing very rapidly, particularly in those countries least able to afford it. This is the "modernisation of poverty" which Illich refers to. Furthermore,

> the high cost of schooling turns education into a scarce resource, as poor countries accept that a certain number of years in school makes an educated man... for poor nations obligatory schooling is a monument to self-inflicted inferiority. To buy the schooling hoax is to purchase a ticket for the back seat in a bus heading nowhere. [44]

The deschoolers, furthermore, deplore the fact that tertiary schooling institutions are disproportionately populated by the children of the middle classes and the affluent. It costs ten times more to "school" a tertiary student than a high school one.[45] In Australia, the children of professionals, (five point six per cent of the Australian population), occupy twenty three and a half per cent of places in four professional faculties.[46] It does appear, then, that the greatest amounts of money diverted to schools tend to benefit those who succeed, and who in turn will end up with greater income returns, later in their careers. A UNESCO Commission reported that the world-wide cost of public education is in excess of two hundred thousand million United States dollars, making it the largest user of financial resources in the world. What makes this statistic equally significant is that this money reaches slightly in excess of half of all children up to the age of nineteen. The Commission furthermore, found that half of all these children who were enrolled, failed even to complete the primary stage of schooling. The deschoolers assert that public schooling constitutes the largest service industry, in virtually all countries, not only in terms of expenditure, but in the way it consumes labour at the expense of other areas of life. The irony is that the vast majority of those who "consume" least schooling are those who pay for a minority to consume most.

> The rules of institutionalized learning have been drawn up to help those with most advantages overcome those with least. It is the same with the developing countries.[47]

The figures show that the Third World countries have an expenditure on public schooling thirty times less per pupil than the technological countries. The former's percentage allocation of resources in terms of the world's educational budget is decreasing and at an accelerating rate.

> Macklin echoes the deschoolers' contention that
>
> equality and democracy through the school system is at best a cynical illusion and at worse a conscious manipulation of the majority for the benefit of the minority.[48]

Even in schools which attempt to provide an education of equal quality, the poor children can seldom make up lost ground, primarily because of unequal home environments. In fact the poor student will keep on falling behind while he depends on the school for his learning. This process occurs among the rich and the poor nations of the world, but it affects the urban industrial nations more. In the so-called underdeveloped nations, modernized poverty is more superficial because institutions, particularly the school, have not developed to the same extent. Their schools have taught them to

> think rich and live poor... Paradoxically, the belief that universal schooling is absolutely necessary is most firmly held in those countries where the fewest people have been - and will be - served by schools.

Schools discourage and prevent people from assuming responsibility for their own learning. "All over the world the school has an anti-educational effect on society."[49] They also discourage other institutions from undertaking an educational role. All aspects of life depend on schools.

Because of the failure of compensatory education programmes,

> equal obligatory schooling must be recognized as at least economically unfeasible... Obligatory schooling inevitably polarizes a society; it also grades the nations of the world according to an international caste system. Countries are rated like castes whose educational dignity is determined by the average years of schooling of its citizens, a rating which is closely related to per capita gross national product, and much more painful. The paradox of schools is evident: increased expenditure escalates their destructiveness at home and abroad.[50]

Just as increasing consumption and production of physical goods will deplete the world of its resources and cause widespread bio-chemical pollution, so institutional pollution threatens social and personal life. The growth of schools in particular is as destructive as the growth of armaments. Universally, school costs

have soared faster than enrolments and G.N.Ps. No amount of money can keep up with the expectations of people schooled in the benefits of compulsory schooling and other institutions.

Furthermore, while equal educational opportunity is

> both a desirable and a feasible goal ... to equate this with obligatory schooling is to confuse salvation with the Church. School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age. [51]

The deschoolers contend that to disestablish schools, laws must be passed preventing discrimination against those wishing to be admitted to learning centres based on previous attendance at some curriculum. It is ironic that there is the least discrimination against those who consume the most in public funds (by reaching tertiary education) and who gain educational certificates bearing very little relation to a vocation.

> Neither learning nor justice is promoted by schooling because educators insist on packaging instruction with certification. Learning and the assignment of social roles are melted into schooling. Yet to learn means to acquire a new skill or insight, while promotion depends on an opinion which others have formed. [52]

The schools basically continue to mete out social rank according to progress along a set curriculum, though not necessarily on learning. Universal schooling however, was intended to be the means whereby social roles were divorced from a person's life history, so that everybody had an equal opportunity to attain any office. What has happened instead is that the school has assumed the task of distributing social roles exclusively and linking them to a learning history. This is no more relevant, according to the deschoolers, than tying them to a person's birth, sex, political affiliation or whatever.

Schools perpetuate another myth - "that most learning is the result of teaching"... whereas in fact "most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school." [53]

Most learning occurs casually. Even the learning of a first language has taken place before a child sets foot in school. This is not to deny that planned learning is of no use.

> The deschooling of society implies a recognition of the two-faced nature of learning. An insistence on skill drill alone could be a disaster; equal emphasis must be placed on other kinds of learning. But if schools are the wrong places for learning a skill, they are even worse places for getting an education. School does both tasks badly, partly because it does not distinguish between them. School is inefficient in skill instruction especially because it is curricular. In most schools a programme which is meant to improve one skill is chained always to another irrelevant task... Just as skill instruction must be freed from curricular restraints, so must liberal education be dissociated from obligatory attendance. [54]

Schools have a number of latent functions - custodial care, social role selection, indoctrination and learning. Illich incorporates these notions by defining "school as the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum." [55]

Children are graded at school by age on the basis of three unquestioned premises - "Children belong in school. Children learn in school. Children can be taught only in school." [56] However, it is often forgotten that the concept of 'childhood' is a recent phenomenon, and that earlier generations failed to discriminate, along with contemporary so-called underdeveloped societies, on the basis of age. Childhood is the product of the school system which in turn was produced by the industrial era. All are modern phenomena. Childhood produces a conflict between self-awareness and the role society imposes through schools. Childhood would not exist if schooling was abolished as an institution which compels compulsory attendance for certain age groups. Schooling convinces us that children learn in schools, and segregation according to age ensures a submission to the teacher's authority. The rapidly increasing demand for childhood around the world as well as the institutional wisdom that learning is the result of teaching, creates an unlimited market for teachers. Yet,

> everyone learns how to live outside school. We learn to speak, to think, to love, to feel, to play, to curse, to politic and to work without interference from a teacher... Poor parents who want their children to go to school are less concerned about what they will learn than about the certificate and money they will earn. And middle class parents commit their children to a teacher's care to keep them from learning what the poor learn on the streets.

Basically, "schools create jobs for school teachers".[57] People are schooled to believe that a teacher must exercise his authority in a classroom or equivalent and that he must assume the mantle of a custodian, preacher, and therapist. His authority is based on these three different claims. As a custodian he

> acts as a master of ceremonies, who guides his pupils through a drawn-out labyrinthine ritual. He arbitrates the observance of rules and administers the intricate rubrics of initiation to life.

As a moralist he

> substitutes for parents, God or the state. He indoctrinates the pupil about what is right or wrong.

As a therapist he

> feels authorized to delve into the personal life of his pupil in order to help him grow as a person. When this function is exercised by a custodian and preacher, it usually means that he persuades the pupil to submit to a domestication of his vision of truth and his sense of what is right.[58]

Notions of individual freedom and rights are of no import in a teacher-pupil relationship when these three sources of authority are merged into one person.

> Their chronological age disqualifies children from safeguards which are routine for adults in a modern asylum-madhouse, monastery or jail... The distinctions between morality, legality and personal worth are blurred and eventually eliminated. Each transgression is made to be felt as a multiple offence. The offender is expected to feel he has broken a rule, that he has behaved immorally, and that he has let himself down.[59]

Yet the most insidious aspect of schooling is the hidden curriculum the deschoolers believe, and the very aspect which makes mere reform of schools futile. All schools, no matter how enlightened and liberal, while they remain institutionalised, cannot shed the hidden curriculum. The deschoolers are not referring to the ghettos' and street's curriculum of the poor or the privileged home environment of the middle class.

> This hidden curriculum serves as a ritual of initiation into a growth-oriented consumer society for rich and poor alike. 60

The first myth of the hidden curriculum is the myth of unending consumption. It

> is grounded in the belief that process inevitably produces something of value and, therefore, production necessarily produces demand. School teaches us that instruction produces learning. The existence of schools produces the demand for schooling. Once we have learned to need school, all our activities tend to take the shape of client relationships to other specialized institutions. 61

We are schooled to believe that the only valuable learning is that which is provided through obligatory schooling. The self-taught person is viewed with suspicion, despite the fact that learning is an activity which least needs another's manipulation. A schooled person will learn to transfer personal responsibility for his needs to that of appropriate institutions from birth to death.

The second myth of the hidden curriculum is the myth of measurement of values. People are initiated by schooling into the belief that everything can be quantified from one's imagination to personal growth. Progress along a curriculum becomes the index of one's personal growth. Soon all values can be produced and measured, and ranking becomes a common activity. Everything can be measured and has its place.

The third myth is that of packaging values. Schools, through the teacher, sell and distribute curriculum, neatly

tailored packages of measurable knowledge to the consumer-pupil. Pupils are schooled to mould their desires to marketable values found within the curriculum. Attendance at an obligatory curriculum in effect promotes "the idea that one person's judgement should determine what and when another person must learn." [62]

The fourth myth is that of self-perpetuating progress. At astronomical costs, schools push children to higher levels of curricular consumption, and the pupil's self-esteem and market value rise accordingly. Education is schooling, which is becoming an open-ended and life-long process. "But growth conceived as open-ended consumption - eternal progress - can never lead to maturity." [63]

Schooling is really a ritual game of graded promotions, everyone is initiated into the myth of unending consumption of services. Guilt is encouraged for those who under-consume. Schooling has become a new world religion and the economy's fastest growth sector in terms of capital and labour.

School has to be viewed as an industry, for its full time participants, distributors and consumers, have become society's foremost employer. The Marxist notion of alienation has validity for schools, for they separate education from reality and work from creativity. "Deschooling is, therefore, at the root of any movement for human liberation." [64]

Other institutions such as the family, the media, transportation, churches and hospitals shape people's view of reality and possess a hidden curriculum also. But the school is the principal culprit because it provides the means to the other institutions. It establishes institutional dependence and a need for consumption.

Our choice is between a life-style of action and personal growth, and one of addiction. Two very different types of

institutions cater for each. The dominant one in the world today is the "manipulative" - the other is the "convivial", although institutions can be placed on a spectrum ranging between these two extremes. Historically, institutions start off by facilitating activity and eventually end up organizing production. Many social institutions, while ostensibly respectable, have developed effects which firmly place them at the manipulative end e.g. nursing homes, mental hospitals, gaols, orphanages etc.

Convivial institutions can be identified by the fact that they are used spontaneously, e.g. telephones, postal routes, parks etc. Men do not have to be coerced or persuaded to use them. They produce no marketable product. Service institutions can be located at either end of the spectrum - on the right the client is the victim of some form of manipulation, whereas on the left the person is free to come and go and there is no social or psychological addiction. "The self-actuated institutions of the left tend to be self-limiting." [65]

There are a number of institutions near the centre e.g. hotels and cafeterias, and some left of centre such as small businesses, hairdressers, and a few lawyers etc. Highways normally constitute a network on the left. Where they become extremely expensive motorways for greater velocity and greater comfort for the private car, they are addictive and manipulative. All other institutions tend to produce only one or two demands, whereas schools create a demand for all those institutions which range themselves at the manipulative end.

To the superficial observer, schools are open to everyone. In fact they are available only to those who continue to make progress in manufactured maturity. Schools force people to forsake responsibility for their own growth. "School... is a perfect system of regressive taxation, where the privileged graduates ride on the back of the entire paying public." [66]

School systems throughout the world are the same in form and in their effect - they are all compulsory, competitive, and open-ended. Institutions on the right are thriving and those on the left withering. Man is being brought face to face with the choice of whether "to be rich in things or in the freedom to use them". It is an inevitable choice for the technological age. The opposite to an economy of planned obsolescence is one of durable-goods. Similarly, the opposite to the existing manipulative institutions is an institutional network which encourages people to take control of their own lives and needs and to help themselves. The alternative to schools is not some new institution which makes people learn but the "creation of a new style of educational relationship between man and his environment." [67]

Despite the frustration so many teachers and children and parents feel about schools, their imaginations have been schooled to the extent that they cannot conceive of learning and society without public schools. The deschoolers maintain that alternatives to teachers and compulsory learning are possible, and that new educational links based on self-motivated learning are indeed essential.

People traditionally view schools as dependent variables of the political and economic system. Most educational reformers and revolutionaries believe that to improve or change anything in the school system, one must first change the political and economic setup. The deschoolers however, argue that unlike other institutions, schools have broken their dependence on the ideology of the state which nurtured them. And unlike other institutions, schools throughout the world have an identical structure with an inevitable hidden curriculum.

> Everywhere the hidden curriculum of schooling initiates the citizen to the myth that bureaucracies guided by scientific knowledge are efficient and benevolent... schools are fundamentally alike in all countries, be they fascist, democratic or socialist, big or small rich or poor. [68]

This universality of schools reinforces their independence of particular social or political systems. The opposite illusion grants school a kind of immunity. People sincerely believe that fundamental educational reform can be effected simply by a political revolution. "A political programme which does not explicitly recognize the need for deschooling is not revolutionary; it is demagoguery calling for more of the same."

## The Deschoolers' Alternative

Illich contends that

> a good educational system should have three purposes; it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known. [69]

There would need to be legal safeguards to guarantee this new freedom in education. Educational pedigree would also need to be outlawed to ensure unrestricted access to all institutions for all learners. Four "channels" or learning exchanges would contain the entire range of resources required for real learning to occur - things, models, peers and elders. Children grow up surrounded by things, people serving as models for values and skills, peers to challenge their learning and ideas, and caring elders to assist and criticize. Illich uses the term "opportunity web" for "network" to describe the particular ways access is provided to each of the four resources. The basis of the new educational setup he proposes is summarized by the question "What kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn?" [70] Learning is dependent on information and the critical response of another person as to how the information is being used.

Illich envisages four different approaches students could use in acquiring educational resources. The first is reference

services to educational objects - these give convenient access to things. They can be located in libraries, museums, theatres, laboratories, factories, airports, farms, etc.

The second approach is through skill exchanges - people could list their skills and suggest how they might be prepared to act as models.

The third involves peer-matching - a communications network linking people who wish to share a learning activity.

Finally, reference services to educators-at-large. People could be listed who are regarded as competent in their field and who are chosen by others according to polls or references from former clients.

For the reference services to educational objects, in a deschooled society, all the environment must become available and accessible as a learning resource. Today, schools monopolize access and they determine what shall be learnt and where. Children are forbidden in many areas of society because these areas are regarded as private and irrelevant to the learning process. In the new network, the people required to ensure its functioning, would act in the role of custodians or guides referring people to factories, offices, business firms and the like which, of course, would have no legal right of privacy. They would be open to all who wished to learn something from them.

Skill exchanges and skill models would be arranged only with the consent of the person involved. Today those who possess skills are scarce and consequently they profit from this scarcity. Schools create scarcity by insisting on higher and higher certification for those wishing to practise skills or teach them. One way of inducing people to share skills under the new system would be to create a skill exchange "bank". All would be given a basic credit with which to acquire skills. Further credit (to improve oneself further) could be gained by teaching others in that skill. Only in this way would people have a claim on more

advanced models. Laws would need to guarantee that publicly tested skills and not educational pedigree qualified people for particular jobs.

A peer matching system would provide opportunities for people to seek others who are involved in a similar learning activity. In the present schooling system, one person has the right to oblige others to form associations in a classroom. The right of free assembly is violated every day throughout the world in schools. Every person should have the right to call a meeting, irrespective of age or sex. To avoid abuse of the peer matching system, only the name, address and learning interest of each person would be listed in a directory.

In a deschooled society, as conventional teachers disappear, a demand for people who are masters or leaders in their art should arise, who would guide people through difficult learning exercises.

This is the ideal, the deschoolers posit, and subsequent chapters will examine the soundness of the underlying principles of their analysis and blueprint.

## Reactions

The reactions to such a fundamental analysis have been predictably varied, some responses adulatory, others cautious, and some disparaging. Birchall believes that "Illich is neither radical nor a thinker (a lot of his misconceived objections to schooling or schooled education can be found in Rousseau's 'Emile')."[71] This latter point will be examined later in more detail.

Neil Postman stated that Illich was a problem for him, for the latter by contrast had shown how conservative Postman really was, despite the radical ideas in Teaching as a Subversive Activity.

> ...it is perfectly plain that Illich's ideas about deschooling society are merely the logical extension of almost all the important criticisms made of the schools during the past five or six years. One could not have read, say Paul Goodman or Edgar Friedenberg or Jules Henry without sensing, at some level of one's understanding, where it was all pointing. [72]

It could be asked why Postman and other earlier critics of the educational crisis era did not make the leap and assert that schooling itself was bad.

> A better rationalization is that it wasn't in everyone's mind at all, including my own, that it took a social critic of Illich's brilliance and peculiar cultural detachment to move criticism of education to another and deeper level. [73]

Rosen talks of

> the brilliance of his (Illich's) writing, its epigrammatic and paradoxical weight, (which) poses an obstacle for some... He often maps different but converging approaches to his target rather than building a reasoned argument ... In 'Deschooling Society' he does not marshal evidence in the usual way, but piles image on image... At the same time one is struck by the heavily theological cast of his writing... [74]

Green however is scathing.

> Presenting not the slightest evidence that he has read the literature of education, Illich picks out the very problems with which educational researchers and philosophers have been concerned for at least fifty years and displays them, as if for the first time... I find it difficult to understand how people who <u>are</u> familiar with the literature can react to Illich's reports upon the schools as if he were bringing the news that God is dead. [75]

He adds that there is no denying that many teachers still regard knowledge as a commodity and as something that cannot be questioned. But this has been something which has been debated since William James and John Dewey. Knowing, not as passive assimilation, but as active participation and inquiry has been purveyed repeatedly by Piaget, Bruner, logical empiricists, and many others. Illich offers it as a revelation. [76]

Nield suggests that one of Illich's best contributions has been the new educational terms he has introduced to enrich our thinking in this area. [77]

Hook is vitriolic.

> It is a book (Illich's) whose absurd extremism warrants little attention from anyone endowed with a normal portion of common-sense... Despite the extremism of his position Illich writes with an astonishing confidence and dogmatism, piling one questionable statement upon another in reckless disregard of evidence, logic, and common-sense. [78]

Götz contends that deschooling has generally been coolly received by educationists. "One reason...is that...one would have to be pretty much out of one's mind to suggest that the schools are not reformable." [79]

Crittenden admits that he can neither completely accept nor reject Illich's theory, and concludes that this "is the worst possible response to a revolutionary." [80]

Sizer declares that Illich's book is "frustrating", although it has a

> classy title, bombastic rhetoric, and a reputation for iconoclasm... And all the time the real business of schooling drifts on, untouched by the fire and brimstone. Education - the largest of the public professions is not about to respond to strident appeals to commit corporate hara-kiri. 'Deschooling' is delicious at conventions, but leads nowhere. [81]

Richard Wollheim regards Illich as a "disturbing thinker" who

> irrupts into the dreamlike state which is by and large our contemporary political consciousness as an ambiguous and monitory figure. We may disregard him. Or in a waking moment we may try to shrug him off. But we cannot, once having taken note of him, forget him. [82]

Burke-Hall [83] sees Illich as

> a cultural revolutionary... doubly subversive because he aims at the 'transformation of both public and personal reality', the redefinition of the relations between man and the world and between man and man... it is a mistake to assume that his writing is addressed only to Latin Americans and the Latin American situation. Attempts to limit Illich's thought in this way ignore the scope of his work, his own personal background, intellectual tradition and roots, as well as his synthesis of much Western radical social thought. [84]

The reactions are almost as innumerable as notions on why there is a crisis in education. Polanyi's outline of the forms of scientific controversy may throw some light on Illich's work and the reasons why many have reacted coldly or even vehemently against his ideas.

> For when a new system of thought concerning a whole class of alleged facts is at issue the question will be whether it should be accepted or rejected in principle, and those who reject it on such comprehensive grounds will inevitably disregard it as altogether incompetent and unsound... (Illich) has his own conceptual framework by which he identifies his facts and within which he conducts his arguments, and each expresses his conceptions in his own distinctive terminology. Any such framework is relatively stable, for it can account for most of the evidence which it accepts as well established and it is sufficiently coherent in itself to justify to the satisfaction of its followers the neglect for the time being of facts or alleged facts, which it cannot interpret. It is correspondingly segregated from any knowledge or alleged knowledge rooted in different conceptions of experience. The two conflicting systems of thought are separated by a logical gap, in the same sense as a problem is separated from the discovery which solves the problem. Formal operations relying on one framework of interpretation cannot demonstrate a proposition to persons who rely on another framework. Its advocates may not even succeed in getting a hearing from these, since they must first teach them a new language, and no one can learn a new language unless he first trusts that it means something. A hostile audience may in fact deliberately refuse to entertain novel conceptions... because its members fear that once they have accepted this framework they will be led to conclusions which they rightly or wrongly - abhor. Proponents of a new system can convince their audience only by first winning their intellectual sympathy for a doctine they have not yet grasped. Those who listen sympathetically will discover for themselves what they would otherwise never have understood. Such

> an acceptance is a heuristic process, a self-modifying act, and to this extent a conversion. It produces disciples forming a school, the members of which are separated for the time being by a logical gap from those outside it. They think differently, speak a different language, live in a different world, and at least one of the two schools, is excluded to this extent for the time being (whether rightly or wrongly) from the community of science.[85]

R. Burke-Hall sees this as the reason why so many educationists cannot take Illich seriously - it involves a "paradigmatic shift in the way we see the world."[86] It may also be pertinent to add, cynically perhaps, that too many educators are directly involved in perpetuating the system Illich proposes to abolish. "A revolution in thought is difficult enough, but a revolution in action disturbs everyone who sees their best interests being promoted by the status quo."[87] This line of reasoning however, borders on the argumentum ad hominem, for while we may be mindful of a man's motivations, they should play no part in our evaluation of the logic of his case. Illich of course, quite often sails close to the ad hominem line by suggesting that proponents of schooling have had their "imaginations schooled", implying that their logic is automatically dubious.

## Illich and the Development of Deschooling

Illich's background can throw some light on the work he has produced and the ideas he advances. He was born in Vienna in 1926, his father being wealthy landowner and engineer. He and his family lived in various parts of Europe. One of his close friends from an early age was the eminent Roman Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, a major influence on his life. By the age of twenty-four he had attained a doctorate in history and degrees in philosophy and theology. It is interesting to note that the ideas for deschooling seem to have come from men like Illich who have been "schooled" more than most. He makes no mention in his works how he deschooled his own imagination, a cognitive operation surely crucial in helping schooled minds in accepting his theory. In addition, Illich has been closely associated with some of the most notorious institutions in

terms of his theories - as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church and a Vice-Rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico. They have obviously not had the debilitating effect on him which his ideas about institutional dependence would suggest.

Illich has a remarkable ability with languages. He has learnt and speaks fifteen of them. This ability, particularly with Spanish and Portuguese has enabled him to cross cultural barriers and gain deeper insights about other societies, particularly relating to his Latin American experiences. Together with his experiences as a priest in New York, his European background, and later work in the Third World, he was able to develop a theory which had direct relevance to both types of societies.[88] As his thinking developed he began to see that no society in the world was able to provide a decent life for most of its citizens and that the cause of this could be attributed to institutions and social organisations built upon "unnatural" ideas about men. Professed aims of "post-industrial" and "underdeveloped" countries were continually being thwarted as a result of this.[89]

Burke-Hall points out that notions of "nature," "natural", and man vis-a-vis the natural world appear repeatedly throughout Illich's works.

> They are profoundly theological and might be best seen as an attempt to revive and refine aspects of traditional natural law theory in philosphy and religion.
>
> Illich sees human life as being natural in the sphere of action, rather than being basically involved in production and consumption of commodities and services.[90]

These ideas link up with a commonly accepted interpretation of Rousseau's conception of the child and Illich's view that a child will best learn when left to his own natural devices and autonomy. Teaching and schooling are "unnatural" interventions in a very "natural" process of human learning. However, a lot depends on how

"natural" is defined. It can be argued that it is impossible in today's complex technological societies to untangle what is 'natural" and what is "unnatural" or" artificial". A further issue to be resolved is the implication that what is 'natural" is necessarily desirable or good.

Rowan Ireland cautions against any inclination to accept Illich's analysis as applicable equally validly to any society. He reminds us that Illich is directing his attention in his works to countries where great extremes of wealth and poverty exist as well as cultural diversity.[91] Such caution seems valid in terms of Freire's "sectarianism" - the "stereotyping of whole groups in the educational process, preoccupation with dogmatically defined problems rather than with investigation of real ones."[92]

Emmanuel de Kadt draws attention to the enormous class chasm in a country such as Brazil and the consequent failure of invariably middle class teachers trying to bridge the gap with peasant class children.[93] Freire, "unlike the more vague and romantic Illich", faces up to another unpleasant aspect of such societies, i.e. the fact that "the condition of oppression is, in part, maintained by the tyranny of the oppressed."[94]

Freire lists such things as fear of freedom, gregariousness, fatalism, self-deprecation, emotional dependence [95] which ensure that the oppressed do not perceive where their oppression is coming from, even though they feel the full force of suffering it causes.

Lewis advances the idea that poverty creates its own culture which becomes instrumental in reinforcing the oppression.[96] Therefore freedom from the usual causes of oppression in these societies does not give full freedom. 'The culture of poverty outlives poverty itself."[97]

Illich's pedagogy arises partly from a fear that international middle class consumerism and the social systems

it generates will be imposed upon the poor of the under-developed countries.[98] Furthermore, the school and cultural situation Illich is writing of in South American countries, is far more formal, rigid, and authoritarian than that of some more liberal Western countries... "The very visible brutishness of the uneducated masses feeds a conviction among the educated that the absence of discipline and the array of knowledge taught in good schools makes all the difference between the poor and themselves."[99]

Another relevant feature of these societies is their rigidly stratified, impersonal bureaucracies. Their organisational structure is impervious to significant change and new information. Unlike some liberal Western countries, these countries lack other institutions which could mobilize anti-bureaucratic opinion, e.g. unions, political parties and other nation-wide organisations.

> When we consider how in Latin America pervasive paternalism and dependence are reinforced by the symbols and gestures of authority habitually used by teachers, then Illich's preoccupation with method as message makes sense. But considering middle class Australian University students and their problems, the same preoccupation seems to be a distraction from more important issues relating to the content of messages.[100]

It would be reasonable to accept that Illich's analysis is based on his particular experiences and that these do not necessarily mesh with the experiences of all other societies. However, Illich directs his attention equally to advanced technological societies which he has experienced in Europe and North America. His analyses are in differing degrees applicable to these other societies. Illich does not attack specific institutions or specific social organisations. He does not have to for he contends that institutions and particularly schools, despite their local variations, do exhibit universal tendencies, irrespective of the ideology of the country. This is why he can talk of the "phenomenology of school".[101]

Implicit in his vision of a better society is his view of the universal nature of man,[102] which requires a similar kind of expression through convivial institutions. These problems and these solutions, in general terms, are applicable to New Zealand as well as to Uruguay. What local content they may assume is an entirely legitimate though different matter.

In subsequent chapters it is hoped to examine in some detail the notion of deschooling and to tease out some of the theoretical issues which the deschoolers consciously or usually otherwise raise. To its credit Illich's work draws upon sociological, psychological, historical, educational, political and philosophical bases. For this reason, while a philosophical reaction to his ideas is insufficient in itself, it is a necessary exercise before these other usually empirical issues can be resolved.

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# CHAPTER TWO

## Education and Freedom

The deschoolers' opposition to compulsory schooling raises the whole area of freedom and education. It also brings under close scrutiny our perhaps too easy acceptance of "childhood" as a "natural" and inevitable phase of life and our lack of certainty as to what are children's rights . As a more deeper level the issues touch upon the nature of children and of men.

## The Concept of Childhood

The whole concept of childhood is full of complexities, according to Kleinig.[1] Indeed, it might be more useful to talk of several loosely related concepts. There appear to be institutionalized and normative concepts of childhood. If we look at St. Paul's statement: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child: when I became a man I gave up childish ways",[2] we can see two sets of contrasts. There is the institutionalized one between "being a child" and "being a man", the child having a meaning equivalent to "under age". An institutionalized use categorizes someone according to customary or legal-like criterion. Then there is a normative contrast in St. Paul's statement, between "childish ways" and "adult ways". A loose casual relationship could exist between the two in that "childish ways" tend to be the result of being a child. Kleinig contends that the normative concept has a "conceptual priority" over the institutionalized one, because the institutionalized contrast would have little meaning if there were no significant normative differences. However, it does not follow that the institutionalized contrast actually mirrors a significant contrast.

Because the distinction between the two types of concepts is wide, a number of quite distinct institutionalized concepts commonly occur. The term "child" has different meanings legally for different people, e.g. barman, busdriver, theatre proprietor, etc. And similarly with the normative use.

Confusion can occur with this distinction when according moral rights however, e.g. Mill's "liberty from interference."[3] Confusion can occur when an institutionalized concept is used to debar someone from the full exercise of liberty. It can also occur when the two types of concepts are accorded the same status. No inevitable connection exists between not "in the maturity of their faculties"[4] and "below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood", despite the fact that Mill tries to forge one.[5] Doing so leads to all sorts of difficulties. Someone may qualify morally, but non-qualification institutionally could deprive him of that liberty. Similarly, a converse situation could arise. "Institutionalization of the concept may function to extend the period of childhood in a normative sense, and therefore, possibly non-qualification for the right to liberty."[6]

To this extent, the deschoolers are right in their concern that with compulsory schooling being continually extended, so the attainment of adult liberties takes much longer to achieve. The Ontario Report talks of the creation of "academic playpens"[7] in the post-industrial society, through childhood seemingly being prolonged into adulthood by education. Normatively many so-called children are ready for adult liberties but institutionally they are debarred. This of course is a constant source of conflict and friction, particularly in many secondary schools, where teachers are institutionally caught in the invidious position of imposing constraints far more appropriate to younger children. This is possibly why many children (and adults) regard schools as prisons.[8]

## Historical Aspects of Childhood

It is only in the last four hundred or so years that the idea of childhood evolved in Europe.[9] Illich bases much of his views of childhood on Philippe Aries' classic work in which the latter establishes that the notion of childhood simply did not exist in medieval society.[10]

> Childhood as distinct from infancy, adolescence or youth was unknown to most historical periods... Only with the advent of industrial society did the 'mass production' of 'childhood' become feasible and come within the reach of the masses. The school system is a modern phenomenon, as is the childhood it produces. [11]

Prior to the industrial age, and certainly throughout the "underdeveloped" world today, no distinct phase such as "childhood" was or is recognised. As soon as children were able physically, they joined their parents and other members of their families in performing useful and "real" tasks.[12]

All this of course indicates competing normative uses of the concept of "childhood". Wardle confirms Aries' (and Illich's) view that it is "almost reasonable to say that childhood was invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[13] Kleinig contends that it is an overstatement to talk of the "invention" of the concept then, but agrees that the last few centuries have seen a somewhat different use of the term, "one which exists beside and in tension with rather than replaces the Pauline one."

For Paul, childhood is something to be grown out of, the start of the road to adulthood. But for us, Wardle claims, childhood is "a stage having characteristic needs and interests which have a value of their own, regardless of their role in preparing for adult life."[14]

This new normative sense of "childhood" originated, according to Aries, in the upper classes, where their labour was not necessary and spread to the other classes during the industrial age. With the protective legislation being introduced to prevent exploitation of children as cheap labour in the early stages of the industrial era, growing mechanisation of production, and an increasing need for greater skill and education in industry, more and more children found themselves in schools. Schools, in a negative sense, kept them off the streets and kept them off the unemployment registers.

Other unemployed were put in workhouses, the mentally ill were relegated to asylums, in part of what Foucault claims was "the great lock up" - the tendency of Western European society to somehow enclose from the mainstream of society such marginal or superfluous groups. In time "it was no longer merely a question of confining those out of work, but of giving work to those who had been confined..."[15]

While accepting that the industrial age played a part in creating "childhood" in the new sense (nothwithstanding Crittenden's claim that Illich provides scant empirical evidence that schooling in particular was responsible),[16] Illich rather paradoxically states that "If there were no age-specific and obligatory learning institutions, 'childhood' would go out of production."[17] It seems that it would take much more than this measure to remove the consciousness of childhood from advanced modern societies.

Furthermore, it is not the idea of "childhood" which is bad but, if we accept Illich's criticisms, what we do with it to children. If the idea of childhood did arise with the industrial age and mass schooling, this does not automatically condemn it, for many good things arose out of industrialisation as well. If the idea of childhood could be shown to be an inevitable outcome, and not a haphazard one, of industrialisation and if we accept that the industrial age was as inevitable in the process of Western civilisation as the stone and bronze ages were, then there is no point in lamenting the emergence of "childhood", any more than we need lament that of "deschooling" through a misunderstanding in the technological age. It seems unrealistic to believe that we can abolish childhood through abolishing one institution. The roots simply go far deeper and are more widespread. This is not to imply that the idea of "childhood" may never vanish. Quite conceivably different eras in the future will generate other ways of looking at the ages of human life and the idea of childhood may vanish or become an historical relic. In our historical context childhood is a reality to be faced. Illich's argument has value if we use it to remind us not to use childhood as an instrument to constrain people on irrelevant

grounds. Illich's claim that ..."only by segregating human beings in the category of childhood could we ever get them to submit to the authority of a schoolteacher,"[18] is trivially true, for adults with all their freedoms and rights can be made to submit to all sorts of authorities without anyone claiming that it is their age category which produces their submission. In the worst sense, children could be coerced into compulsory schooling through many ways other than falling back on the recognition that they are children. If our industrial and technological age requires "educated" or "schooled" children it will find ways to achieve this, with or without schools. In an enlightened sense of course, the "authority" of the schoolteacher should not be based on something as arbitrary as the age of the learner. Illich, possibly unwittingly, raises the important area of authority and education which will be explored later. Indeed the authority of the teacher is questioned time and again by deschoolers and is a crucial element of their case against compulsory schooling.

## Rousseau and Childhood

The deschoolers' attitude to children seems to fit into the great "progressive" tradition stemming from the Seventeenth Century and articulated by men such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Tolstoy, John Dewey, Susan Isaacs and A.S. Neil.[19] A similarity in a number of assumptions can be traced throughout the Plowden Report in England and the Hall-Dennis Report in Ontario.[20] These theorists in varying degrees have accepted the "romantic vision of the child as innately good, developing spontaneously and naturally if only he is not perverted by bad teaching and a corrupt environment... The child unfolds like a plant, while the teacher plays a rather modest gardening role", if even that.[21] Their ideas of helping to free the child through stressing the importance of direct, first-hand experience can in turn be traced back to the great changes in attitudes to knowledge which took place with Descartes, Bacon and Locke.[22] "The approach to learning advocated by 'progressives' was basically scientific" for it used the methods of observation of science.[23] The child was consequently placed in much the

same sort of situation as the scientist. "Implicit is an element of freedom of choice, of personal discovery; it is not knowledge accepted on authority but through individual effort."[24] This could well be Illich and the other deschoolers speaking, although they would demand not "an element" of freedom, but maximum freedom.[25]

The scientific revolution, in part, laid the foundations for freeing man and the child from dogmatic and authoritative knowledge. This new preoccupation with the laws of nature led to the idea that freedom resulted from abiding by the "natural law of development inherent in the growth of the individual."[26] The teacher's role was basically to follow what Susan Isaacs called "the spontaneous interests of the children". Rousseau regarded as incontrovertible that "the first impulses of nature are always right". This again fits in well with the deschoolers' insistence on the spontaneity and autonomy of children learning what they want and where they want in their environment without adult intervention. Implicit in this is a negative conception of freedom, i.e. the absence of constraints. They have the right as independent entities to develop as their individual natures impel them. Yet as Bantock notes, there is a constraint of the laws of nature, for the laws, if that is what they are, do not allow any sort of development, any more than an acorn can become an oak. The plant metaphor is often invoked by thinkers of this kind who suggest there is an analogous situation between the growth of plants and that of children, for both will grow best when there is no outside interference or intervention. Hardie has exposed an error in this line of thought by conceding that while there may be similarities in adherence to laws of physical growth, there is no such connection obviously in terms of mental growth and learning, and consequently there is no justification for bowing to any "laws of nature".[27] However, it could be argued that the psychological laws governing mental growth and learning are just as much rooted in the "laws of nature" as those of physical growth. In any event psychological "laws" contain no value element.

Bantock rejects the notion of freedom springing from the ones of natural development, and the idea that "true" education will occur once the man-made constraints are removed, as the deschoolers seem to think. He concedes that an element of "negative" freedom in certain situations is essential to the achievement of some educational progress. The attitude of Rousseau and indeed the deschoolers to the nature of children is a key element in their thinking on freedom. They discard earlier notions of the child being born in "original sin", needing external coercion to develop and learn. All evil and errors come from the adult world.

A.S. Neill in fact views the child as being "innately wise and realistic",[28] and this is seemingly the basis for the deschoolers' ideas also. They claim that children can learn what is best for them without adult experience and the guidance inherent in compulsory attendance, curricula, etc. Theirs is an optimistic view of the nature of the child, which seems rather at odds with much of the research findings of Piaget and Kohlberg which point to limited abilities at various developmental stages of cognitive and moral growth. Rousseau often contradicted himself[29] however, and did call for some human intervention in the affairs of the child: "His sense experiences are the raw material of thought; they should therefore be presented to him in fitting order".[30]

It is an interesting question whether the deschoolers, like Rousseau, do take the ultimate step by suggesting that when the child only does what he wants, he will only be doing what he ought. It in fact takes the negative freedom and suggests that positive results will inevitably flow. Bantock rightly points out that there is no logical connection linking "doing what one wants" and "doing what one ought".

This is a critical point for the deschoolers, if what they are advocating is complete freedom for the child to do what he wants, in the belief that this will naturally lead to doing what the child ought to do in terms of his optimum development.

If the deschoolers cannot guarantee that the child in complete freedom will develop optimally, and in logical terms they cannot, as Hume indicated three centuries ago, then they are back to adult intervention, at least for some children who do not develop as they ought to. There seems to be no avoiding the fact that education is a moral endeavour and that it makes sense to ask not only whether a child is doing what he wants to, but also whether he is doing what he ought to.

Negative freedom can also lead to one person's desire interfering with another's. True freedom, according to Bantock seems to flow from a commitment to a moral rather than a natural law. He accepts Cranston's[31] view of human nature, as being torn between the emotions and reason. Some restraint seems necessary not only for social freedom but also for learning i.e. being initiated into established bodies of learning... "It is to the production of moral, not 'natural', man that educationists are dedicated."[32] It appears that deschoolers hope to produce moral man also, but by allowing the "natural" man full freedom to develop.

The Nature of Education and Freedom

Crittenden tackles the issue of freedom and education from another angle, by arguing that one must begin by examining the use of "education". It could be that different uses of "education" might affect the freedom of those engaged in it differently. It is difficult to determine what Illich means when he uses the "education" for he does not define it in adequate detail. He obviously does not feel that what is happening in schools is "education". His proposal for learning networks and his insistence on people being free to learn how and what they will, implies a very loose and unusual use of "education". Education seems to be equated with the learning of anything in any manner one wishes, outside of schools.

> But if schools are the wrong places for learning a skill, they are even worse places for getting an education. School does both tasks badly, partly

> because it does not distinguish between them... Schools are even less efficient in the arrangement of the circumstances which encourage the open-ended, exploratory use of acquired skills, for which I shall reserve the term 'liberal education'. [33]

Compare this definition with that of Peters who suggests three essential criteria for any activity to satisfy if it is to be called "education". First, something of value must be passed on and the activity have intrinsic value. Second, the activity must generate a wide cognitive perspective by being related to other ways of understanding and experiencing. And finally, those who participate in the activity must come to care for it and consider it worth doing. Basically education is seen by Peters and others as an initiation into worthwhile activities, an intentional act of one or more persons leading someone or some others into worthwhile experiences and understandings.[34]

Now, in Illich's terms of education as an "open-ended exploratory use of acquired skills", education could conceivably be thought of as say, the activity of pickpockets experimenting with different methods of stealing, i.e. acquired skills..While it would be obvious that this is not what the deschoolers would mean, their definition leaves out the crucial moral aspect which would preclude certain activities from coming within the gambit of education. Their definition also implies that acquiring skills is not really part of the process of education, only the "open-ended exploratory use" of them.

Crittenden reminds us that the term does not specify particular objects or activities and that it can be viewed in a very broad sense of being "virtually synonymous with the total experience of life", and in a more restricted sense as referring

> to the processes by which the adult members of a society deliberately initiate the young into their beliefs and practices. In societies of any complexity, this task has given rise to distinct institutions (schools)... [35]

Oakeshott believes that education involves a transaction between persons, usually through a school, leading to an initiation into a cultural inheritance, part of which embraces the enduring achievements of human knowledge excellence in thought, feeling, imagination and action.[36]

> Consequently... it will be obvious that 'becoming educated' is not primarily an idiosyncratic matter, to be determined by the private desires and interests of an individual. Like the acquiring of ordinary language, the main educational activities involve the acceptance of public rules and procedures...(it is) entirely arbitrary the claim that whatever a society decides to do with its schools, or whatever an individual at school wants to do, is to be called education. [39]

Being an "autonomous" learner in the deschoolers' proposed "networks", could give even less guarantee of education occurring than in schools, for discovering things for oneself (a deschooling tenet) presupposes a social and conceptual context.[38] Oppenheimer, a creative scientist himself, argued that great discoveries simply do not occur outside a tradition or cultural initiation.[39]

What all this is leading up to is that being educated involves accepting the constraints, logical and conceptual, of being initiated into public forms of knowledge. Whether or not schools are necessary for education to take place is another issue. The issue is that cultural initiation and education cannot occur without the acceptance of some limitations on a person's freedom.

Logically, there need be few constraints on the freedom of a learner in the deschooled situation for education simply means an "open-ended exploratory use of acquired skills", (the only constraint might be that posed by the "acquired skills"). Indeed "open-ended exploration" does assume the maximum freedom to experiment. In terms of what appear to be more thoughtful and philosophically sound definitions of education it does seem that the learner must sacrifice some freedom in accepting the logical sequences, structures, and relationships which exist in the public forms of knowledge. The deschoolers, by giving the learner complete freedom to learn what and when he wishes, may in fact, reduce his freedom in terms of the considerable time he may waste in following up wrong choices, for the learner in the deschooled situation is not obliged to follow any advice of the limited professional educators.

Despite the constraints imposed by the logical relationships within forms of learning, a fair degree of freedom in the patterns of organisation seem to be possible, within schools and out of them. Despite the fact that there are individual learning differences, it does not follow that learning as part of gaining an education, is a private matter.

> To communicate with one another and to be in a position to distinguish what is true and worthwhile, human beings must acquire concepts and methods of inquiry that are subject to public criteria and rules. Education is the systematic effort to engage in this kind of learning in its most significant forms... If one complains that the application of such standards is an unwarranted interference with the freedom of the learner, one must be opposed to education in any serious sense at all. To be consistent one should treat the learning of language - with all the structure it 'imposes' on how we think and feel and act - as seriously miseducative and as doing violence to the freedom of the child. [40]

Yet the deschoolers do not see language learning as having these potentially bad characteristics - they regard the acquisition of a language as a part of "natural" and "casual" learning of life, in no way affecting the freedom of children.[41]

We can now consider the compatibility of education and freedom on a broader front. Berlin differentiates between two previously mentioned aspects of the ideal of freedom - "negative" and "positive".[42] Negative freedom is basically an absence of interference by others: "positive" freedom entails the presence of factors which make the exercise of freedom meaningful. Crittenden, while arguing that these are really two different concepts, posits the distinction between "external" and "internal" freedom, the former identifying freedom in relation to factors external to the person, and the latter according to conditions within the person.[43] His and Berlin's distinctions have this commonality: theories of external freedom can be either negative or positive, whereas all internal freedom theories are positive as well. External, negative freedom is the state where the less obstruction exists, the greater the person's freedom is said to be. The greatest objection to it is that it pays scant regard to the social and cultural context of people; that people

are, in relation to their social experience. Crick points out that even "privacy is itself a social relationship."[44]

Crittenden regards the principle of non-interference as indefensible for children, because they lack the capacity to look after themselves. Yet this seems precisely the form of freedom the deschoolers are talking of.

> Philosophies which state in positive terms what is and what should be seem to lead to the constraint of one human being by another, to the imposition of enlightenment upon the heathen. A philosophy based on the right of meximum freedom from human constraint begins by denying the right of any man to impose either truth or virtue upon another.[45]

Birchall confirms that Illich

> is operating with an assumed definition of freedom as free from all constraints
>
> (i) Constraints are opposed to freedom;
> (ii) Freedom is a necessary condition of education;
>
> Therefore
>
> (iii) Constraints are opposed to education.[46]

The second premise can be regarded as false for as established earlier, education does have a definite intrinsic character which does impose some restrictions on what a learner may do. Macklin denies that this is how Illich conceives of freedom. He contends that the latter constantly calls for limits as a condition for freedom of action. In particular such constraints do not exist in society in general and in institutions and the technology we employ.[47] For this reason people do not have the maximum freedom that they might have. Macklin has however subtlely shifted the argument, for the constraints are to be put on factors in society, so that people are ultimately free of the constraints which impede their freedom. There is still no hint in Macklin's or Illich's arguments that constraints might have to be imposed on people as a condition of freedom for them. Birchall's claim then that Illich is operating on the external, negative freedom appears accurate. In terms of the latter's definition however, compulsory education does violate a learner's freedom. But unless we are thinking of freedom as an absolute principle, there may be other

considerations, which in certain circumstances may have a higher priority than freedom. The problem is that the deschoolers do seem to be using it as an absolute. They regard any intervention in the learning process, without the learner's approval, as a paramount evil of the schooling system.

Birchall points out that

> the fact that you are compelled into doing or not doing something is a threat to your freedom only if what you are proposing to do is an exercise in freedom. Illich seems to be operating on the naive nature view of Rousseau's that we are 'born free', and, therefore, all our actions are in essence free ones. [48]

The development of psychology since Rousseau has provided some evidence that some human behaviour is the result of compulsive rationalisation, rather than the exercise of freedom.

Crittenden suggests that educational intervention might be justified more satisfactorily

> by appealing to standards of what is for one's good as a human being. Education... obviously constitutes one of the 'high order' goods of human life. The loss of freedom that may be involved in the process of education is thus outweighed by the good to be attained. [49]

It might be possible to persuade someone who espouses non-intervention along the lines that, being left alone, has value only when a minimal of physical conditions have been seen to and that some initiation into educational activities is an inevitable pre-condition for this. It could be though, that by pursuing this line we have moved into a more positive expression of freedom, and away from the deschoolers' position.

The other version of external, negative freedom is determined by "the absence of interference in relation to the objects and activities to which a person may claim a human right."[50] Its practical application hinges on what constitute human rights.

Freedom and Rights

Human rights in the liberal tradition, are all rights of liberty, corresponding to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom is achieved when someone is not prevented from enjoying these rights by anyone else. As far as children are concerned, only deschoolers talk of them as possessing the same rights as adults (even the right to choose one's guardian!)[51]

Hart stipulates that the natural right to freedom can only be applied to "any adult human being capable of choice".[52] Crittenden takes the view that it would be "reasonable to treat children as though they had these rights, modifying the policy only to the extent that their actual level of development requires it."[53] It seems that the attainment of the maturity for the complete possession of rights for children is irrevocably linked to some minimal form of education. And education in turn is regarded as a welfare right (and these are actually possessed by children). By providing children with a welfare right initially, we make it possible for them to possess liberty rights at a later stage.

Theories of external, positive freedom deal with the external factors which make it possible for as much freedom to be enjoyed as is consistent with the freedom of others. The positive aspect is the belief that not only should others not unjustifiably constrain a person, but that adequate opportunities should be provided to enable a person to enjoy a right e.g. the right to travel overseas is meaningless in a sense, if a person's income barely makes it possible for him to live, let alone travel. The ideal of equality surfaces here as well as that of freedom. Education is seen as contributing directly to making a person free. The deschoolers take the converse line: that one must be free first to benefit from education, and not educated first to be free. This does make education instrumental however, which is what deschoolers bitterly complain about, e.g. education is used through certification to determine social roles and life chances of individuals.[54]

Theories of internal, positive freedom stress a self-determining person who acts in terms of standards of moral good or human excellence. The kind of self-determination is as important as the ideal. Berlin questions this type of freedom, as in his view, it provides authoritarian-inclined regimes with a plausible justification for limiting the freedom of their citizens, i.e. for their own good.[55] Crittenden defends the basic thrust of the theory by arguing that, the fact that a regime might use it for such a purpose, does not invalidate it as a theory. He goes further by postulating that

> every interpretation of internal, positive freedom is also in some sense a theory of education, for the objective is to become a self-determining agent who acts in accordance with standards of what is thought to be worthwhile... When we speak of a person who can interpret and appreciate the world from a variety of conceptual perspectives, whose capacities for thought and feeling range over the main public traditions of human understanding, who has acquired the facility to act intelligently according to standards of moral and intellectual excellence, we are at once describing someone who is ideally educated and has achieved freedom in an internal, positive sense. [56]

This is not to suggest that formal schooling can achieve this alone, but that it can be part of a 'freedom-making experience".

Compulsory Education: a Contradiction?

We now come to a key element of deschooling theory: whether education should be compulsory. Because deschoolers regard that very little learning is the product of formal teaching,[57] and because their highest ideal in education is the autonomous learner, completely free to make all significant decisions, as a condition of being truly educated, compulsory schooling, for these and other reasons, is anathema to them.

Three factors complicate the issue. Whether education should be compulsory or not depends on what sort of society one is trying to establish. If it is the deschoolers' "convivial "one, it may well be that education in terms of their major premise cannot, by definition be compulsory. The danger is that there is no guarantee in their system that cultural transmission will be widespread and effective.

A freedom which allows a person not to be educated carried the burden of a culture not carried forward, nor enriched by the agents who opt out.

A second factor for consideration is a partly empirical issue: are the schools working in accordance with the educational ideal spelt out earlier? Or are they operating in a manner as depicted by Illich and other deschoolers, as certificate factories cynically paying homage to high ideals, but miseducating in the worst possible sense? This has a bearing on whether education should be compulsory. For purposes of this question, and to treat the issue philosophically, it will be assumed that schools are operating as they should be, or at the worst, are reformable.

The third factor involved in this area, is the fact that children are involved. Winch contends that

> they are not yet in a position to exercise freedom of choice in the full sense, because they have not yet been sufficiently educated in modes of social life to be able to deliberate. The exercise of authority over them, therefore, cannot be an encroachment on their freedom: it is via the exercise of authority that they will be inducted into modes of social life and thus be made capable of deliberating and exercising choice. [58]

Birchall[59] suggests that perhaps the deschoolers' argument is that compulsion is a contradiction of the educational process, much in the same sense that Nietzsche said that people cannot be forced to be good. Perhaps they likewise cannot be forced to become educated. No matter to what extent we coerce we can only hope for a semblance of education. Yet most teachers do not force children to become educated. Hopefully, the subject matter itself captures the children's interest. Attendance, not interest is compelled, so that in time interest will develop, unconnected with compulsion.While compelling people to become educated is counterproductive, providing causal conditions for education to occur, i.e. compulsory attendance, need not be.

Furthermore, compulsory attendance serves a useful function in freeing the child from his parents (or in the deschoolers' terms, the hidden cirriculum of the home and parents, which can be as bad as that which they contend exists in schools). Often parents show scant interest in freeing or educating their offspring.

In some instances, "uneducated and uncritical values are brutally inculcated. Were there no compulsory schooling, parents could maintain a crippling cultural hold on their children.."[60] It is unlikely such parents would voluntarily ensure their children become educated. Compulsory schooling has another benefit - it can free in varying degrees a child from his social class. The equal opportunity of attendance can and does give some children from poorer economic classes increased opportunities for social mobility.

Compulsory education then, can be justified for the long term interests of children, on the assumption that schools are truly educational, or can be reformed if they are not. The deschoolers would deny both and declare compulsion as anathema to the true education of the autonomous learner.

Beyond compulsory attendance, there are issues involving further constraints on the learner within the school situation. A minimal rule of law must prevail in the classroom context for education to proceed - we encounter Popper's "paradox of freedom"[61] i.e. too much freedom leads to too little.

> If the rule of law imposed impartially by those in authority is absent it simply is not the case that children are actually able to do what they individually want. They are subject either to the arbitrary will of a bully or to the tyranny of peer group pressure... Or something like a state of nature prevails, as depicted with ghoulish exaggeration by William Golding in his 'Lord of the Flies'. [62]

Education also involves the transformation of children's wants into something more qualitatively better and stable. Therefore some constraints will occur in terms of their immediate wants, some of which may not be compatible with education.

Education may involve the mastery of something children may not find immediately interesting nor something they may

perceive as a want. The educator

> cannot, as in an ordinary social situation, say that what people want to do is their own affair, provided that they do no damage to others or interfere with their liberty. To adopt this laissez-faire attitude in a school would be to abdicate as an educator. Caretakers,maybe, can adopt such an attitude, but not teachers.[63]

The deschoolers argue that one of the things wrong with compulsory schooling is that no everyone wants to learn the same thing and certainly not to learn it at the same time. They contend that a compulsory graded curriculum rides roughshod over people's interests and freedom. Birchall denies this, stating that this represents Illich's

> superficial theory of interests that seems to draw little on psychology. It seems to work on the assumption that interests have fixed and immutable objects at all stages of childhood. A child may not express an interest in subjects A, B, and C at $t_1$, but part of the reason for sending him to school is to develop those interests or the capacity of interests to have objects whatever these objects may turn out to be in later specialised life.[64]

There could be a number of reasons why a child may not be interested in learning from the set curricula at a particular time. He may not be interested (at least initially) or he may be "indifferent". It would seem to be the teachers' task in either instance is to develop such an interest, if at all possible. There may however, be a few instances where external factors may make the lack of interest intractable, despite the school.

Birchall suggests that adults cannot seriously accept a child's claim that he does not need to be educated or does not want to be. Children lack the kind of knowledge which education provides in making informed statements. The child would need to have some idea of developmental stages and of the structure of knowledge to determine what and when he would learn. There is an assumption also that children's interests are "somehow necessarily educative".

We also cannot assume that because a child is not interested in learning something that he is uninterested in learning it per se. Furthermore, interests which are not present at one point of time may flourish later with an involvement in the subject. There is no logical reason to suppose that someone must find a subject interesting immediately to be educated. A lot of dull groundwork may in fact have to be covered in some areas before more interesting aspects of the subject arise. Young children generally seek objects rather than are committed to them. Birchall regards it as educationally irresponsible not to try to influence children with educational interests and objects.

With Illich's hidden curriculum of conviviality and the abandonment of any overt curriculum it does seem that education will end up as meaning little more than having an interest. This can be viewed in two ways - the interest in being critical, and the interest that is critical. The second presupposes the first type of interest, but they are certainly vastly different. A knowledge of how to be critical is involved.

> Education is more than any interest; it is a critical interest or as Matthew Arnold put it, the capacity to 'see things as they are'. And this capacity does not come about overnight, but only through a strenuous wrestling with specific problems and subjects. Hence the importance of the fixed, overt curriculum. [65]

Whether it takes place in schools of course is another matter. It could be contended that Birchall's definition of education as critical inquiry is stipulative and arbitrary. Birchall would reply that it is interpretative, more than just surface usuage. His use implies a patterned way of being interested and not a host of unrelated pieces of knowledge acquired casually and at whim.

The laissez-faire attitude is a central element of deschooling theory however, where the teacher in the conventional schooling situation is depicted as going far beyond an acceptable role and interfering with people's liberties through his multiple functions as custodian, preacher and therapist.[66] Their alternative is autonomous learning.

Peters suggests that autonomy implies the ability to order one's life according to rules worked out by oneself. Yet Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories of moral development,[67] point strongly to the fact that such an attitude is not developmentally possible before the age of about seven.[68] Musgrave also mentions Piagetan stages in this context.[69]

Illich and other deschoolers seem oblivious to the wealth of evidence which has accumulated pointing to definite sequences in cognitive and moral growth. Deschooling theory seems to act on the assumption that there are no justifiable grounds for treating children any differently from adults. They seem to regard children as being capable of operating at the abstract or formal level of cognitive functioning and at the post-conventional or autonomous level of moral development. It is a classic case of ignoring individual differences on a mass scale, in that say an eight year old simply does not behave intellectually or morally as an eighteen year old adolescent. Many adults cannot cope in an autonomous and free situation. It seems verging on the irresponsible to expect all children operating at earlier cognitive and moral stages to make wise decisions about their learning choices, let alone whether to learn at all.

Macklin however, argues that it is nowhere near as easy to specify what or when a child should learn, as it is to specify what or when a child should eat. The "when" of learning is not determined by adults, but according to Piaget, the child's conceptual development. Schools can only present the occasion; they cannot "dictate" when a child will learn. Similarly with the "what" of learning. Only a child can choose.[70]

We might ask why it is relatively easy for adults to determine what and when a child should eat. Surely it is because of a superior knowledge of what constitutes a balanced and adequate diet - not because adults are inherently superior but because experience and education over a larger number of years makes their judgement over food (in most instances) more valid than that of a child's.

Now, it is conceded that it is much more difficult to determine what or when a child must learn, although the principle of more experience of life, i.e. a better understanding of the consequences of all the options which can be chosen still holds. If an adult can see that a child choosing a constant diet of some inferior food will lead to ill-health, then he has a responsibility to guide the child into better dietary habits. If an adult can see that fishing all day will prejudice the child's life chances and narrow his social, cognitive, and imaginative perspective, then he has some responsibility to guide and initiate the child into more worthwhile activities. If we do not abdicate our responsibilities in the physical health of the child, why do we have qualms about doing so in his overall growth? This line of thought, assumes unlike the deschoolers, that the schools are either providing the sort of education outlined earlier, or that they are reformable if they are failing in this function.

No one seriously suggests that adults determine when a child is developmentally ready for the learning of certain concepts. However, the (best) schools provide an environment which systematically capitalises on developmental readiness. A knowledge of Piagetian developmental theory and of readiness brings with it some responsibility to ensure the necessary environmental conditions are optimal. Illich's proposed system provides no such systematic preparedness. It leaves it to the child to develop casually and haphazardly, for adult intervention is seen as an evil to be avoided. Some children may begin to learn concepts at an optimum time by sheer chance. Others will either want to learn something before they are fully ready to understand because it looks novel and attractive, or will encounter concepts long after they should have developmentally handled them. Musgrave in fact suggests we know little of cumulative deficits and "how late some Piagetian stages may be left without endangering the ultimate capacity to understand relevant higher level concepts."[71] Perhaps something along the lines of striking the iron while it is hot has some validity. Only a school (i.e. some form of systematic, compulsory education) can provide the controlled environmental factors and the assessment of when a child might be reasonably ready to cope with another stage of his learning. Autonomous learning at large does

not even provide a minimal guarantee that a child will encounter concepts and experiences crucial to his readiness and development.

Schools, it is true cannot dictate when a child will learn. But then, neither can learning webs. At least in the school situation children are required to go through experiences which may stimulate a more enduring interest in worthwhile activities. The environment, while full of learning opportunities, does not provide this organised and compulsory experience, and does not normally take the child beyond his immediate interests and needs (which themselves have been created by his previous socialization), at least not without some guidance. Guidance certainly is provided in the learning network, but only if the child wishes to utilise it. He is free to choose, as in everything. Certainly in an autonomous learning situation, a variety of learning will occur, but there is no guarantee again that any or much of the public forms of knowledge will be encountered, except perhaps at a superficial level. This would disadvantage the child in terms of his cultural inheritance and his capacity for later autonomy in the fuller sense.

To a limited extent within the confines of worthwhile activities[72] the school can allow a child, increasingly with age, a choice of what to learn. But it is doubtful whether a society, whose progress is intimately based on its citizens having some understanding of its cultural inheritance, can abdicate its responsibility completely in this area. In Illich's proposed alternative, we are faced with the uneasy prospect of the continued existence of a cultural heritage being determined in large part by the immediate whims of children who have very little idea of its value and how it undergirds their very existence.

Illich points out that the burden of proof is placed generally on the child to justify why he wishes to learn something other than what adults decide. In fact, it can be argued that the opposite should occur; that our intervention, particularly when it results in compulsion should be justified to the child.[73] Peter reminds us that

> there is evidence (from Kohlberg) to suggest that the giving of reasons for action has little educative effect at an early stage. Yet long before this age, children, for reasons both of their own survival, and for the welfare of others, must acquire in other ways a basic code of behaviour. [74]

Again it seems the deschoolers are oblivious to theoretical and empirical evidence on a key aspect of their theory. The burden of proof for adults to justify their intervention in education increases in relationship to the ability of the child to understand the giving of reasons and later, what constitute good reasons.

Peters[75] also notes that it does not make much sense to propose (as the deschoolers do) that children should choose the subjects they will study. The "choice" is a hollow one until they have had some experience of these subjects first. A real choice can only be based on some understanding of what (and why) a person is rejecting an option. A choice based on immediate attraction (a child's let alone on adults' foible) is virtually no choice at all. And to learn to make realistic choices, one must first have a predictable environment, one which a school can provide.

The development of autonomy is a slow and laborious business. Young people have to learn gradually to stand on their own feet and direct their own lives. They are not likely to do this if they are not encouraged to take responsibility and make choices about important matters within their limited experience; still less are they likely to do it if they are pitchforked into an anarchic situation in which they are told that they have to decide everything for themselves. Yet this is the alternative deschoolers leave themselves open to, by making freedom an absolute and by blurring the real distinctions between adults and children.

White advances a forceful argument in favour of compulsory education.[76] By allowing children to learn whatever they wanted to, or even nothing at all, we are restricting the range of possible things which they might choose for their own sake. We can even accept that the child be allowed to determine what is in his best interests, by first initiating him into as many activities or ways of life as possible, and equipping him with the skills to ensure a maximum of freedom and autonomy when he has the maturity to cope with it. If he then opts as an adult for rejecting the activities he was initiated into and the autonomy it gives him, he is free to do so. This is not the case however, for a child in Illich's learning networks, who uses his freedom and say, fishes all day. As an older child, or adult he may still lack the sorts of experience a good education can give which lead to a maximum of autonomy and freedom.

Dore remarks that the striking aspect about deschooling writers is "their lack of any sense of the reality of childhood."[77] They seem not to have noticed the great differences in children's capacities for wonder, discovery, and curiosity. He argues that curiosity and the ability to perceive are trained capacities, and not in most children, "natural" ones. Most children simply do not notice many things until they are pointed out to them. For the many children, particularly those from unstimulating home backgrounds, schools quite often can stimulate a sense of wonder, and develop an enduring interest in worthwhile activities.

> Neither Illich nor Reimer gives any indications he has over seen or heard about the way in which a gifted and patient teacher can, by careful, conscious but loving manipulation, coax out of the sort of child who scores 65 in an I.Q. test, the first glimpses of curious interest, the first experience of mastery of an idea or a manual technique, the first flow of self-confidence. [78]

How such a child will ever come to achieve even this modest state of liberation is hard to see in the deschoolers' autonomous alternative, for it is almost inconceivable that such a child will

ever freely approach the legitimate guides of the networks. It is equally inconceivable that the many children who come from lower class homes will ever thrive in an autonomous situation.

Autonomy and self-motivating drive seem to be the characteristics of middle class children, whose home backgrounds have already given them an advantage. It seems strange that the deschoolers who profess a profound sympathy for the world's dispossessed, propose an educational set-up which will give an advantage to the self-starters, the children of the middle-class who already prosper from our existing schools. Dore notes that Russell remarked some time on

> the frequency with which philosophers with a passionate concern for the fate of Man show an inconsistent indifference to the fate of individual men. An awareness of the wide range of difference among men - in capacities as well as in temperaments - should be the starting point of any educational theory. [79]

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## Institutions

In order to understand some of the reasons why deschoolers find schools bad, it is necessary to examine their view of institutions and society in general, for they contend schools are part of a wider malaise in our society, even though schools may have become the chief culprit. For this reason, and because Illich is endeavouring to draw up a theory of social action,[1] he has drawn upon and applied his analysis to a wide variety of institutions, e.g. the Church,[2] schools,[3] transport,[4] and health.[5] Implicit in his analysis of society is a vision of man, which too needs examining, for his alternatives embody such a view.[6]

The previous chapter considered the deschoolers' arguments on education and freedom. Some of the arguments against their stand were based on a certain understanding about society and schools, i.e. that schools are either educating in terms of Peters' and Crittenden's analysis of the concept of education, or that the institutions are reformable. The deschoolers' case partly rests on the conviction that schools are not educating, and are indeed miseducating, and furthermore, they are impossible to reform. If the deschoolers' case against schools proves accurate, then the case for compulsory education becomes that much more difficult to sustain. Not that a description of a state of affairs can lead to a logical presciption[7] i.e. the fact that schools are either miseducating or unreformable, does not logically allow us to argue that education ought not to be compulsory.

## The Concept of an Institution

What seems to be "central to the concept of an institution is some over-all purpose or purposes without which the behaviour of its members would be unintelligible."[8] An institution is a body of people with a definite purpose, related directly or indirectly to some human need. They may have many purposes, such as the State, and they may have arisen without anyone in particular establishing them. Institutions have "generalized aims which provide a unity of purpose to an indefinite number of individuals who conceive of the actions and activities in the light of them."[9]

How effective an institution is, largely depends on how well its individual members have grasped or understood its overall purposes. It also depends on the type of society if exists in, e.g. the institution of the secret police in a totalitarian country is generally particularly effective because of the milieu in which it operates, and because it has been given great powers by the ruling group to preserve the latter's existence.

Institutions can find their original purposes greatly frustrated by the people who man them. Ritualization of rules can occur to an unnecessary degree. A power or authority structure can arise within institutions, distorting their central function, until the institution ends up merely serving the interests of its own members. Alienation can also occur as the institution grows larger and more impersonal, a process Karl Marx confidently predicted for highly institutionalized "capitalist" societies.

Broom and Selznick define the process of institutionalization as the "development of orderly, stable, socially integrating forms and structures out of unstable, loosely patterned, or merely technical types of action."[10] They confirm that institutions have four characteristics: clear-cut goals, an effective system of internal communication, means of exercising control over their members, and a system of maintaining their own security (an adaptive one with the environment).[11]

How does this compare with Illich's use of the term? He appears to apply it to a broad range of social elements, e.g. telephone systems, roads, learning webs, footpaths and schools. A complicating factor is that he employs the word "tool" to include not only hardware items such as motors, pots, brooms, etc. but also "productive institutions... and reproductive systems for intangible commodities such as those which turn out 'education', 'health', 'knowledge', or 'decisions'."[12] The reason for so doing is to use one category for all "rationally designed devices". The analysis in effect depends on examining various systems and concentrating on the product rather than the mechanism behind the institution. As Macklin concedes: "His intention is clearly not logical rigour but maximized impact."[13]

Possibly the best way to understand how the deschoolers think of institutions, is to avoid the static concept of what an institution is, and to concentrate on the dynamic one of how an institution is used. The human process rather than the structure is their concern.

The Spectrum of Institutions

Illich introduces a crucial and interesting distinction between two major categories of institutions - manipulative and convivial. (Like many of the terms Illich and the other deschoolers use, they are charged with emotional overtones, and imply approval or disapproval. For this reason it seems to be difficult to say anything in favour of manipulative institutions, Almost by definition they are bad, if we conceive of manipulation as being bad).

He suggests there is a spectrum along which institutions can be placed. On the right (the placing seems significant also, if the political right is seen by deschoolers as objectionable), are those which exist to produce and manipulate people into unwilling consumption (often of goods and services they do not need). They tend to be socially addictive (i.e. the more you use them, the more you need to), they are limited to qualified users, and they endeavour to frustrate any attempts to seek alternative ways of satisfying the need. The manipulation originates from the people operating the institution rather than the organisation as a material entity. Often in manipulative institutions the operators end up as unable to change the institutions as those who become its clients.

One of the worst features of manipulative institutions is that they mould the imagination of those who come within their orbit and narrow man's view of himself and his possibilities. Hence most people today would be aghast at the thought that welfare institutions are bad per se. They may be far from perfect, but the thought that hospitals, schools, transport systems and social welfare agencies are irredeemably bad seems unimaginable. As Freire says:

> Manipulation...attempts to anaesthetize the people so they will not think. For if the people join to their presence in the historical process critical thinking

> about that process, the threat of their emergence materializes in revolution...One of the methods of manipulation is to innoculate individuals with the bourgeois appetite for personal success.[14]

At the other end of the spectrum are the convivial institutions, and indeed the aim of deschooling is to produce a convivial society. Macklin notes an important problem involved in its use. i.e. the concept of conviviality is used not only to explain what is desirable, but also as the criterian by which to judge that desirability.[15] Illich's standard method of describing what is convivial is to parade example after example, although he does state that conviviality is "individual freedom realized in mutual personal interdependence and, as such, (is) an intrinsic value."[16] A convivial situation is where people matter more than the production of goods.

Crittenden suggests that

> the primary idea which sustains and illustrates Illich's account of institutions is the distinction drawn by Aristotle between 'poiesis' -making - and 'praxis' -doing or acting. The more convivial an institution the more it fosters 'praxis', enjoyable activity for its own sake; institutions on the right are concerned with producing things, so that value is moved from activity to product.[17]

While Illich is not against "poiesis" as such, he is opposed to the making of products for which there is no genuine human need and where technology has ensured that a person does not really "make" something in the traditional sense.

Macklin regards Illich as accepting an existentialist view of man - that only humans give life any significance. A convivial society is undergirded by such things as joy, concern for others, happiness and the lack of a desire to possess things. It is the opposite of our present technological, materialistic societies.

> Increased manipulation of man becomes necessary to overcome the resistance of his vital equilibrium to the dynamic of growing industries; it takes the form of educational, medical and administrative therapies. Education turns out competitive consumers, medicine keeps them alive in the engineered environment they have come to need; bureaucracy reflects the

> necessity of exercising social control over people who do meaningless work. The parallel increase in the cost of the defense of new levels of privilege through military, police and insurance reflects the fact that in a consumer society there are inevitably two kinds of slaves: the prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy.[18]

Continuing consumption stems from an individualism threatened by a bureaucratic society. Accumulation of goods is a form of security, but in turn it creates envy and alienates people one from another. Conviviality is the converse - the sharing of goods that are genuinely needed in an autonomous, but co-operative spirit. Illich and the deschoolers are concerned to produce a humanized society, and in this sense share a common lineage with Karl Marx, the humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, and the Freudian 'left', e.g. Erich Fromm.[19]

This humanized society on which Illich sets his vision, will only be attained if developed technological societies agree to limit their material growth. Limits must be imposed on social "tools" i.e. those things which are of use in some kind of human activity. Production of goods and services must be curtailed for they are physically polluting the environment and causing psychological impotence.[20]

Illich talks of watersheds in the growth of institutions where their usefulness degenerates into a liability. He illustrates this with medicine, which reached its maximum usefulness in the early part of this century, by establishing the connections between a number of causes and effects, e.g. health and a balanced diet. Illich, seemingly in response to earlier criticism that Deschooling Society was unscholarly in that he failed to provide references and evidence for his generalisations, mounts a formidable case bristling with footnotes in Medical Nemesis![21]

However, beyond an initial usefulness, medicine began its decline into a liability by assuming to define sicknesses and death and even create new diseases - iatrogenesis (an illness caused by professionally recommended treatment).[22] The extent

of the growth of health services has been phenomenal during this century, with the bulk of the money being invested in research or diseases particularly afflicting technological societies, and in most instances directly caused by the way of life created by industrial growth, e.g. heart diseases. Coupled with this has been the growth of an irrational mana attached to doctors and a high degree of mental and physical dependence on their "services". This is the point most institutions have reached in technological societies and consequently they are primarily manipulative.

Macklin suggests that it is extremely difficult to quantify growth and utility, particularly the latter.[23] There may also be argument as to what constitutes a genuinely useful service provided by an institution. It is interesting to see that Illich acknowledges that an institution can begin with convivial attributes and end up being manipulative. From his analysis of institutions on the spectrum, it does seem that they cannot change their nature. Yet he advances the argument that manipulative institutions cannot be reformed - they must be abolished, implying that their nature cannot be altered to something more desirable. It seems rather odd that the process can only operate in one direction - from convivial to manipulative, but not vice versa. He does not advance any justification for this position and yet it is a crucial element in his theory. What is it about manipulative institutions which poses an inherent obstacle to reform? Why can they not be stripped of their undesirable features and made to serve their original purposes, if the will is there?

Costs of institutions throughout the world do appear to be accelerating at a much greater rate than the services they offer, hence the invariable demand and mass superstition of most people in thinking that society's problems can be remedied by injecting more and more money into the appropriate institutions.[24] The deschoolers, often to the mystification of many, contend that only by channelling money away from our manipulative institutions can we really get to grips with our problems. And indeed many of our problems would presumably disappear with the ultimate abolition of

manipulative institutions. As Birchall reminds us, "It is not institutionalisation as such to which he (Illich) is opposed, but institutions of a certain character."[25]

Man's Nature and Institutions

It is difficult to see how Illich would ensure that his convivial institutions did not grow, nor assume manipulative features. It could be argued that it is not institutions, nor indeed any invention of man which is in itself bad, but the uses which men put them to. A case in point is nuclear energy, knowledge of which is morally neutral. However, it can be used for either good or bad purposes. No particular institution ultimately can compel a man or a group of men to act in a certain way. It is true that complex and impersonal institutions in technological societies do have a propensity to mould the imagination and behaviour of those who work in them and those who are their clients, and can even assume a "life" of their own, opposed to the original intentions of their establishment. However, ultimate responsibility rests with men, particularly if we accept that they are free agents and capable of moral choice. It could even be argued that despite some interesting illuminations on the negative aspects of institutions, Illich and the deschoolers are doing us some disservice by blaming institutions for society's ills, when it is the men themselves who operate the institutions who are largely at fault, together with the rest of society in accepting what they allow institutions to become.

Basically, it is an empirical question as to whether institutions do in fact wreak the havoc the deschoolers claim they do. Only sociologists can investigate the truth or otherwise. In a sense whether or not they find that institutions have these characteristics is philosophically irrelevant. The philosophical question is whether it is in man's nature to corrupt initially seemingly praiseworthy institutions. Illich fails to come to grips directly with this issue but by implication through contending that manipulative institutions are unreformable, he does reveal an optimistic view of man's nature and a pessimistic one about his creations. The optimistic view of man's nature is further evidenced by his advocacy of a convivial

society, i.e. by creating different sorts of institutions, man will automatically create such things as joy, a desire to co-operate, a lack of envy and so on. All this seems rather naive, considering how Illich spells out in detail man's inhumanity to man existing in today's technological societies. It is rather hard to believe that a change of institution will so dramatically change man's nature and cause people to behave morally in regard to each other. Certainly, if sociologists did find that manipulative institutions (and again, the term already damns them) were particularly prone to cause human misery, then to say that it is in man's nature to corrupt things he uses, would not be sufficient reason to remain complacent about them. It would be reasonable to try to reform them to reduce the ability of men operating them to abuse them.[26] But to conclude that institutions are unreformable is not sociological but philosophical, for it reflects a view of human nature rather than an understanding of the mechanics of institutions.

Macklin notes that Illich has a tendency to state beliefs as facts,[27] without really providing any or substantial evidence for them. e.g. that people have a need for "freedom to make things among which they can live,"[28] that they feel uneasy about living in houses which they have not contributed directly to the building of,[29] that they would be happier in a system where they could work co-operatively and show concern for each other,[30] and that they have "staked their self-images in the present structure and are unwilling to lose their ground."[31]

All these beliefs, of course, carry implications about Illich's view of man's nature, and that given the appropriate social organisation, such values would predominate among men. As Macklin says: "Evangelical conviction may win converts but not necessarily thinking supporters. It is not mass reaction but mass awareness that is needed."[32]

As in the sphere of freedom, Illich and the deschoolers take the Rousseauian line that man is essentially good and that bad societies produce bad men. Hobbes took the converse stand, that man was basically corrupt and only society and its institutions kept man in reasonable check. One could take a third position that man

is inherently neither good nor bad, but the sort of society and the institutions which he creates partly governs his ability to do good or bad. It may well be that convivial institutions may bring the best out in some men, but there is still no guarantee that unscrupulous ones may not exploit those convivial institutions (as Illich has acknowledged with medicine) and turn them eventually into manipulative ones.

Another difficulty is that despite Illich's enthusiasm for convivial qualities such as joy, co-operation, sharing, concern for others, a lack of envy and so on, there is certainly no consensus about their desirability. They are, at present, Illich's and the deschoolers' personal preferences. Indeed, there is something which makes one uneasy about a society where men would have such a conforming enthusiasm for similar preferences. Despite the unhappiness, envy and selfishness which a lack of concern for others creates in our societies, they at least bear witness to human diversity and of man's freedom to make moral choices. Is there anything more ethical about convivial institutions which will mould men's imaginations and views of social reality, than manipulative institutions moulding our imaginations in another way?

Cutlural Differences and Conviviality

Furthermore, Illich's theory is one he believes is applicable to all men, irrespective of their culture and historical development. Could it be that the manipulative-convivial dichotemy is a function of the socio-culture of Western man,[33] applicable, if at all, only to his societies?[34] Illich and the deschoolers include the Third World in their analyses and predictions.

The problem with the underdeveloped countries, they believe, is that these countries will fail to see the grossly erroneous direction the so-called advanced technological nations are following, and will imitate many of their bad features. Simple human needs which their communities will have adequately satisfied in the past, will be exploited by new institutions created along Western lines. New definitions of poverty, health and housing etc. will be formulated, and a formerly independent people will become increasingly dependent on institutional care.

Dore sharply attacks the way the deschoolers show a "cavalier lack of discrimination" between underdeveloped and technological societies.[35] He argues that Illich

> has the gall to say that poverty in most of the poor countries is only 'modernised poverty', the product of expectations aroused by modern advertising; 'classic poverty' was 'stable and less disabling'.[36]

One wonders if he has ever read Lewis's[37] account of how this stable and undisabling classical poverty brutalised life in the villages around Cuernavaca early in this century.[38]

Illich and the deschoolers, in their comparison of life before institutions reached their manipulative phase in technological societies with that of today, and in their description of underdeveloped societies, do assume that human problems and the evils which afflicted societies then and in the Third World today, were and are somehow more bearable than the problems institutions have created today. It is somewhat like the "noble savage" syndrome held by Europeans in the last century - an idealized version of what life was really like. Combined with this is the deschooler's desire for a less complex deinstitutionalized life of the sort existing in the cottage industry era - the convivial society where each man himself produces what he uses. This, it may be said, is an overstatement because Illich does not directly admit that he wishes to turn the clock back, although what he advocates as alternatives provide strong pointers. His advocacy of individual freedom and autonomy, the abolition of social welfare institutions, his belief that each man is responsible for his education and for the satisfying of all his needs, almost strike one as being the sort of philosophy which was espoused by the laissez-faire society of the last two centuries, and which led to one of the greatest eras of men exploiting men ever seen in history, not only in industrial Europe but in the colonial empires it ruled. It is predictable that this is not what Illich and the deschoolers intend, but it seems that the wholesale abolition of the institutions which support not only our technological societies but out welfare states as well, and their replacement by institutions which rely almost exclusively on man's alleged good nature, place the very survival of our culture at grave risk.

As far as the underdeveloped countries are concerned, classical poverty, insanitary and unsatisfactory living conditions, ill-health, over-population and so on, are very real and soul-destroying problems for the countless millions of people who have to endure them. They see, rightly, that the institutions of technological societies have provided unprecedented affluence for most of their citizens, despite the new and apparently greater problems those institutions have bred. It would be understandable if they paid scant heed to the deschoolers' grim warning not to emulate the "developed" world, because classical miseries are claimed to be less debilitating.

The convivial society of the deschoolers presupposes an acceptable level of material well-being for people to experience joy and for them to have enough to share without feeling envy. The Third World countries are seemingly so beset by sheer physical problems of survival, that it seems odd to say the least, to ask them to accept a blueprint for conviviality on an empty stomach and a life expectancy of thirty years.

The difficulty with the deschoolers is that they force us into an either/or situation. They conclude that institutions are unreformable and the major source of our ills; therefore there is only one solution and that is to abolish them, to wipe the canvas clean and begin again. This is the problem of all utopians from Plato to Marx. It is essentially an aesthetic concept. They leave no room for other possible diagnoses or solutions.

Yet there is nothing in Illich's definition and analysis of institutions which condemns them per se as beyond reform. Hirst and Peters' definition of an institution as a group of people organised coherently in relation to some human need and one that seems to be commonly accepted in ordinary usuage, does not appear to contradict Illich's use, except that, of course, the latter's is related to the activity rather than the structure of the institution.

Illich's portrayal of institutions as ranging from manipulative to convivial introduces only new terms, for there would be few who would not have realised that any of man's creations can be used for

good or bad purposes. There is nothing in Illich's descriptions of manipulative institutions which logically condemns them as irredeemably bad, and which prevents their being transformed into convivial ones.

Marxism - the Primacy of Economic Factors?

Gintis[39] suggests that Illich's consumption-manipulation model of how technological societies operate is incorrect. As a Marxist, the former believes that the decay of society is not to be found in manipulative institutions, but in the economic institutions of "Capitalism" (i.e. the free market and private control) which are primarily concerned with accumulation of capital and the production of goods and services which return profit. Dismantling manipulative institutions without removing the capitalist economic system will bring about only superficial changes.

Consumer consciousness, furthermore, is created not by the socialisation processes of institutions, but by the day to day observation and experience of people operating in a capitalist system. Illich, even in his convivial society, accepts such capitalist mechanisms as competitive markets for goods and services and small scale entrepreneurial capitalism.

Economic institutions of the capitalist system, Gintis claims, are the real sources of decision making and in turn lead to the plethora of manipulative institutions. Thus, Illich's analysis is superficial for he seems to ignore the economic factors which Marxists contend influence every aspect of our Society.

A major difficulty with Gintis's reaction is that he makes no effort to explain the complex, cumbersome, and bureaucratic institutions which seem to thrive in countries which claim to have abolished the capitalist system. The deschoolers at least seem to have a valid point when they argue that institutions have very similar characteristics throughout the developed world, irrespective of the country's ideology. For example, in respect to schools they say: "... schools are fundamentally alike in all countries, be they fascist, democratic or socialist, big or small, rich or poor."[40]

In other words, beyond a certain point of development, institutions become manipulative, irrespective of the economic organisation of the country. Certainly the relationship between economic structure and institutions is a question which can be explored fruitfully by sociologists or economists. Gintis like all Marxists, confuses the issue by his use of the term "capitalism". He uses it in a "pure" or theoretical form, seemingly unmindful that since Marx, most capitalist states are varying mixtures of centralised economic control and free market systems, as indeed are increasingly most states which claim some allegiance to Marx. Hence while Gintis is right is reminding us of the economic factors underlying much of social phenomena, Illich,in probably recognising the "mixed" economic system of most countries, may be right in assuming that institutions have developed a "life" over and above that of the economic and other factors which gave rise to them.

But as mentioned earlier, whichever sociological interpretation is correct, is in a philosophical sense irrelevant. A description of a state of affairs does not lead to a logical prescription. Furthermore, there is nothing conceptually in the term"institution", which implies an ethical judgement in terms of "good" or "bad". Illich describes institutions by the same terms with which he judges them, a philosophically untenable practice. Furthermore his description of institutions and of his ideal society reflect a vision of man and of human nature which, to say the least, is controversial, and for which, despite his optimism, there would be little consensus. Ironically, his faith in the basic goodness of man is at odds with his description of what man has done with existing society, and with his plea that the social welfare institutions, which were originally established to protect men from the unscrupulousness of others, be abolished.

To remove them totally and to replace them with "structures" which operate essentially on the optimism that man is basically good, seems more likely to invite the opening of Pandora's boxes referred to by Illich, than the retention of institutions which act on the premise that man needs institutional help from the unscrupulousness and lack of concern of many of his fellow men.

In any case, no one institutional form can guarantee to provide the ideal solution to man's needs. Man as well as cultures differ in their needs, values and aspirations. To contend that some institutions are irredeemably unreformable and bad for all men and that other institutions are equally good for all of them is just too simplistic. The characteristics of a convivial society seem to be projections of the qualities deschoolers personally prefer in men. There is no attempt to provide a rational justification for these moral attributes and to show that these are not only better than any others, but that they merit the total transformation of society.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

## Schools

The general sort of charges which the deschoolers level at institutions of the manipulative kind, apply to schools,with the difference being that schools constitute the most "insidious" of all institutions. The reason for this is that they mould the imagination of people at their most vulnerable age, initiate them into an addiction for consumerism and a total dependence on other institutions, as well as possessing the critical function of regulating and controlling the entry to all other institutions.

Illich defines "school" as the "age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum."[1] Reimer's definition is almost identical: "Institutions which require full-time attendance of specific age groups in teacher-supervised classrooms for the study of graded curricula."[2]

Vandenburg claims that "schooling as a phenomenon exists only as public schooling. In other words free, universal, and compulsory schooling exists as a phenomenon independent of its incarnation in particular circumstances because it originated so that everyone might have access to education, and this original image of being public and universal that existed before the schools is part of the phenomenon of schooling. "Schooling can exist only as public, and public schooling can exist only as free, compulsory, and universal..."[3]

Basically, this would mean that such functional characteristics are essential to the definition of school. The freer, more obligatory, and more universal schooling is, the closer it is to what might be regarded as the "ideal" concept of a school. But the "better" schooling is the more its bad consequences are. The better schooling is, the more against "education" it is. Vandenberg calls this "the pedagogic paradox".

In conceptual terms there is no reason to suppose that Vandenberg is correct. Schools do not necessarily and inflexibly have to possess the characteristics of being public, free, universal

and compulsory in the same sense that being a bachelor must mean being unmarried. It is quite possible for schools to be private, subject to tuition fees, to be available only to a social or racial elite, and even to be voluntary. They certainly need not be confined to one age group, as the recent return of many adults to classrooms throughout New Zealand would testify. No such logical necessity exists between "schooling" and "free", "universal" and "compulsory", nor between that definition and how "ideal and good" a school is. That schooling has in a particular historical context come to mean such things is another matter.

As an analogy, there is nothing in the definition of monarch to link it conceptually with absolutism. In a particular historical context the definition of monarch may have come to be thought of as irretrievably tied to notions of absolutism - in another historical epoch, it may be just as appropriate to talk of a monarch as a constitutional figurehead. No one would suggest that such a monarch is by definition, no more a monarch. The same with schooling. Illich's definition of schooling is prescriptive and not tautological. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "school" as an "institution for educating children". There is no notion of public, universal, compulsory or free. That definition could equally well apply to learning webs - "an institution for educating children."

## Historical Origin of Schools

Historically, schools date back to Babylon,[4] although their form and functions varied through their ages. Training in writing and calculating numbers were especially associated with the priesthood in Mesopotamia and special houses were set aside for this task. Schooling, then, at these early stages was thought of as inculcating a basic literacy, and was organised along bureaucratic lines.

> The Greek term for "school" was synonymous with "leisure". Latinized as 'ludus' (a game), its etymology bears witness to the fact that schooling was originally thought of as being of marginal importance, and functioning, if at all, on an informal, take-it-or-leave-it basis."[5]

It was custom rather than a law which determined how a father trained his sons. Despite the fact that formal schooling was

relatively unimportant, widespread public literacy existed in Athens in the fifth and sixth centuries.[6]

> In the heyday of the city state, schooling was neither formalized nor compulsory. In practice, there were no schools in the modern sense, only teachers who offered their services as demonstrators of certain skills.[7]

According to Aries, "Medieval society... had no idea of education,"[8] and learning was confined largely to part of the preparation for the priesthood.

Schooling began to assume a more formal, institutionalized character at the time of the Renaissance. Luther reversed the age-old doctrine "we believe in order to know". The Reformation provided the generating power for ideas of mass education. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cornenius, Milton and Dury regarded education as a key means of excercising power over people. The need for universal literacy was sparked by the newly established right of every man to read and interpret the Bible for himself.

The bad features of industrialization in the nineteenth century prompted the need for massive social reforms, one of which was organised schooling. "The need for universal literacy was the excuse for state intervention".[9] With mechanisation, children became increasingly superfluous.

> In England, the mass provisions of schools from 1870 onwards was seen by some as a means of protecting children from factory exploitation: but they were also places to put children who otherwise would have been on the street."[10]

The purposes of schooling seemed largely instrumental and not necessarily linked to being educated in a broad sense.

The deschoolers' criticisms of schools are certainly not new. Quintilian castigated the vices of Roman Schools. Luther regarded them as "slaughter houses of the mind". Rousseau expressed a contempt for "Jeunes professeurs". Dewey regretted "the divorce of school from life". Kozol deplored what amounted to "Death At an Early Age" and used it as a title for his book.

Margaret Mead declared that "My grandmother wanted me to have an education, so she kept me out of school".[11] Bantock, a

conservative in his attitude to education, confessed that:

> If we are honest we have to admit that a great deal of our popular education is an almost total failure... The school has come to take its major role in the distribution of life chances..[12]

John Holt stated that:

> Schools do not have the power of life and death over children. But they do have the power to cause them mental and physical pain, to threaten, frighten, and humiliate them, and to destroy their future lives.[13]

A Valid Concept of Schooling?

The deschoolers' definition of schools certainly is one that might be applicable in a very general sense to schooling in the last century, although historically speaking the nature and functions of schooling have varied tremendously from society to society and from one historical setting to another. Illich's definition, then, cannot convey any absolute sense of the term "school" because of this variation in the past. And indeed, there is substantial evidence to indicate that the notion of schooling is changing just as fast at the present, e.g. "open schools", "free schools", schools of the "Summerhill type",[14] "schools without walls",[15] and many other alternatives which reject one or more characteristics of traditional schooling. Four Avenues in Christchurch could perhaps be regarded as the nearest institution to a "deschooled" school.

Many schools are simply not merely for children. "Life-long education" having now come into our vocabulary, ensures that schools cannot realistically be defined as age specific. Some schools are also not teacher related in the sense of being dominated by an adult. The teacher may well have a minimal role; schools of the Summerhill type are almost totally child-centred. Some schools do not require full-time attendance and encourage children to engage in community projects or work experience activities during official hours. Some schools, particularly for older children who have some experience on which to base mature choices, do not have an entirely obligatory curriculum. Their numbers are growing, and their very existence erodes Illich's

narrow definition. There does not appear to be any conceptual reason why they should not be regarded as schools simply because they deviate from the present norm. In fact they may even resemble more closely the ideas of some schools which existed in the past.

The suspicion exists with the deschoolers' prescriptive and rigid definition of what constitutes a school, that they are setting up a straw man in order to have something to knock down. They do have a point, however, in drawing attention to the recency of the present system of schooling. Having our imaginations "moulded" by schools, as the deschoolers insist has happened, has made it difficult for us to conceive of learning and education occurring in any other form.

The concept of "school" which best includes all the variations and alternatives which exist and have existed in the general one of a non-family institution for learning. This leaves open the question of compulsory, universal, general education or specific skill learning, teacher-dominated or pupil-centred, and confined to specific age groups. It leaves open the moral direction of the learning which takes place. It is an "institution" rather than an "arrangement" for learning, because all schools, present and past have had some sort of organisation however informal. The use of "institution" conveys some sort of intention or purpose to distinguish it from casual learning which occurs to all of us most of the time both outside (and inside) schools. It makes no mention of education for the obvious reason that education and schooling are not conceptually nor necessarily historically synonymous, although Crittenden reminds us that:

> If we find that schools and teachers have been engaged for more than two thousand years with a number of distinctive activities and objectives, it would be absurd to suppose that these are not essential to the meaning of education.[16]

"Schooling", then as contrasted with "school", can best be defined as the non-family institutional process of learning. It need not include a notion of the worthwhileness of what is learnt, for we can speak of Fagin's school of thieves. "Schooling" is clearly independent, though not always unrelated to "education".

The deschoolers' definition furthermore, in so far as it may be accurate of some schools existing today, particularly in technological societies, does not in itself indicate that schools are morally bad nor in need of reform or even abolition. "Compulsory", "public", "universal","age-specific", and "teacher-related" conceptually convey no overtones of ethical undesirability or desirability.

If conceptually there are no grounds for holding that schools need be abolished, are there other compelling reasons for doing away with them?

The Allocation of Resources to Schools

In an earlier chapter the deschoolers' evidence against schools was outlined, based on the latter's apparently insatiable and inequitable consumption of the world's resources. The implication was that because schools were not able to and never could match people's educational expectations, it was pointless to continue pouring money into them to perpetuate their outlived usefulness.

Yet the situation, surely is not quite that simple. In a sense their case is paradoxical for while they lament that schooling does not reach every child in the world and that the advantaged gain most out of schooling, they equally deplore the effects of schooling on those it does reach. In fact they regard the children who have never experienced school as "fortunate". Yet the deschoolers cannot have it both ways. Either schooling is deplorable and one should pity those children who are compelled to endure it, or schooling is desirable and one should pity those disadvantaged millions who miss out on it.

If schooling is essentially bad, it follows that devoting so much of the world's financial resources to it is equally bad. Schooling, however, is not condemned by its unequal distribution throughout the world. That may well be determined by political, economic and other factors outside of schooling. In fact, the deschoolers concede this by admitting that no country can afford

the education its citizens want for its children. This is an opinion and not a statement of fact. It is theoretically possible for a society to plough most of its resources into education at the expense of other areas of life and so obtain what it wants educationally, assuming money is the problem. It is probably a question of what that society values most as well as a question of possessing the political will to make that kind of investment.

The deschoolers undoubtedly have a valid point in arguing that more money ploughed into an enterprise does not guarantee results and that perhaps it is a symptom of the materialism of our age that we tend to believe this. However, the fact that schooling is unevenly distributed throughout a society and among the countries of the world does not condemn schooling, but the political and economic organisations which permits an uneven allocation of educational resources and which creates the socio-economic environments that deprive a child even before he enters school. This is not to suggest that schooling is blameless. Indeed a common criticism of schooling is that it is a "middle class" enterprise, in organisation, value-orientation, and methodology. To the extent that schooling structures and presents itself intentionally according to non-educational and socially partisan criteria, it is clearly responsible for many inequalities which occur. However, if schooling simply reflects the political and social will of its societal context, and can be changed to reflect a more equitable distribution of educational resources, then it is rather futile to condemn schooling while ignoring those factors in society which will continue to exert their influence upon whatever new structure is used to replace schooling.

The Hidden Curriculum: the Significant Learning?

The deschoolers contend however that there is something endemic to all manipulative institutions and particularly schools which provides justifiable grounds for abolishing them, even if we were to minimise the bad effect of any one particular consequence. This is the notion of the hidden curriculum which is the "framework of the system, within which all changes in the curriculum are made."[17] In a sense all the bad effects of schooling are subsumed under the idea of the hidden curriculum as opposed to the overt one. The idea of subtle and significant influences operating behind the official and public front is not really something which the deschoolers alone believe in.[18, 19, 20]

Nor is it something new or radical. Indeed the term did not originate with Illich, but with Strodtbeck in 1964.[21] Birchall sees it as amounting

> to little more than the recognition that subjects are taught by teachers or that schools are part of a social movement. Any attempt to import knowledge by means of the overt curriculum will manifest certain values or attitudes that may or may not prove deleterious to the success with which knowledge is imparted... As all attempts to educate will have their hidden curricula, it cannot be hidden curricula as such that Illich is opposed to, but hidden curricula of a certain sort - those that betray hostility to learning.[22]

Illich elaborates further:

> I am using the term hidden curriculum to refer to the structure of schooling as opposed to what happens in school in the same way that linguists distinguish between the structure of a language and the use the speaker makes of it.[23]

Recent research in political socialization does seem to confirm that the authority structure in schools "teaches" more effectively an acceptance of the wider political structure than explicit and official courses in civic education.[24,25]

As institutions move away from the original reasons for their establishment, by utilising an increasing proportion of their resources to perpetuate their very existence, the hidden curriculum assumes a greater significance. For schools, the overt curriculum learning becomes less important than the learning of a wide-ranging set of values and assumptions built into the hidden curriculum. The messages which are transmitted by the latter,, help perpetuate the idea of the necessity of schools and of all institutions in society.

Lister summerises some of the messages. Schooling and education are one and the same thing. All the most important learning takes place in schools. The self-educated man is looked upon with deep suspicion, and his knowledge has no legal tender. Learning is the result of teaching. The most valuable knowledge economically is that acquired through professional teaching. Knowledge is a commodity and is divided into packages in the curriculum ready to be consumed.[26] Everything can be measured including values,

imaginations, and personal growth.[27] The world's resources are unlimited and consumption of them is natural and inevitable. People need institutions to service their needs and institutions best know what our needs are and how to service them. Their judgement of what we need is superior to ours.

The hidden curriculum of the schools plays a big role in preparing people for their later role in life and socialises them to accept the distribution of life chances as normal and natural and even inevitable.

Burke-Hall regards the notion of the hidden curriculum as crucial, for it teaches people the opposite to the school's outward rhetoric. It frustrates the school's educational aims by burdening it 'with the other roles of custodial care, social role selection, and indoctrination...'[28] He suggests that the bad features of schools are not accidental propoerties but part of an intentional system to prepare people for social life.

Gintis and Bowles seeing this in the Marxist context, claim that schools deliberately set out to replicate the social relations of production.

> The conditions of office or factory work are reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education, the irrelevance of school work to the student's own interests, the motivation of work by a system of grades and other external rewards rather than the student's interest in either the process of production-learning or its product-knowledge; the persistent and ostensibly objective ranking and evaluation of students, and the emphasis on discipline and acceptance of authority and the supremacy of strict and unvaried routine. By attuning young people to a set of social relations similar to those of the work place, schooling teaches future workers not so much how to work, as to how to behave.[29]

As schools have drifted away from their more laudible origins, their most obvious message has become that of their own worth. They constantly remind us of how they affect our life chances. Children are often pressed to stay on longer at school because it will benefit them later in terms of better rewarded or more interesting careers. Rewards are allocated and people are ranked according to

the number of years they "serve". Length of serving is linked in many people's minds with a better education. Hence the world-wide movement to raise school-leaving ages and even the spectre of lifelong education is spreading as a means to tie people to the institution of schooling beyond their original school years.

It is the hidden curriculum which gives schools their universal character, irrespective of what the overt curriculum is, and irrespective of the ideological nature of the society, schools are the same throughout the world because of their universal structure and the universal messages they transmit. The schools may vary a great deal on the surface, but the hidden curriculum ensures their identity of purposes.

> It does not matter whether the curriculum is designed to teach the principles of Fascism, liberalism, Catholicism, socialism, or liberation, as long as the institution claims the authority to define which activities are legitimate 'education'.[30]

Macklin argues that while a country makes education compulsory and regards schooling as a preparation for life in the wider society, irrespective of the overt curriculum, it shares a common purpose with every other school in the world,ie. the manipulation of the "young to an acceptance of the status quo",[31] and incidentally, an acceptance of the ministrations of all institutions. While schools retain these functions, they will not be able to change their fundamental structure. The"hidden curriculum... stays forever beyond the control of the teacher or of his school board. It conveys indelibly the message that only through schooling can an individual prepare himself for adulthood in society."[32]

Musgrave however disagrees that schools are basically the same under all systems, and refers to sociological and comparative educational work,the evidence of which points the other way.[33] Yet a close study of the different examples, reveals a similarity beneath the outward differences and what is the presence of a commitment to initiate students into an acceptance of the status quo.[34,35,36,37]

Shipman confirms what most people already believe to be not only true but right:

> School prepares (children) for their future in a world of organisation and bureaucracy... Punctuality, quiet, orderly work in large groups, response to orders, bells and timetables, respect for authority, even tolerance of monotony, boredom, punishment, lack of reward and regular attendance at place of work are habits to be learned in school.[38]

Kenneth Richmond notes the irony of society becoming increasingly permissive and schooling remaining authoritarian, with the result that schools do not really prepare children for the realities of life beyond school.[39] An example of this is the difficult transition for the adolescent from the restricted life style of the high school to the far freer life at university. This can inflate the failure rate for first year students, if they find that the new found freedom is a greater novelty than study. Also many adolescents at school become restless when they witness the greater freedom and spending power of those of their friends who have left school.

Goodman, Illich and others have compared schools to other institutions such as hospitals, asylums, prisons and the Church. All of them have supervisors and mediators and with the recent exception of the Church, attendance is compulsory for the inmates. A number of sociologists have commented on the contradiction between what the institutions allege they are doing and what in fact they really do through their hidden curricula.

Becker notes that "the rhetoric institutional apologists produce diverts our attention from the way the very organisation of an institution produces the failures so excused."[40] So much hope has been placed in schools to overcome our problems that school has in effect become the world church of secular society, offering salvation to the masses. In the past the Church through its good offices, distributed eternal life chances. Now the schools distribute the equally eagerly sought after secular life chances. The "elect" are chosen and are able to recognise themselves by the quantity of the world's resources which come their way.

As Lister says:

> School certificates are received and taken as a sacrament - an external and visible sign of internal grace. Those born in grace - of the right sex, to the right parents, in the right place and at the right time - consume more formal schooling and go on to consume more houses, cars, and wives than the damned whose in-born ignorance the school has confirmed and certified.[41]

The deschoolers quite often make this religious analogy.

The Hidden Curriculum and Learning

A number of assumptions about learning are implicit in the hidden curriculum as well. One of them is that adults must intervene in the learning process fairly regularly otherwise learning will cease as well as curiosity. Furthermore, rewards and punishments are needed to ensure that learning takes place. Individual effort and competition are necessary to get the best out of children. All the most valuable learning takes place in schools. These are all messages which children learn and remember rather than what is in the overt curriculum.

The deschoolers argue that we learn most things casually out of school, and for this reason schools are superfluous. Schools simply "fail to teach what they pretend to teach."[42] Most people spend many years failing to learn anything significant from the overt curriculum. They fail to get any sort of school certificate and this in turn affects their later opportunities. There is considerable empirical evidence which suggests strongly that even a university "education" has very little effect on those who put in the required number of years.[43]

A further indictment of schooling can be found in the Report on Higher Education,[44] which points out that there is virtually no correlation between the school grades of future professionals and their subsequent achievements in their careers. As Macklin says:

> Because school is seen as a preparation for life and not part of the 'real' world, it fosters the impression that 'learning about the world is more valuable than learning from the world'.[45]

Dearden however notes that a person cannot "just learn" from the "world" because he needs "concepts" in order to see what is there.[46]

It does seem, however, that few if any societies, past and present have not incorporated some learning about the world as a more or less compulsory part of initiation into their culture. No human society has relied predominantly on its members learning from the world. A Robinson Crusoe type figure and situation would lead to learning from the world because there would be no other human to learn with and about the world. The more industrial and technological a society becomes, the fewer the opportunities to learn directly from the world, no matter how desirable primary sense experiences may be. The more complex human society becomes the more it learns about the world, through extensions of its physical senses i.e. instruments and books. If schooling does leave children with the impression that learning "about" is more valuable than learning "from", then schooling certainly does them a disservice, because both have their value. It is important that children gain primary sense experiences as a basis for more abstract thinking about the world at a later stage of their development. To work at the level of learning from the world all the time however, is time consuming and limits man's expansion of knowledge. The accelerating growth of knowledge about the world in fact makes it impossible for man, if he is concerned about his personal growth, to limit himself strictly to learning from the world. The deschoolers' theory of man and society ironically is a complex and abstract exercise in thinking about the world, possible only because man has moved beyond learning exclusively from the world.

The deschoolers commonly cite that most learning takes place casually outside of schools - in the family, peer groups, work, clubs and so on.[47] They also argue that schools, through their hidden curriculum, denigrate the value of any learning which does not occur in schools or which is not institutionally packaged and graded, and does not lead to some type of certification.

While it is undeniably true that most learning may take place in environments other than the school, and indeed the capacity to learn may be determined even before a child begins school, the deschoolers are using learning here in the sense of the whole experience of living. In this sense the

> concept is so extended that there is no point in wondering whether it involves any special dimensions of value...[48]

There is an assumption that quantity rather than quality determines the significance of a learning experience for a person. The implication is also that any learning is necessarily educative, in the sense of being worthwhile and broadening a person's cognitive perspective as Peters claims. However, it is patently obvious that not all learning is worthwhile, e.g. one may learn criminal behaviour equally well. Errors and mistakes and prejudices can be learnt casually. This is not to condemn casual learning but to indicate that it needs to be transformed and supplemented and disciplined. For instance, a child may note and learn that leaves are green. Without guidance he may progress no further. With guided learning he may be brought round to see that the green is chlorophyll and that this substance enables the plant to absorb and transform energy to sustain it.

Because of the complexity of our societies and their dependence on technology as well as social and political traditions we cannot rely on casual learning alone to initiate our children into our culture. Some systematic learning seems inevitable if we are to have any sort of guarantee of cultural transmission. Some degree of systematic learning also seems an inevitable and minimal condition for personal growth. Equally important, some form of systematic learning culturally and socially adapted, should help minimise or eliminate socio-economic or cultural differences which influence a person's ability to benefit from casual learning. At worst, casual learning can limit a person to the narrow confines of his environment and imagination. At the very least, systematic learning may help people transform their casual learning into experiences which promote personal and social growth.

Certainly the deschoolers do not deny the value of some systematic learning, and their warnings of the hidden curriculum have some validity, but it should not be forgotten that casual learning also has its hidden curriculum, which may be even more destructive. Values are transmitted in all human arrangements, whether they be schools, families, peer groups, clubs, work places, and so on. The hidden curriculum of casual learning may be even more

insidious for no control is, by definition, exerted over it. At least the possibility of control exists over the hidden curriculum of organised learning because of its systematized structure.

The deschoolers have a valid point when they emphasize how schools in varying degrees have downplayed the value and importance of non-school learning. Indeed schools often take too much for granted the crucial groundwork of learning which has occurred before children begin school as well as the learning which goes on during the school years outside the school. How often has it been validly argued that a stimulating home environment increases the capacity for more cognitive and organised learning at school.

## The Hidden Curriculum and Knowledge

According to the deschoolers, the hidden curriculum of the schools manifests itself through the way knowledge is quantified and packaged and "sold" as a product to the consumer-child. "Knowledge is equated with capital"...[49] What actually exists in the strict sense, is not "knowledge", but rather people who "know". The use of the norm "knowledge" suggests an object rather than the dynamic process suggested by the verb "to know". A learner and knowledge in this situation exist spatially. Knowledge exists outside of him which needs to be acquired and taken in by the mind. In the "banking concept" of education, knowledge is divided into "digestible" amounts and deposited in children by the teacher. It is essentially a commodity, and not really integrated into the learner's life view.

Perhaps this is the reason for the common complaint that a short time after successfully passing an exam, so little seems to be remembered. Macklin however, goes on to assert that:

> The fact most people forget most of what they have learnt in school curricula means that schools are mostly a failure or they are attempting the impossible and the unjustifiable.[50]

The amount of retention is an empirical matter. It could be complicated by what one chooses as having been learnt - a fact, a principle, an overview of events. It could also be complicated by whether one tests retention in the short-term or the long.

In fact, if some facts and items of knowledge are forgotten and general principles remembered, then many schools may have succeeded in their task. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the deschoolers can defend casual learning, for just as much forgetting takes place here. In any case the charge is empirically unproven. It may even be impossible to prove because of the complex interweaving of our learning from school and outside it. There is also the element of learning which may be stored in our unconscious minds and which continues to influence our attitudes, values, and indeed our world view. Schools cannot be written off on such flimsy evidence of forgetting, alone.

There is another aspect to the charge of forgetting and that is the implication that memory is extremely important in education. Schools are being, in effect, judged as failures because of how badly they have trained the memories of their charges. Many schools nowadays do not regard simple memory as a higher order mental function of paramount importance, as it might have been in the past. Without denigrating the value of memory, greater emphasis is placed on abilities which help people to cope with new knowledge they will encounter every day of their lives - problem-solving techniques, divergent thinking and creativity, such as synthesis and analysis. Schools should be judged on how well they develop such abilities if these are their goals, and not on people's ability to remember "facts", which may be useless as soon as they are learnt.

It appears that knowledge can be regarded or defined as a commodity only as long as it is the "result of institutional enterprise".[51] As a commodity it can be exchanged, or used as legal tender for the purchase of other advantages society offers. Schooling produces knowledge, which can be utilised in the marketplace, much along the same lines as any other commodity. The product is standardized for convenience of processing which means that there is little room for any unique way of knowing. Children learn through the hidden curriculum that the only value in understanding or learning is in terms of what it can lead to. There is little room for learning for its own sake. It is seen as instrumental, subordinated to the values and goals of a materialistic consumer society.

Like many of the deschoolers' arguments there are undeniable elements of truth here, spoilt, however, by overstatement. In many of today's schools it is simply untrue that the "supplier-teacher delivers the pre-packaged knowledge as a finished product to the consumer-learner."[52] It is as if the deschoolers are unaware of the greater emphases in schools on inductive learning, on children learning and discovering for themselves, within a general context prepared by teachers.

However, it can hardly be regarded as pre-packaged knowledge. The teacher supplies the materials and the children "package" their own knowledge. As far as inductive learning is concerned, what is learnt in any case is not so much a knowledge product as a skill, or ability or an understanding of general principles. Many educationists accept that in the light of the knowledge explosion, it is futile to try to learn and assimilate the overwhelming amount of information that is turning up. Apart from the sheet quantity, it also dates so quickly, so that today's factual claims are tomorrow's errors. While in the past schools may have over-emphasized the knowledge element of education, it is a charge that the deschoolers cannot sustain against all schools today.

The issue of the justification of including only some sections of the totality of man's knowledge in school curricula is raised as well.[53] This is linked to what deschoolers regard as the unjustifiable attitude of adults intervening in children's learning and assuming they know best what has to be learnt. Quite apart from the incredible quantity of knowledge available which would necessitate selection under any system, there is the argument that not all knowledge is equally valuable or indeed valuable at all in an educative sense. e.g. there is undoubtedly knowledge involved in knowing how to prepare a letter bomb, but presumably the deschoolers would not want children to learn this. If this assumption is correct, then they also, are necessarily involved in selection from the vast area of knowledge.

Without delving in great depth into the important area of curriculum selection, we must take account of Peters' claim that only by studying certain subjects such as maths, science, history, literature and so on, can we find the answer to the question,

'Why study this rather than that?'[54] At least under compulsory schooling children are exposed to those curriculum areas which may provide some of the answers to such a fundamental question. There is no such guarantee under the deschoolers' proposed learning webs, for children will be free to select what they wish to learn, worthwhile or not.

Furthermore, if schools do teach only a certain section of the total range of knowledge available, they may in effect be moving in the right direction in terms of what the deschoolers want. For too long schools have, in varying degrees, been involved in specialized teaching, preparing children for specific careers. Schools have been diverted from their task of providing a broad, liberal education which initiates children into a wide range of worthwhile experiences, by being saddled with a role that work places should be providing, that is, on the job training for a vocation.

Personal Worth, Certification and the Hidden Curriculum

Another feature of the hidden curriculum is that it establishes people's worth according to its selection procedures. Illich notes that:

> The number of satisfied clients who graduate from schools every year is much smaller than the number of frustrated dropouts who are conveniently graded by their failure for use in a marginal labour pool... Citizens are 'schooled' into their places.[55]

Failures seem to be a necessary aspect of a system which acts as a sorting mechanism for the wider society.[56] In New Zealand, fifty per cent of all School Certificate candidates, for instance, are doomed to fail, irrespective of effort. The schools are seldom blamed for this large degree of failure which is even greater if we include those who leave school at the minimum leaving age and never even make an attempt at obtaining the certificate. Macklin suggests that it would not be quite so bad if these people were merely failures-in-school. The trouble is they also tend to become failures for life.[57] As Everett Reimer says: we are

> consistently punishing half of the children who are trying to learn what society is trying to teach them.[58]

There seems some element of truth to this claim, yet it partly depends on how one defines "failures-for-life". Simply because a person is doing unskilled, semi-skilled, or trade work it does not follow that he is a failure-in-life. In New Zealand's egalitarian-type welfare state, for instance, the financial rewards for non-professional work often approximate or even excel that of many professions, e.g. watersiders, riggers, freezing workers, inter-island ferry stewards and hydro-construction workers. So it cannot be low-financial reward which necessarily relegates one to the category of failure-in-life. If failure-in-life more accurately referred to poor personal relationships, or broken marriages, or dashed ambitions, one could find as many failures among those who did well at school as those who "failed".

The deschoolers are probably correct in suggesting a general trend for those who fare poorly at school finding the odds stacked against them more heavily in terms of a narrower choice of interesting careers and material returns than those who do well. Yet the exceptions are so numerous that one must be cautious in trying to establish a direct causal link.

It could be argued that it is not so much schooling which disadvantages a child but his socio-economic background which happens to be incompatible with the values and assumptions of schooling.[59] The deschoolers would probably argue that schooling cannot be blameless in this situation in that it reflects and perpetuates the values and structure of the dominant "middle class" of technological societies.

> Institutionalised education, as much as politics or the mass media, or religion, is an attempt to initiate students into the rituals of a dominant culture. [60, 61]

The lack of "cultural capital" which poorer students suffer from, their reduced access to educational resources, and their earlier drop-out rate and greater failure at school, lead them to internalize the school's judgment of their failure. Consequently, they come to believe their failure is their own fault, rather than a heavy weighting of social, political and economic arrangements against them. [62]

If there is this link between schooling and the distribution of life chances, it does seem unfair that procedures such as school examinations which test a narrow selection out of a relatively narrow selection from the totality of human knowledge should determine them. A person's school performance is then used by other institutions to determine job suitability, financial reward and status.

Macklin suggests that a school grade or certificate can become the basis of a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby a person continues to act and perform as he has been labelled.[63] Lister sees school certificates as "passports" and "credit cards", labelling the product and easing access to new social strata.[64] While internal assessment and the abolition of external examinations might seem a progressive step in meeting the deschoolers' criticisms, Lister sees it as equally tyrannical in that instead of studying subjects, students study their teachers.

The selection role society grants to schools not only gives them what deschoolers regard as arbitrary power, but also frustrates any attempts at education in the sense of pursuing something worthwhile for its own sake. The curricula and teachers' efforts become geared to an external goal, with the result, that students internalize certain values about education. They are "schooled" rather than educated. They learn to value a subject for what it leads to.[65] It seems to be a common phenomenon that children often resent a teacher moving beyond the set curricula because they fear it will frustrate their chances to pass examinations.

Schools endeavour to project notions that their evaluation and assessment procedures are objective, impartial, and possess predictive value. However, the evidence points in the other direction. The Report on Higher Education which reviews studies in this area, concludes that "the men who get to the top in management have developed skills that are simply not taught by formal education."[66] Similarly Berg has exposed the negative correlation between the gaining of a school certificate and subsequent performance on the job.[67]

In a sense, it could be argued that it is a good thing that there appears to be little correlation between what is learnt at school and what occurs at work. It could mean that the sort of education being offered in schools is not really instrumental in any specific sense and that work places should do all the selecting and training for a career. However, schools do claim that they are providing employers with a reasonably accurate guide to the potential ability and worth of a student, in the issue of school certificates. Perhaps for this reason employers in New Zealand have strenuously opposed the abolition of the external School Certificate, the fear being that they will no longer be able to judge an applicant for a job. Through the hidden curriculum schools have fostered this belief in their ability to predict a person's future worth, and not only do employers believe this, but the students do so as well.

Because the selection procedures in many schools systems are so pervasive and because they require the constant exercise of the teacher's authority over the learning process and the student himself, revolts have occurred despite the hidden curriculum's relatively successful task in creating acceptance and docility.[68,69]

While selection on merit is a vast improvement on heredity and privilege as a criterion for allocating jobs to people, it does seem to some deschoolers that school certificates are not the same thing as qualifications for a job.[70] As established earlier, the gaining of a school certificate may mean no more than that a person has capitalised on the advantages of his socio-economic background. In a sense, the advantaged social classes appear to perpetuate their own version of privilege in a system of meritocracy, not really based on cognitive ability. Bowles and Gintis have revealed that school selection occurs independently of the level of a pupil's cognitive development and is largely based on such personality traits as willingness to accept discipline and rules.[71]

The deschoolers, then see certification as discriminatory because it represents a judgement based on past school-learning history which they regard not only as narrow but irrelevant to most other concerns in life. Birchall puts it this way:

(i) Certification produces discrimination

(ii) All forms of discrimination are undemocratic

Therefore

(iii) Certification is undemocratic.

Certification is opposed to education, for what is undemocratic is necessarily opposed to education. The first premise certainly is true, for certification is the result of discrimination on the basis of who best knows the subject, the importance of the student's relationship with the teacher for internal assessment notwithstanding. Those who have mastered their particular level of the subject are permitted to proceed; those who fail must try again. Birchall claims, rightly, that the second premise cannot stand scrutiny "... it is simplistic democracy... which argues that all people are equal in all respects..."[72] What certification really means is that those who are not allowed to proceed in a subject, i.e. discriminated against, are simply not equal with respect to mastery, to those students who acquired the minimal level of mastery and were certificated.

> Democracy is equal opportunity for those who are equal with respect to X. It is not equal opportunity for all regardless of equality or demonstrated inequality. Unfortunately democracy has become identified with a form of 'social levelling' or 'indiscriminate egalitarianism' where inequalities, factual or not, are ignored or ironed out... But facts of difference are intractable, and are in no way opposed to true democracy.[73]

A whole variety of factors are unrelated to intellectual attainment but one's previous learning history is related to continuing learning, and is therefore a relevant ground for discrimination, according to Birchall. There is a strong element of truth in this argument, for a teacher would be doing a student a disservice if he chose to overlook such a significant individual difference in preparing the student's learning programme.

Yet Birchall fails to see the main thrust of the deschoolers' argument against certification. It is not so much against holding back a student who has not mastered a level of learning as it is against using a school certificate to judge a person's general worth and his potential ability to perform well at a particular job.

They are also opposed to examinations and certification to rank people. Once people are measured and tanked, assumptions are made about their worth as people. Ideally, people should learn and compete against themselves and not others. Examinations and certifications regrettably become goals and the chances of education taking root diminish. People are sorted out into "success" and"failure" categories and so many of life's opportunities are determined by such dubious selection procedures, based on mainly cognitive exercises.

What makes the selection worse is that the socio-economic backgrounds of the students strongly influence how they will fare. A sense of diminished social worth is reinforced through the hidden curriculum by a sense of low academic worth.

Certification in schools is unnecessary in an educative sense, for mastery of a discipline is reward in itself. Whether job-training institutions wish to continue with certificates and diplomas is another matter, for strictly speaking they are not primarily concerned with educating. There may well be need for the use of certificates to prevent charlatans exploiting people by insisting that they have the requisite training in a particular field.

That there are significant socio-economic factors affecting the learning ability of students in schools, is another argument against any form of certification. The only justifiable ground for grading students is according to their mastery of the subject; for while it is acknowledged that socio-economic factors may affect their ability to master a subject, they are not sufficient grounds for adjusting standards within a discipline to suit the student. Part of the problem is to create a learning situation in the schools which utilizes other socio-economic values and interests as well as that of the "middle class" student. The other part of the problem can only be resolved by the wider society developing the political will to eradicate those socio-economic factors in life which disadvantage people even before they begin school.

Part of the hidden curriculum involves the fostering of an over-confidence in what schools can do. Not only are they required to educate, but also to perform a multitude of other tasks as well.

As Reimer says:

> Different schools do different things... but increasingly schools in all nations, of all kinds, at all levels, combine four distinct social functions: custodial care, social-role selection, indoctrination, and education as usually defined in terms of the development of skills and knowledge. It is the combination of these functions which makes schooling so expensive. It is conflict among these functions which makes schools educationally inefficient.[74]

The deschoolers' deplore schools assuming these multiple tasks for the latter are believed to interfere with true education.

## The Inherent Ethical Component?

Götz poses the question of whether the school does necessarily produce a hidden curriculum and whether the latter is necessarily bad.[75] In philosophical terms, we must determine

> what is meant by 'producing' or 'causing' a hidden curriculum, and what is meant by the claim that this is done 'necessarily'. It seems to me that we are dealing here with 'if-then, always' statements, that is, the claim that C is followed by E always, other factors remaining the same; or, the claim that C is constantly conjoined with E without exception, other factors remaining the same... the Humean construct is sufficient for establishing the reasonableness of the claim.[75]

Even when certain factors are altered or modified in a school, as in the process of reform, the factors which deschoolers regard as part of the definition of a school remain the same and consequently the hidden curriculum is inculcated. Götz argues that the claim is empirically verifiable and in fact has been verified.[76] The point here is that an outmoded definition of "school" must be accepted in order to maintain that this type of hidden curriculum exists, and as established earlier, many schools simply do not fit Illich's definition. Even if we did accept it, and accepted an empirically verified link between that type of school and its hidden curriculum, we would still have to raise a philosophical issue i.e. is a hidden curriculum necessarily "evil"?

## The Perfectibility of Man

Götz explains it as follows:

> Illich dresses his argument in terms of the myths of Prometheus and Pandora. According to one version of the myth, Pandora opened the Amphora Zeus had given her, and

> thus allowed all manner of evils to escape. The history of modern man, says Illich 'is the history of the Promethean endeavour to forge institutions in order to corral each of the rampant ills'. As a result, 'man is trapped in the boxes he makes to contain the ills Pandora allowed to escape'. What this entails, really, is the self-entrapment of man, or in other words, the denial of the perfectibility of man. The passage from the empirical statements to the valuational judgement that the hidden curriculum is evil, is effected via a view of the nature of man. In dialectical terms, schooling is antithetical, and therefore must be transcended (negated) because of a conception of man as a being who constantly seeks to actualize in further syntheses all the thetical potentialities of his essence. Schools necessarily have a hidden curriculum, the argument runs, and this kind of hidden curriculum is evil because it contradicts the basic essence of man as perfectible and everything that violates man's basic nature is evil.[77]

Illich often alludes to the Greek notion "paideia", the humanization and socialization of man. Education is viewed within this concept as a process of self-realization based on understanding and awareness. This is a never-ending process as man has an infinite number of potentialities capable of being actualized or developed more fully. From birth to death man spends his time in becoming. Consequently, it makes little sense to regard any man as being educated if we take it to mean there is nothing more for him to understand. In other words, no one stage that a man may be at, represents all that he could ever be, nor all that he is ever capable of reaching.

Self-realization involves a continuing transcendence of previous stages. Camus noted that (and in doing so derived an "ought" from an "is"!) "Any fulfilment is a bondage. It obliges one to a higher fulfilment."[78] For a man to progress he must in effect go beyond his present level. Institutions, however, often trap him as boxes when he regards institutions as untranscendable. The hidden curriculum of the schools accustoms people to thinking of all institutions in this manner.

According to the theory of man's perfectibility, everything in life is a vehicle for man's further growth. Yet the hidden curriculum delivers the message that schools cannot be dispensed with

and that institutionalised learning cannot really be basically improved upon. This sort of mental set denies man's perfectibility and his self-realisation,for it implies that a certain stage of development cannot be transcended. In effect, schooling must be rejected if education is to proceed. Nietzsche noted that "We should fight against everything that deprives us of the highest fulfilment of our existence."[79] One difficulty with this line of thought is that it seems unmindful of the moral value element in growth and perfectibility. The Nazis admired Nietzsche and perhaps Hitler represented the "highest fulfilment" of their existence. Moral direction is crucial in speaking of perfectibility. Man does not automatically perfect himself by going in any direction and developing any potentiality. We all have the potential for evil behaviour, yet one would hope that this is a potential we would try to suppress or eliminate rather than develop. Education, in the best sense in the schools, is an attempt by man to improve himself and to refine his moral qualities through engaging in those activities which reflect moral attributes e.g. fairness, honesty, respect for persons and a passion for truth. While schooling cannot guarantee that good potentialities will be actualised, it does at least provide minimal conditions for it to occur. In a deschooled society, with the principle of autonomy and the learner's freedom being paramount, there are no checks to prevent morally undesirable potentialities being actualised at a very early age, and before the learner has the cognitive and moral maturity to make well-considered decisions as to what potentialities he wishes to develop. Even then what he wishes may have to be circumscribed by moral restraints. In a deschooled system he may not learn of the many possibilities open to him,through not being deliberately exposed to them. A school ideally maximises choice and offers greater opportunities for people develop their best potential, particularly if it provides a broad liberal education.

If man must transcend an institution such as schooling and go on to autonomous learning in networks or whatever, it must follow that in time he must transcend the deschooled society as well, if he is not to be trapped again in a set-up which he regards as untranscendable. According to this line of argument, deschooling is as provisional and as temporary in man's growth as any other stage of self-realisation.

It is interesting that Gotz does not advance an argument that man can "perfect" himself without any institutions at all. The implication is that institutions are necessary for man to fulfil himself, but he must not allow himself to become dependent on any one if he is to continue to grow. This is a reasonable and tenable proposition. It might not, however, be that schooling is totally undesirable simply because some people do not transcend it and grow beyond it. Illich's networks might equally create a dependence for some people. This is a danger of all institutions. It is not sufficient, however, to condemn them, for many men do attain some measure of self-realization as a result of them.

One could regard schooling as analogous to one of Piaget's cognitive stages, perhaps. According to his theory, cognitive growth consists of passing sequentially successive stages. Each one in turn is transcended. This does not mean that a particular stage which has been left behind is in some way "bad". What might be considered as undesirable is if we become fixed at one stage and do not proceed beyond it, if we have the capacity to do so.

While one could not argue that schooling, as we know it, is as necessary as a Plagetan stage in man's cognitive development, one could establish a case for the necessity of some degree of formal initiation into learning as a necessary step to later self-directed learning and education. There is no evidence to suggest that autonomous learning is genetically acquired. Many of the more enlightened schools do have as one of their major aims, the development of a person who is capable of continuing to learn and to grow right throughout life. But they all initiate people into the skills of learning by carefully directing it in the early stages.

It may be conceded that schooling the way it is constituted in some schools may be partly or even largely responsible for some people not developing beyond it, but it is by no means accepted that schooling as such need have this characteristic.

We may even in fact regard Illich's autonomous learning networks as a further institutional stage beyond schooling which people could enter, without denying (or abolishing) a more structured and compulsory learning setup as a prelude to it.

Götz might be hard-pressed to find any serious educator today who believes in schooling, holding also to that contemporary schools are "the best possible ever" or "the supreme kind of institutionalized learning process that man could ever devise."[80] We would not have the unprecedented reform ferment if this was a seriously held view. Again, it appears that a straw man is being set up.

Götz must concede that just as man may be driven to improve himself, so he seems to be driven to improve the institutions which, at their best, help to realize the best in his potentiality. It seems illogical to hold that man can be improved but not the institutions which he himself has created.

It is unusual for a deschooler to concede as Götz does, that schools "do represent an achievement of man", even though they must be transcended. The deschooler would transcend schools by abolishing them so that no one may pass through a structured period of learning, even if he wished to. There is however, something unusual in this use of "transcend", for surely the term implies going beyond something after having experienced it first. Does autonomous learning have any significance for someone who has not experienced some sort of guided and structured learning? Is the former even possible for advanced learning without the latter as a pre-condition?

Götz talks of deschooling as the "concrete social change that can create in man the consciousness of his human potentialities and worth", an extravagant claim in terms of what he contends is the provisional nature of institutions.

Deschooling, if we accept the logic of its proponents' analysis, must be as provisional as all the others and just as necessary to transcend in the drive for improvement. Götz admits that alienation, in the Marxist sense, of a human being separated from what he produces, could occur with all institutions including those of a deschooled society. However, he says that:

> Illich's argument, like Marx's, is not one of the perfection but of the perfectibility, of improvement and progress. If man is indeed perfectible, there is the likelihood that his institutions may become more perfect, or alternatively, that he may learn to live more humanly despite the alienating tendency of his institution.[81]

Awareness and re-creation go hand in hand, although it is difficult to see how something can become more perfect than "perfect".

Schools and Alienation

Schaeffer has argued that:

> Alienation is an inevitable phenomenon of social existence, and that the process of education is really the process of encountering and transcending alienation from moment to moment.[82]

Paulo Freire draws an important distinction between "cultural action" and "cultural revolution". The former is the overthrowing of alienating institutions whereas the latter is the maintenance of an awareness essential to avoiding succumbing to further encroaching alienation. Marx would see it in terms of making the revolution permanent, as indeed the Chinese attempted to do in the 1960's.

Götz argues that even if all institutions are alienating there is merit in striving for those which encourage the greatest degree of awareness (or degree of education) necessary for overcoming those alienating characteristics. He sees schools as by their very nature militating against this awareness. Deschooling could be regarded as a revolutionary action. What comes after would be what makes the revolution permanent.

One wonders if schools are necessarily the most alienating institutions. Schrag suggests that there is no evidence indicating that families, supermarkets, peer cultures or skill centres are any less alienating as socializing agencies.[83] In fact, one of the reasons for the development of schools was to expose some children to the wider range of cultural pursuits than that which could be provided by many disadvantaged families.

So we come back to the original issue of whether a hidden curriculum is not only a necessary and inevitable part of schooling but also irredeemably bad. Götz's reference to Illich's analogy of Pandora's box does not satisfy logical and philosophical criteria. There is no logical co nection between a hidden curriculum and moral

undesirability for the message a hidden curriculum may convey, e.g. through Illich's learning webs, may in fact be morally good, assisting a person to realize the best in his potentiality. We can accept that all institutional structures of necessity convey and imply certain value assumptions. But we need not accept that these value assumptions or hidden curricula are either morally bad or unreformable. The deschoolers themselves become entrapped by their rather narrow, sterotyped and increasingly obsolete definition of schools.

If the concept of "schooling" can be employed more flexibly and loosely, as outlined at the beginning of the chapter, there is no reason to suppose that these schools cannot operate with a hidden curriculum which reflects the best characteristics of a liberal education. This would mean that their multiple and instrumental functions would have to be shed and this will be examined in Chapter Six.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

## TEACHING AND AUTHORITY

### Teaching - Irrelevant to Education?

The deschoolers charge schools with creating an illusion; the illusion "that most learning is the result of teaching."[1] The former argue that most knowledge is acquired outside of schools, and that what occurs in schools is merely skill instruction and role learning. Even in skill instruction, schools do a very poor job, partly because they confuse it with giving an education and partly by making it curricula, i.e. advancement in one skill is linked to advancement in another unrelated one. Illich does concede that planned learning can be assisted by planned teaching to a certain extent. But the main principle they adhere to is that people learn the best and most important things for themselves when they are free from the constraints of a professional teacher.

Reimer lists indoctrination as a function of schooling.[2] He sees it as a series of learning values of the hidden curriculum, enunciated earlier. The deschoolers have employed terms such as "teaching," "learning" and "indoctrination" extremely loosely, and this had led them sometimes into making unjustifiable claims about what happens in schools. In principle it might be empirically possible to determine the effectiveness or success of teaching in schools, but a number of philosophical issues must be resolved as part of the necessary groundwork of an empirical investigation. While the deschoolers do not reject teaching as such, they make it quite clear that the most valuable learning is the consequence of the learner "teaching" himself outside of schooling.

In examining the characteristics of a concept such as teaching, one could say that teaching is an intentional activity,[3,4,5] The fact that someone has been learning from another is insufficient grounds for claiming that teaching has been occurring. Whoever is doing the teaching must be aware that he intends to bring about a relatively enduring change in the behaviour of another, whether the learner responds or not.

Because an enduring change can be brought about in a number of different ways,[6] teaching cannot be conceived of as a single

activity. Green regards it as "molecular",[7] with some activities being more central to the idea than others. A number of activities exist on the teaching continuum, their location determined by whether they are more involved in changes of behaviour or changes in knowledge and beliefs. Hence the concept includes such overlapping activities as training, instructing, conditioning and indoctrinating. Training and instructing for instance, are regarded as more centrally related to teaching, than conditioning or indoctrinating.

Crittenden notes that the concept of teaching lacks an evaluative component.[8] It is therefore logical to talk of teaching someone something which is untrue or bad, or trivial. However, within the context of education we do not possess quite the same freedom, for that concept does have evaluative criteria, as established earlier. Schooling, as an educational engagement

> is responsible to the standards that are embodied in the public traditions of understanding... these traditions do not simply reflect the economic and other conditions of a society ... they transcend the functions and problems that may preoccupy a particular social class or even an entire society at a certain time.[9]

While teaching and learning can and do occur outside of schools, that which does occur in the latter, because of the historical association between schooling and being educated,[10] must satisfy the epistemic, aesthetic and moral criteria of value inherent in any educational activity. Any teaching therefore which takes place in this context must have as its objectives and content that which is worthwhile and true as opposed to false or trivial. To avoid a rejection of the teaching of ideas or theories of the past which are no longer accepted as valid, it could be accepted that the content need not be objectively true but that it is rationally held has been rationally acquired.[11]

Teaching within an educational context furthermore must conform to a number of conditions relating to methodology. These conditions are implicit in the public modes of inquiry e.g. evidence must be freely available to the learner, emphasis should be on promoting understanding rather than simply acquiring knowledge.

However the range and complexity of evidence and understanding any teaching should promote will also be limited and governed by the age and ability of the learner. The teacher nevertheless is obliged to furnish the best reasons the particular learner is able to grasp.

While other criteria are crucial as well, Crittenden sees the epistemic one as the paramount factor separating educative and miseducative teaching. He says, "The whole issue finally turns on what can reasonably be asserted and how claims of a certain kind are to be justified."[12]

Conceptually, the deschoolers are correct in maintaining that there is no logical connection between education and teaching.[13] Learning that is educational can occur with no one teaching. Much learning in life does go on without any direct teaching or teaching within a school context, though of course not all learning possesses educational value. This is a point the deschoolers overlook with their unsubstantiated claims that most of what we have learned we learned outside of schools.[14] Even if it could be empirically proven that most of our learning in terms of quantity occurred outside of schools it would not negate the qualitative value of schooling.

Hirst and Peters argue that "It may be a general empirical fact that most things are learnt more rapidly and more reliably if the situation is explicitly structured by a teacher."[15] In addition there is some guarantee that the teacher will feel obligated to teach that which is worthwhile and true. In the autonomous, deschooled situation we do not have even this minimal hope. What trivia, what cynical and embittered values and attitudes would children of the slums be likely to learn in a deschooled society? This incidentally suggests the necessity for all in a society to possess a reasonable socio-economic background before deschooling can be introduced. The deschoolers rather paradoxically claim that only a deschooled situation can equalize learning opportunities for the children of society's poor.

The deschoolers rightly do remind us that learning is conceptually and logically necessary to education, whereas teaching is not. They regard teaching as a means whereby the teacher exercises his often

unreasonable authority over the learner and reduces the latter to a state of continuing dependence on institutional care and mediation.

Yet teaching does bear a relationship to education via the latter's relationship to schooling. The abstract nature and complex structure of public forms of knowledge which have evolved

> through the progressive elaboration of complex linguistic structures, social institutions, and traditions, built up over thousands of years... is such that the only way in which it would seem possible for youngsters to acquire these efficiently and effectively, is for us to introduce pupils to them deliberately and systematically.[16]

Hence teaching, even if it involves no more than an intentional structuring of the environment to aid learning, is an indispensible part of schooling, which in turn is linked to education.

Because of the sheer quantity and increasing complexity of our cultural heritage and the vast numbers of children who have to be initiated into it, it is becoming increasingly physically impossible for children to educate themselves in a necessarily random though autonomous way. It seems that circumstances are forging closer links between teaching and education despite the lack of a direct conceptual relationship. Certainly it is not illogical to say that someone teaches another in order to help him become educated, and while it may have been commonplace to speak of the self-educated or self-taught man in earlier times, it is becoming increasingly difficult today. The deschoolers would claim that this is because of the monopoly schools exert over knowledge and learning in modern society, and their suspicion of any knowledge not packagable and certifiable. While this may be partly true, it does seem that they underestimate the formidable task of acquiring any more than a superficial education through one's efforts alone. The very nature of educational activity involves discourse and rational enquiry with others as well as some initiation by someone who has himself achieved a measure of mastery over some public form or forms of knowledge. The deschoolers do not necessarily deny this process; indeed their learning networks with peer matching and educators-at-large recognise this. What they do overlook, rather ironically in the light of their emphasis on our growing scarcity of educational resources, is that for this very reason, a one-to-one teacher-learner relationship however desirable, is completely unrealistic. Even affluent technological

societies cannot afford to pursue an improving teacher-pupil ratio to its logical conclusion.

If we are to reach all our children educationally in our mass technological societies, it may well be that the mass, teacher-structured learning situation is the only physically feasible one for our time, despite its weaknesses and disadvantages. This is not to suggest that the form it takes in schools is the only possibility, but merely to emphasise that a teaching situation is virtually impossible to avoid today if we are to have any hope of initiating as many children as possible into educationally significant learning and even utlimately to ensuring the survival of our cultural heritage.

While the deschoolers admit "that planned learning does... benefit from planned instruction,"[17] they deny that learning of any significance (other than that of the hidden curriculum) occurs in the classroom. Instead of teaching in its best sense, we have instruction where the student passively accepts what the teacher says. Birchall questions whether the student is indeed a "passive recipient" in the classroom and if active participation by the learner is essential to learning.[18] He indicates that "passive recipient" can be conceived of in two ways - as an uncritical acceptance of whatever is taught or as a recognition of his own lack of knowledge and a preparedness to accept, at least for the time being, what the teacher is endeavouring to impart.

On the other hand if "active participation" is thought of as contributing in an informed way, then obviously it is not a necessary ingredient of learning, for one of the objectives of learning is to become informed. If the term however means endeavouring to understand what is being taught, then it can be regarded as an essential component of learning.

Indoctrination

Worse than just instructing, the deschoolers accuse teachers of more sinister practices. We employ teachers "to bribe or compel the student to find the time and the will to learn,"[19] and "indoctrination" is commonplace in our schools. While indoctrination certainly comes within the spectrum of the teaching concept, it has long been regarded as a form of miseducation, despite its

respectable historical origins.[20] It can be used in a descriptive way, but more often than not it has derogatory connotations. There is no intention here to justify indoctrination, whether thought of in terms of intention, content, or methodology,[21] although it is difficult to determine how the deschoolers are intending its use. By referring to the fact that "bright and dull alike have always relied on rote..."[22] for learning, Illich seems to imply that method is one of his ways of distinguishing indoctrination. In this instance learning is taking place in a mechanical way without being thought about in order to foster understanding. Yet rote learning cannot necessarily be equated with indoctrination, for some degree of rote learning can often lay the foundation for later understanding of an area of knowledge. Furthermore rote learning can commit to memory that which is false as well as true. At the empirical level, Illich and the other deschoolers provide no evidence of the extent of rote learning, and indeed of any other type of learning occurring in schools.

Indoctrination may also be regarded in content terms as when Illich suggests that the teacher

> indoctrinates the pupil about what is right or wrong, not only in school but also in society at large... and thus ensures that all feel themselves children of the same state... He persuades the pupil to submit to a domestication of his vision of truth and his sense of what is right.[23]

For this situation to qualify as indoctrination, the teacher would have to inculcate these beliefs as part of a systematic body of doctrine without intentionally exposing his pupils to other beliefs or indicating that alternatives exist. Yet in what are commonly referred to as the liberal democracies where numerous standards and life styles seem to flourish, it is difficult to see how a teacher could reasonably prevent his pupils being exposed to other beliefs and other conceptions of right and wrong. More often he would have to persuade (if he felt this was proper in his role as teacher) his pupils to prefer one set of beliefs to another. And in this process of persuasion would more likely exist the possibility of indoctrination, i.e. whether he used rational means and considered all the relevant evidence fairly.

R.M. Hare makes an interesting point in the light of the deschoolers' general claims about teaching. The educator is basically endeavouring to turn children into adults whereas the indoctrinator tries to keep them always as children.[24] The deschoolers may well be seeing indoctrination in these terms, for they constantly compare the independent, autonomous learner in the deschooled society with the dependent client learner nurtured by the school and other institutions throughout life. Even if it was possible to determine in what specific ways deschoolers are utilizing the concept, it is doubtful if empirical evidence would unearth widespread employment of indoctrination in any of the three senses in most schools of "liberal", technological societies. This is not to suggest that all types of miseducation (including indoctrination) do not occur from time to time throughout the schooling system. If it does occur it is more probably than not through malice or ignorance on the part of the teacher.[25] To imply that it is a common, intentional and systematic process, inherently part of institutional schooling is a gross exaggeration. The very nature of many Western technological societies with their diversity of schools, curricula, methodology and the openness of inquiry and learning, make it extremely difficult for any one child to be indoctrinated continuously throughout all his school years. Also there is often a conflict between some of the values a school fosters and those prevailing in the home and the wider society, a factor ensuring that, if anything, a child grows up uncertain about the rightness of any value system.

It can be conceded that part of the role of any schooling system will be to initiate the young into and help perpetuate the cultural heritage of a particular society or civilisation. This function, by its very nature, could mould the young person in an indoctrinating sense particularly if that heritage does not value rational enquiry and debate and the holding of beliefs based on objective evidence as opposed to tradition and even superstition. The nature of the cultural heritage of Western civilization is based on those very principles which cannot logically be acquired except through the processes which are the antithesis of indoctrination. Again while it is theoretically possible for a teacher in such a society to indoctrinate, the content of the public forms of knowledge which are central to the Western heritage as well as the

powerful traditions of rational enquiry, consideration of evidence, respect for persons, and objectivity, cannot help but determine intentions and methodology. It is children's age which makes any degree of indoctrination possible in a Western society. Certainly in the very early years of a child's life, parents and teachers could be regarded as guilty of indoctrination in the sense of insisting on beliefs and behaviour whether the child has grasped or is capable of grasping reasons beyond his developmental maturity. They are perhaps absolved to the extent that they give some reasons which the child can understand, and increasingly as he grows older, give him more appropriate reasons and increasingly greater autonomy in his beliefs and behaviour.

While schools can be accused of tardiness in allowing adolescents, especially, to make significant decisions about the running of schools, choice of subjects, and general autonomy, it is difficult to sustain an argument that most of today's schools are determined to stunt the growth of children through indoctrination and other means. The proliferation of ideas, inventions, life sytles, and beliefs in Western societies today, simply could not exist if schools were systematically indoctrinating as the deschoolers contend. The most articulate "divergent" thinkers in our society including perhaps the deschoolers, often seem to be those who have had the most extensive schooling history.

Education and Authority

The deschoolers are not only unhappy with the sort of teaching which occurs in schools but with the authority of the teacher. In their view his authority is based on different claims, depending on the role he is enacting, whether it is custodian, preacher, or therapist.

> A teacher, through the combining of these three powers,
>
> contributes to the warping of the child much more than the laws which establish his legal or economic minority, or restrict his right to free assembly or abode... Under the authoritative eye of the teacher, several orders of value collapse into one. The distinctions between morality, legality, and personal worth are blurred and eventually eliminated. Each transgression is made to be felt as a multiple offence.[26]

Society, seemingly through defining some people as children and pupils in school, invests the teacher with a considerable degree

of power. It appears that the deschoolers deplore the sort of relationship which exists between an adult and a child in the institutionalized setting of school. As in other institutions, it is claimed to be structurally a manipulative one - the teacher conditions the child, through the hidden curriculum and daily activities to accept a state of dependence on institutional care and an inferior status in relation to those who wield power and authority in general.

The deschoolers however, cannot claim a monopoly of concern over those forms of authority which abuse their responsibilities, and cynically manipulate people. It is difficult to determine with any accuracy whether the deschoolers are against authority per se. The lack of authority and institutions would be equivalent to anarchy and certainly this is not their ideal. The fact that they believe in convivial institutions and "network administrators" add "pedagogical counsellors"[27] in the deschooled milieu strongly suggests that they recognise the necessity for authority in some sense.

Peters sees the concept of authority as an inseparable part of a rule-governed form of life, intelligible only if we understand the notion of following rules, and by implication perceive that there are correct and incorrect ways of doing things.[28] Traditionally we appeal to an authority to make a decision. Power must be distinguished from authority for the former explains ways of coercing people to someone's will, whereas the latter appeals to a value system which people voluntarily accept. Authority obviously has often been aided by power.

A distinction also needs to be drawn between those <u>in</u> authority and someone being <u>an</u> authority.[29] The latter possesses authority or the right to pronounce on matters relating to his sphere of competence training, or insight. Authority in social control revolves around the validity of someone or some institution exercising it. Authority in knowledge however, can only be justified by good reasons, and is always provisional.

The teacher possesses authority, in both senses. The state or the community authorize him to act on their behalf as well as that of the parents, for schooling, in the sense of cultural transmission

and serving the overall needs of a country, comes within the authority of the state.[30] This is linked to the idea that learning and acquiring an education cannot be a totally idiosyncratic and individual matter. We learn from a cultural heritage, and in a very real sense we owe our personal identity to it. The state's existence rests on the perpetuation and extension of this heritage and here stems the authority of certain people who have mastered aspects of it and who have been authorized to initiate others into it.

The history of authority systems is one of rationalization.[31] In earlier centuries people wielded authority as a consequence of their birth, e.g. monarchs, and it was regarded as a proper order of things. With the development and awareness of the liberating effect of reason and individualism, authority increasingly had to justify itself on rational grounds. Men came to resent obeying someone or submitting to a system which was not based on consent and reason. Hence, the development of democratic political systems. Paternalism withered and authority became rationalized.[32] And this is the important point to note in terms of deschooling. Authority, despite a prima facie antagonism with reason, can be justified in institutions, and in particular in schools, if it is exercised in accordance with the purposes of the institutions and its personnel are chosen on relevant grounds.

Peters justifies authority in the area of social control furthermore by referring to the paradox of freedom, i.e. we will end up with a fair degree of freedom if we accept some constraints to prevent the arbitrary exercise of the strong exerting their will over the weak, and depriving the latter of their liberty.[33]

The state, through its institutions, exercises this authority on our behalf. The teacher in turn exercises this control over his pupils on behalf of their parents. For the normal processes of education to take place effectively in the classroom, some degree of authority and control over events and the children must occur, particularly in view of their developmental stages. Without being authoritarian, and this is one aspect that deschoolers rightly decry, the teacher has a responsibility to ensure that a lack of maturity in a developmental sense does not hinder the successful initiation into worthwhile activities.

One of the implications of welding the authority structure to the aims of a learning institution is that teachers must exercise a degree of academic freedom and autonomy. It is extremely difficult to pursue the truth if there is not a corollary freedom to do so. If this autonomy is abandoned, any advancement of knowledge lays itself open to political, economic and other influences, until the teacher ends up being a mouthpiece for the state's ideology, and in effect indoctrinating.

Another implication is the provisional authority of the academic or teacher. While he possesses authority through having mastered a body of knowledge and techniques in the sense that it is foolish for someone uninitiated to ignore what he says, by the same token he is obligated as part of handing on the inheritance, to equip his pupils with the knowledge and skills, eventually to dispense with the need for a teacher.[34] The authority is there really to serve the learner. The knowledge of the teacher during the learner's early years while it may be, and is, sometimes ignored, cannot be regarded as irrelevant in the course of acquiring an education.

Teachers must not only have mastered an area or areas of knowledge together with some awareness of how such knowledge has been accumulated, criticized and revised, but they need also to have acquired an understanding of how children develop and learn, in order to teach effectively. Because of this specialised knowledge they possess and because they must be permitted freedom in the pursuit of truth, teachers can be regarded as having the responsibility and right of determining the syllabus, or what children should learn, without necessarily being unmindful of the needs of their society and the needs and interests of their children. But they cannot abandon this right as the deschoolers insist they do, and allow children to decide what they wish to learn.

The deschoolers argue that the teacher's decisions in this sphere constitute unjustifiable authority. What they are saying in effect is that the judgement of a mature, educated, and experienced adult is not to be preferred over that of a child lacking generally in the knowledge and experience with which to make a reasoned decision.

This constitutes an untenable argument. If the deschoolers were to insist that teachers justify their curriculum decisions as far as is possible to children and others uninitiated into the public forms of knowledge, then they would be on sounder grounds. Indeed it could be regarded as a motivating exercise to inform the learner of why he is studying a subject or a certain aspect of a subject. And undoubtedly many good teachers have been and are doing this very thing. Perhaps part of what made the authority of the teacher unpalatable to many learners and critics was the reluctance (possibly through not having thought the reasons through himself) of the teacher to confide the justifications of this aspect of his authority. This right of the teacher to decide on the syllabus need not preclude the opinions of parents and the wider community being solicited.

Crittenden observes in this connection, the distinction between decisions concerning education directly and those which are more peripheral.[35] The blurring of these two areas in the past and even in some schools today leads to authority being regarded with some degree of anathema. For instance, the selection of appropriate evaluation techniques for a certain area of the curriculum, because of its direct bearing on education and the authority of the teacher as an expert on pedagogical matters, must remain ultimately the teacher's decision, even though he may consult his pupils. However, in the area of, say, discipline or classroom organisation, which is not so directly related to his expertise or authority and over which there may be well-informed disagreement, the teacher may well involve his pupils in decision-making.

It is this possibly widespread reluctance of the teacher to minimise his dominance in classroom and school proceedings which Illich rightly condemns: "He (the teacher) arbitrates the observance of rules and administers the intricate rubrics of initiation to life."[36] The teacher, probably, through necessity in the past, has assumed a multiplicity of related roles, not all of which need be part of his authority.

To avoid the hydra-headed type of authority which Illich portrays (assuming there is some truth in it for some teachers), they need to remember that "the exercise of authority in the school

should be shaped by the distinctive character of the educational process."[37] This means, among other things, that they need to respect the type of human learning which is also educationally acceptable.

Many sorts of metaphors of learning have inspired teachers e.g. those of a plant unfolding,[38] a receptacle, a machine, and an animal[39], and in different ways they have been inappropriate models. The teacher must involve the learner himself as an agent in the process of his learning. The teacher's authority involves him in persuasion by the force of reason rather than coercion and command, although undeniably at some stages of the learning process he may have to content himself with insisting on merely external compliance. Generally though, the very nature of the educational process, as initiation into worthwhile activities determines how he exercises his authority. Cajoling people constantly into learning is not only self-defeating but a mis-use of his authority. This undertaking must guide him ideally into leading his pupils through intrinsic motivation, into caring for their subjects.

Peters draws attention to the distinction between formal and actual authority, where for instance a teacher may be legally in authority over his class but in actual fact may lack the ability to exercise authority over them.[40] The converse may also apply. Normally, however, the office makes the man, and this is part of the problem of the teacher's role, in the eyes of the deschoolers. Despite any enlightenment which may exist on the part of some individual teachers, the institutional structure of schools determines in broad terms how a teacher will behave in relation to his pupils. Structurally the teacher is the decision-maker and asserts a dominant influence as part of his authority. The system ensures that he possesses a monopoly over knowledge, and of crucial importance, gives him the authority to assign social rank through the curriculum.[41] Just as no school can avoid the hidden curriculum, no teacher can avoid the roles and authority invested in him. Furthermore most teachers have no desire to relinquish this authority, for the raison d'etre of their profession is linked to it. As Illich cynically notes: "Schools create jobs for school teachers."[42]

The Teacher's Triple Role: Anti-Educational?

In the light of the nature of authority and the teacher's formal role, what do we make of Illich's charges that the teacher is in effect a custodian, moralist, and therapist? Need teachers be viewed in the derogatory manner the deschoolers conceive of them?

It seems that if any society wishes to survive it must possess the mechanisms which guarantee some degree of transmission of its cultural heritage, along with the capacities and techniques for developing and transforming it. And of course, all societies which have survived today have done this very thing. This process of education involves initiating the young systematically into what it conceives as worthwhile activities, intrinsically valuable, as well as modes of conduct which are morally justifiable. The agents authorized to fulfil this function must possess a dual authority - as masters in their own understanding of sections of the culture and as representatives of the will of that community that the culture be preserved and transmitted.

It is therefore difficult to see how that agent, or teacher, can avoid the role, at least in some sense, of custodian, i.e ensuring that children are physically gathered together within some sort of organised system where order prevails and learning can occur, particularly where intrinsic motivation may temporarily be lacking.

Even in Illich's networks some degree of organisation and custodial work may be required, despite the autonomy of learning. It is hard to see the deschoolers allowing four, five or six year olds, for instance, to be under no control or supervision of any kind. Certainly few parents would allow their children to do as they pleased and go wherever their interests took them. As children get older however, the custodial role should diminish as they become more able to take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

It seems to be the Rousseaulan streak in the deschoolers and their optimism about human nature which leads them mistakenly to assume that a teacher does not have to be a custodian as well. As mentioned earlier, the custodian role need not be authoritarian, particularly since custody does not have a direct bearing on education. A teacher can afford to consult and even allow some pupil

decision-making in the daily classroom "ritual", organisation, and administration.

As a moralist, the teacher stands in loco parentis in a similar way to when he acts as a custodian. He is the legal authority representing the parents and the state, and if we accept that cultural transmission is a legitimate human activity, then we must also accept this second role. Illich alleges that teachers indoctrinate their pupils about what it right and wrong while in this role. As established earlier, some teachers out of ignorance undoubtedly do teach morals and other subjects in a way which leads to uncritical belief. Yet if children are to be initiated into a rule-governed life, particularly at the early moral developmental stages where they cannot yet function autonomously, a teacher (and parent) would be acting irresponsibly by not insisting on certain things even if the children cannot understand reasons fully. The teacher does have a further responsibility by giving reasons that children might be able to understand and by allowing older pupils a degree of autonomy in deciding what is right and wrong.

In addition, there are values inherent in the procedures of becoming educated, e.g. a respect for truth and for persons, objectivity, fairness, honesty and so on, which the pupil cannot help but acquire in the process of learning. A truly educated teacher cannot help but be a moralist. He would be failing as an authority on his subject, if he did not actively follow and encourage these values and procedures.

If Illich is referring to a teacher who expounds only his vision of what is ethical and endeavours to persuade his pupils to adopt this unthinkingly, then that teacher has stepped well over the boundary of his role. This role is inextricably bound up with what has earlier been said in connection with indoctrination. The extent to which teachers assume this role in its worst sense is speculative as no significant empirical studies have been conducted. It could be added that under no system can teachers avoid some cultural bias as opposed to prejudice. No matter how objectively a teacher endeavours to present his subject, he cannot avoid the fact that he is part of that very culture. His very

teaching of it affirms that he is also transmitting what he considers desirable and worthwhile. And this need not be bad educationally, if we believe that an educated person must have come to care for his subject and exhibit some enthusiasm for it.

Finally, to what extent is a teacher justified in acting as a therapist and to what degree should he concern himself with his pupils' personal lives?

One can try to find out more about a person for two main reasons - to manipulate that person more efficiently or in order to be in a better position to help that person develop or become educated. A teacher certainly needs to know a substantial amount about how children develop and learn, physically, psychologically and socially, so that he can adapt his aims, content, and methodology to suit a developmental stage. However, if there is a respect for persons involved in his teaching, he needs to be aware of individual differences.

It is a fact that each person is unique, and ideally a teacher teaches both a subject and a person. He must know some personal things about each pupil he teaches. These personal aspects must of course have a bearing on that person's education.

In addition, a teaching relationship of necessity, is also a personal relationship. The pupil learns things about his teacher and vice versa. Both can use this information for miseducative purposes, for pupils can dominate a teacher just as much as the latter can exert his will over them. What has to be remembered is that people are not machines, with one master machine transferring information to others not yet programmed. We are dealing with education, an activity which people participate in because they find it worthwhile.

In Illich's learning networks, we have peer-matching, where nothing except a learner's interest is conveyed to his peer. They are required to go about their learning activity as if the other learner's characteristics and background have no bearing on the success of their enterprise. This uni-dimensional relationship seems the antithesis of acquiring an education.

Hirst and Peters talk of the legitimacy of embryonic personal relationships in the teacher-pupil situation.[43] While a full personal relationship may not be possible or indeed desirable with every member of a class, they do suggest that the teacher should allow glimpses of himself as a person. In other words, they are saying the opposite of the deschoolers; that it can be considered part of a child's education to learn to relate to an adult as a human being as well as strictly in his role as a teacher.

Furthermore the relationships could act as a catalyst to the educational process. Role tension could be diminished as well as limiting some of the stereotyping which occurs when people do not know others as well as they might. It could also erode the myth that education is something which occurs only in schools and has only a minimal relevance to what occurs outside.

One aspect of a teacher's authority and role which the deschoolers could be right about, is related to the instrumental role many schools assume in addition to their main task of education. Their curriculum is geared to certification,[44] and the teacher is consequently put in the position where his relationship with his pupils and his assessment of their overall capabilities can determine their life chances and the distribution of rewards or the lack of them.[45] This invests teachers with a power which can militate against the processes of education, and lead pupils to believe that education is merely a means to an end - one of the worst aspects of the hidden curriculum. It can also lead to a warping of the curricula in favour of the immediate needs of that society, which may not necessarily be consistent with the aims of education. This is what gives the authority of teachers so much mana and which also helps frustrate the acquiring of an education in schools.

There is no reason why all children should not receive a broad liberal education, with no specialisation and examinations leading to certification, even up to the senior classes of high schools. The task then would fall upon places of work and other agencies to train a person for a specific career. These could institute entry tests, related only to testing the potential of an applicant for the type of ability and skills pertinent to the work involved. His

past learning history could in a sense be treated as irrelevant, as the deschoolers insist.

The deschoolers portray a pessimistic picture of the teacher's triple role all run into one formidable ogre. In summary it could be said that the nature of any educational activity places some severe restrictions on any conscientious educators and in effect limits their role to something more positive. Educators must teach that which is valuable and pass on moral standards inherent in their disciplines and which transcend te the educators' roles, e.g. benevolence or consideration of interests, fairness, respect for persons and a degree of freedom. These moral principles are only made concrete in that special form of personal relationships a successful teacher has with his pupils.

Knowing something about his pupils, should reveal his interest in them as human beings as well as learners. It can help him to motivate them and help those whose backgrounds make it difficult for them to become educated. It is regrettable that some schools by allowing education to become, in varying degrees instrumental, have added an alien dimension to the role of the educator.

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# CHAPTER SIX

## Schools and Society

The deschoolers' argument against reform of schooling and in favour of its liquidation, partly pivots around the supposedly inherent links between the hidden curriculum and manipulative institutions, and partly around the relationship between schools and society.

Illich contends that schooling has become the largest service industry in technological societies and in a sense the balance of power has shifted from society in general to schools. Instead of society influencing and determining what happens in schools, schools now shape the sort of society they wish to produce. Schools possess this remarkable power not only because of their physical pervasiveness in utilizing such vast capital and labour resources in the economy, but also because they "mould" everyone's imagination to accept the logic of increasing consumption and because they control entry to every other institution: "The engineering of consumers has become the economy's principal growth sector.."[1] schools have ceased to be dependent on the ideology professed by any government or market organisation... in other words are fundamentally alike in all countries."[2] This is a radical and key argument in deschooling theory. The conventional sociological view is that schools reflect the structure and values of society itself. More radically, the Marxist view is that a political revolution involving an ideological change will in turn revolutionize all the institutions of society. Illich rejects this, denouncing it as "demagoguery calling for more of the same,"[3] and insists that a true revolution must begin with the abolition of schools. Only then will the whole nature and fabric of a society register a fundamental change.

Macklin notes, however, that while school may be an independent variable, paradoxically it cannot be abolished until there is a similar change occurring in the wider society as well.[4]

Illich points out that traditionally, political revolutions tend to alter power structures only by installing a new ruling class in place of the old, without really having a significant effect on social processes and structures.[5]

A people's future is redefined for, not with them. Political revolutionaries promise a more equitable distribution of material resources and increasing standards of consumption. In effect, "everything the masses have learned to know and crave as privileges of the rich will be produced and distributed."[6] The implication is that it is merely a question of adapting and re-directing the energies and purposes of a society's institutions. Orthodox revolutionaries leave the most vital structures untouched as well as continuing to subscribe to some version of consumption.

Illich agrees with Freire that a cultural revolution is necessary which forges a new social reality out of man's wants and needs.[7] Technology must be harnessed for the benefit of man and not for the pursuit of increasing G.N.P.s and higher levels of consumption and despoilation of the world's resources. The cultural revolutionary reminds man that a greater emphasis on materialism decreases the chances of establishing a humane society. There is a displacement of value from what a man is to what he has, leading to decreasing personal fulfilment. Man's products and his institutions are employed to dominate other men and to raise levels of expectation which ultimately cannot be satisfied.

## Schooling as an Instrument of Society

In the past, a considerable number of social theorists, from Plato to Dewey, have seen education or the school as the crucial agent of reform. Locke, Comenius, Rousseau, and today Skinner, have added an element of optimism to this belief since the 17th century.[8] Education was looked upon as a means of human perfectibility. Before society itself can be changed the schools themselves must be transformed in line with the desired changes.

The school in recent times, has in general, responded to the doctrine of social "needs", acting as an agent of social reform, at the direction of the political will of society. The deschoolers however challenge this view. They do not necessarily deny that this originally might have been the case, but contend that with mass compulsory schooling, the schools have effective control over each generation's imagination and aspirations. This means that what the

society directs schools to do in the way of social action, has already been determined through the power of the hidden curriculum.

Considerable debate has occurred over the school's role in reform, some contending that it is inappropriate for the school to initiate any change, and that the school's legitimate function is to reflect the community's will.

Emile Durkheim is a major exponent of this view of the school's role as conservative.[9] He sees two key components to social reality: a collective conscience and division of labour. The former consists of the values and beliefs shared commonly and transcends any individual consciences. The division of labour constitutes the principle of change for the collective conscience. Any belief or value which is part of this conscience is necessarily valid and desirable for the members of that society. The school's specific task is exclusively one of socialization. Humans are products of society and become social beings by assimilating society's values through the school. Through this systematic initiation, "The man whom education should realize in us is not the man such as nature has made, but as the society wishes him to be ..."[10]

The school serves social needs both of uniformity by exposing man to the collective conscience, and also diversity through reflecting the specialized interests generated by the division of labour.

Durkheim states that "Institutions are neither absolutely plastic nor absolutely resistant to any deliberate modification."[11] The school can be changed within the broad limits of its dependence on other institutions. It needs to be continually changed or reformed in the light of any change to the collective conscience, so that it accurately socializes each new generation. Durkheim's attitude to social change implicitly carries a rejection of deschooling, for any reform in the school must be gradual:

> It is neither possible nor desirable that the present organisation collapse in an instant... For these creations ex nihilo are quite as impossible in the social order as in the physical order. The future is not improvised, one can build only with the materials we have from the past.[12]

In Durkheim's eyes, the school derives its moral authority from the degree to which it faithfully reflects the collective conscience. There is no justification for employing the school to impose values alien to that culture. If the collective conscience starts disintegrating through the lack of common values - the source of the malaise afflicting Western technological societies - the school cannot continue to fulfil its primary function. Education

> is only the image and reflection of a society. It imitates and reproduces the latter in abbreviated form; it does not create it. Education is healthy when peoples themselves are in a healthy state; but it becomes corrupt with them, being unable to modify itself.[13]

Interestingly enough, the New Zealand Currie Report also took the view that the school reflects the collective conscience, although it acknowledged there was a problem of interpretation:

> The aims and needs of a particular society change from time to time and the schools reflect this change. However, the aims and needs of a society are seldom explicitly stated; instead they are interpreted and expounded by sectional groups, more or less well informed, by experts, by enthusiastics, by interested parties, by all the myriad voices of a democratic society... It is sometimes difficult for those responsible for decisions to determine what the general will of society really is.[14]

Durkheim's is a somewhat pessimistic view of the power of schools vis-à-vis society, and does seem to overlook the way modern institutions have developed the mechanisms for their self-perpetuation and the ability to influence the course of events in the wider society.

Karl Mannheim is another modern theorist who shares the belief that the school is primarily an agent of the socio-political institutions of society.[15] He posits that the school, reformed by a planning group of the intelligentsia, should act in a reconstructive role in society. These planners determine the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which schools should promote to achieve the desired society.[16,17]

With all these theorists, the school remains a dependent variable, irrespective of whether it is transforming society or responding to existing needs. There is no justification in this

conceptual framework for the school to exercise any initiative. As Crittenden notes:

> It is the philosophical account of knowledge, and in particular the relationship of knowledge to the socio-political order, that is the fundamental stumbling block to even a partly independent status for the practice of education.[18]

Furthermore, these theorists appear to overlook the possibility that institutions such as schools might acquire some degree of independent life through "moulding" the attitudes, values and beliefs of those who pass through them to the point where people come to believe institutions are indispensible to society. The assumption underlying this school of thought is that the relationship operates one way, whereas in fact it probably works both ways. The deschoolers argue in fact that it operates most strongly in favour of the school.

Balanced against the force of this argument, are the large numbers of major social and political reforms which have taken effect in the last two centuries in Western technological countries, initiated and advanced by people who theoretically should have meekly accepted the value systems propounded by schools. Basically "capitalist" countries have been transformed into welfare states of varying degrees e.g. Scandanavia, Britain and New Zealand despite the fact that schools were meant to reflect the "capitalist" ethos. This does suggest that schools may not have quite the power attributed to them by the deschoolers. Despite any uniformity-of-values effect which schools may be responsible for, this age has seen an unprecedented proliferation of different value systems, life styles and beliefs, hardly an indication of an institution of pervasive and formidable power. It also ingores the primary and perhaps even more significant influence of the family in establishing values and attitudes, as well as that of the mass media.

Interestingly enough, the deschoolers do not wish to use schools to establish their ideal society. If schools are not as powerful as the deschoolers think they are, and the evidence strongly indicates this, then abolishing them will not necessarily eradicate those values and bad features associated with a consumer-oriented society. They may have to contemplate a wider reform right across society at the same time as schools are done away with. The danger exists that with the consolidating effect of schools thrown out as

well, the convivial cultural revolution may not be established securely enough in the imaginations of present and future generations.

Crittenden, together with the deschoolers, deplores the proliferation of functions which schooling has acquired. The former however sees this as a consequence of the instrumental role of schools constantly responding to society's needs. The latter see it as the result of schools deliberately enlarging their spheres of influence to encompass as many aspects of a person's life as possible, steadily stripping the family and the individual of autonomy and independence. "The school's specialized character" has been increasingly corroded to the point where it is "a kind of omnibus institution."[19]

A Case for the Partial Independence of Schools

There seem to be at least two major objections to the direction schools have moved. In practical terms it impairs the ability of schools to engage in a total education for which they have been historically associated and for which no other institution specifically exists. A liberal education, i.e. initiation into the main forms of thought that distinguish human culture and the associated skills, should remain the exclusive task of schools. Other tasks, related to the passing needs of society often tend to subordinate and warp this objective. A liberal education has inherent values which do not have to be justified extrinsically. Other institutions can be utilized to serve the needs of society, e.g. industry and the world of commerce could provide a wide variety of vocational training. This would effectively help counter the deschoolers' claim that schools are social role selection agencies which distribute and determine life chances. Nor could they be accused of inculcating the values related to the passing needs and aspirations of a specific society, for they would be solely involved in transmitting values which transcend them.

This is not to suggest that schools can or should avoid the influence of the political, economic and social milieu of which they are a part. Schools are accountable to the society which supports them in the sense of the efficiency and success with which they initiate the young into a liberal education. To engage in a liberal educating role, teachers must have a degree of autonomy and academic freedom, which is largely free from the passing pressures

and needs of a particular social context. Teachers and schools are not accountable to society, in the sense that education does not have to be justified by reference to extrinsic ends. Ideally, only those people whether teachers, administrators or parents who are themselves liberally educated are in a position to determine educational matters. The deschoolers deplore this position as they reject the professional mystique and exclusiveness of groups of people who possess knowledge and erect barriers to perpetuate their elitist status. They deny that any group of people in fact have special expertise to determine how and what anyone should learn. Certainly one could agree that the exclusive "closed-shop" image of some professional and trade groups is an unhealthy trend. It is a particularly undesirable factor in the teaching situation which ideally is a personal relationship where people co-operate in the pursuit of the understanding and appreciation of worthwhile forms of life. However, the fact remains that some persons through their prior initiation in greater breadth and depth will assist the initiation of others. This knowledge and understanding which the teacher ideally should possess, can obviously be used either to create an atmosphere of exclusiveness and to manipulate people or it can legitimately be employed to further the processes of education. There is nothing wrong with the teacher being seen as an authority provided the learner is not led to confuse the justifications for this role with that of being in authority.

The reasons for advancing a case for the partial autonomy of the school would lose their force if the validity and worth of knowledge were solely determined by social factors as in Durkheim and Mannheims's theories. Certainly, while knowledge originated in specific cultural settings, its values and procedures may be seen as transcending any particular context and acquire what Crittenden calls "general human application" reflecting "the achievements of an entire civilization". They possess a universal validity and

> provide a relatively large perspective from which the educational institution can critically evaluate the prevailing practices and fashions of the society.[20]

Educational issues cannot be settled by procedures other than those inherent in the public forms of knowledge. An educational matter cannot have a parent or a pupil or a politician as a final arbiter. A political issue can be resolved by the exercise of political authority. An educational issue can only be resolved by rational

argument and evidence. And even then the results or theory may only be tentative until better propositions and evidence are advanced. This is a crucial difference and a major reason why schools must be permitted a degree of autonomy and why the educational process inherently determines the type of relationship with society. The school cannot merely be an instrument of society if the former is performing its function appropriately. Nor can the school assume a dominant role in relation to society if it is committed to a liberal education.

Because appeals to the authority of experts is not necessary in educational matters, cognitive autonomy is feasible. We can test hypotheses and theories and ideas through the test of logic and evidence. Even our initial submission to and dependence on the autonomy of a teacher can be dispensed with or critically assessed as we acquire the knowledge, skills and experience to do so.[21] The deschoolers claim that teachers abuse their authority by perpetuating the dependence of pupils on them. While it may be true of some teachers, particularly with the unnecessary multiplicity of non-educational roles they assume, for someone to become initiated into a liberal education is synonymous with stating that he grows in autonomy and independence as he acquires the knowledge, skills and experience which enable him to dispense with his teacher. It seems contradictory to argue that a teacher is educating and at the same time contriving to reduce the learner to a state of continuing dependence.

While schools may require a degree of autonomy in their relationship to society, conversely they would exceed their legitimate functions by actively interfering and dominating events in the society of which they are a part. Do schools then not have any social responsibility?

Crittenden argues persuasively in favour of a dual function for schools - both conservative and reformative.[22] As far as transmitting our cultural heritage, the school has a decidedly conservative function. Without taking any initiative, it has a responsibility to follow the continuing changes and growth of culture and transmit it faithfully to each generation.

Indirectly, the school could have a reformative role vis-à-vis society by equipping its citizens through a liberal education with the perspectives, understandings and skills with which to submit society's practices to rigorous scrutiny. For schools to embark upon political action however, would be to place them in an instrumental role.[23] It would also jeopardize their argument for autonomy and the right not to be interfered in by other forces in society. Only political impartiality could ensure the continuation of the schools' autonomy, bearing in mind that impartiality need not be synonymous with a lack of critical evaluation.

It could be objected that in societies where a policy of pluralism exists, i.e. a variety of value systems co-exist within one society, it would be inappropriate for schools to assume such a critical social function, even if they refrain from political activism. Pluralism, however, need not imply that all value systems are equally good or valuable, and that no objective criteria of what is true exist. For pluralism to exist, different value systems must assume a commonality in a number of respects, e.g. toleration of diversity, acceptance of majority decisions, recognition of others' interests and so on. Schools have a role to see that such principles are being respected, for some of them overlap and relate to the principles and procedures inherent in the practice of education itself. Once, however, schools assume a multi-purpose role, as they do generally today, the difficulties of functioning in a reformative way are compounded. Responding to the needs of society is another way of saying that schools are engaging in their conservative role.

In summary, it would probably be fair to say that Illich and the other deschoolers cannot establish that schools as institutions, are the dominant and deciding variable in their relationship with society. They undoubtedly exert an influence because of the schools' multiple roles and the instrumental way education is viewed by many people. But because many people do achieve material and other success in life without having fared particularly well in school and because a considerable diversity of values, ideas, styles and innovations flourish in Western technological societies, it appears that schools are not as powerful and crucial in "moulding" people as the deschoolers suggest.

It has often been stated that the most crucial years for any person in cognitive, social, emotional and moral terms are the first five years of life, a time almost totally under the influence of another institution, the family. There are indications that in the school years most children spend more time in front of television than in schools,[24] yet deschoolers barely mention the hidden curriculum of the mass media.

It appears more accurate to see the school in a complex, mutual interrelationship with a variety of other institutions, the relative influence of any one waxing and waning with passing circumstances. The deschoolers themselves admit, and in fact use as an argument against schools, that we do most of our significant learning outside of them. If this is the case, it seems implausible to attribute to schools the premoninant influence in life, manipulating other institutions and transcending all societies.

Whether one opts for reform or the more revolutionary deschooling depends on two factors: First, whether the proposition is accepted that schools are inherently bad and inherently unreformable, and second, how one views the relationship between schools and society. The deschoolers contend that no revolution is truly revolutionary without abolishing schools. Even if we were to accept the argument that schools constitute the most powerful institution in society, and that the relationship is imbalanced in favour of schools, it does not necessarily follow that schools should be abolished. If schools are centrally concerned to provide a liberal education, not shackled in an instrumental role to other aims or the economic system, then it might follow and desirably so, that they are the most powerful institution. For an institution which equips each generation not only with an understanding of the finest traditions in its cultural heritage, but also with the knowledge, attitude and skills to add to that heritage and the perspectives with which to appraise critically and change the existing state of affairs, is potentially society's most powerful agency for good. However, if schools do not fit this ideal, or even approach it, then the deschoolers' case against the power of the institution has greater weight, for there is little merit in the existence of an institution which effectively perpetuates some of the worst features of our civilization. However, the determination of what schools are actually doing as opposed to their ideal role is

an empirical question, and on this the deschoolers do not provide conclusive evidence.

A further consideration is that even if we did find that schools are in some way unreformable and decided to dispose of them, the convivial society envisaged by deschoolers would not necessarily materialize, for other institutions would have a vested interest in the sort of values and society the schools were fostering, and would undoubtedly make arrangements to fill the vacuum left by institutionalized learning. It is not enough to deschool. All the other manipulative institutions would have to be abolished at the same time to ensure some degree of success for the new order.[25]

Even the conventional revolution which the deschoolers scorn, attempts to bring about corresponding changes in all aspects of society, and not simply in the political régime, In any case, it is difficult to see how if a majority of a society accepted the philosophy behind the need to deschool it would also not see the necessity to apply the same formula to the rest of society to ensure the success of its experiment.

Macklin concedes that educational networks could not exist within the existing political and social context. The learning process cannot be disassociated from the social process. Deschooling could only operate within a totally transformed society.[26]

## The Learning Networks

Let us now turn to Illich and Reimer's alternative, the learning networks, and subject them to the same scrutiny with which schools were examined. It should be remembered that many of the arguments and issues about deschooling theory are implicit in any alternative to institutionalized learning. How they are resolved at the theoretical level cannot help but colour a person's attitude to the practical expression of the theory. Since learning networks do not exist, it is easy either to minimize or exaggerate their possible strengths and weaknesses. Schools do exist as an observable phenomenon and hence any argument about them is not quite as hypothetical.

Postman comments that despite his social criticism, Illich is really a mystic who deals with the hypothetical realm.

> In proposing a deschooled society, Illich offers an alternative that, like the city of God, is invulnerable to criticism. It is invulnerable because it does not exist and, in the form he proposes, has never existed.

We simply cannot say whether it is better or worse.

> Most innovations are attempts to correct a specific evil... Experimentation also occurs within a reasonably stable framework, which presumably remains intact if an experiment fails.[27]

There is an assumption, along Skinnerian lines, that if an environment is completely altered, a new kind of "human nature" will emerge. So many such attempts in history which have failed to alter man's nature seem to be overlooked by the deschoolers.

Götz rejects the objection from practicality, suggesting that the very idea is symptomatic of present schooling which indirectly teaches us to value something according to its practical worth - "A very common and very unenlightened vulgarization of pragmatism."[28] Furthermore deschooling need not be planned to the last detail before we embark upon it. We can phase it in step by step as we go. What is important primarily is a commitment to begin the task. ".. The objection from practicality is at best a reformist argument. It is the objection of those who believe there must always be institutional structures..."[29] Götz seems to be astray here for Illich and the other deschoolers are not against institutions as such. The learning networks are institutional structures, albeit convivial ones.

In addition, Illich himself is not averse to invoking the practicality of any problem when he argues that

> the United States is proving to the world that no country can be rich enough to afford a school system that meets the demands this same system creates simply by existing.."[30]

There are two arguments that Götz does not mention to counter the practicality objection. First deschooling cannot be judged impractical until it has been tried on a significant scale after which empirical evidence could be marshalled to determine its success. (A problem here of course, would be that the criteria for success

for the present system and a deschooled one would be diametrically opposed).

Second, a philosophical idea or theory cannot be condemned simply because it is regarded as unpractical. The theory must be found to be unsound at the theoretical level. Illich's learning networks, if found wanting, cannot be employed to condemn deschooling theory. The specific blue-print for convivial learning which Illich suggests is not a conceptual concommitant of deschooling theory. Any number of alternatives which embody convivial principles could be validly considered. In this sense, those critics who latch onto these particular learning webs and work back to condemn deschooling theory are misguided. As Illich says:

> The institutional forms that education will take in tomorrow's society cannot be clearly visualised. Neither could any of the great reformers anticipate concretely the institutional styles that would result from their reforms.[31]

Götz does note that the practicality objection is found in another guise, expounded by Bereiter who maintains

> that the ideal of an educational setup that would enable human beings to become even more human is unrealistic, and that it therefore should be abandoned... we do not presently possess the kind of teachers that could render such an ideal feasible.[32]

Götz concurs with Bereiter's estimate of teacher quality and adds

> that with characteristic duplicity we continue to proclaim marvellous humanistic objectives while judging the success of our schools in purely economic terms.[33]

Both seem to have overlooked the fact that teachers would play a minimal role in the learning networks, and that their quality, while not unimportant, would not be crucial to the exercise.

Havighurst claims that deschooling is an elitist notion, since it would "favour the haves against the have-nots" for

> the social group that could give their children the best education in a society without schools is the well-to-do group that could both employ tutors for their children and teach their children informally in the family.[34]

This does seem to be a potent argument against the autonomous learning situation, for numerous studies have indicated a strong correlation between social class and a child's achievement at school.[35,36,37] Some of the variables which make for success in learning in school seem to be the ones which would assist it in an autonomous de-institutionalized one, e.g. parental attitudes to education and their interest and aspirations for their children, the educational level of the home, interest in books and other cultural stimulation, values which stress individual effort, personal ambition and a sense of competitiveness,[38] in short, that complex of what are commonly regarded as "middle-class" attributes. These are the values of the hidden curriculum of the home which the deschoolers simply cannot legislate away, and which seem to be more persistently durable than the hidden curriculum of schools.

It seems then that the self-directed learning and higher levels of curiosity and competitiveness of children from middle-class homes would place them in an advantageous position over children from poorer homes. An autonomous learning situation is no more guarantee of equality of educational opportunity than a formal schooling situation. At least in the latter situation some children from poorer homes do succeed because they are compulsorily placed in a situation where some adults who are sympathetic and concerned endeavour to minimize and overcome the initial disadvantages of the hidden curriculum of the home. There would be no such minimal guarantee in the learning webs, for the freedom of the learner would be paramount. If a child did not wish to learn, irrespective of whether he was rationally motivated or the victim of socio-economic circumstances, he could not be compelled to engage in learning, not even to the minimal point where he came to acquire an intrinsic interest in the activity.

One wonders whether the deschoolers have given any thought to the possibility of perhaps millions of children drifting aimlessly about their environment in the deschooled society, refusing to engage in any significant learning because of ephemeral passing whims and pleasurable pursuits, such as say fishing.

> When Illich speaks with the voice of pure freedom, he masks a conservative message... to learn what one likes

> is to learn prejudices... important truths of today are painful truths... people will do everything they can to avoid them. Important truths will require enormous changes in attitudes and life styles. Education self-elected will be no education - we have such education currently available to us (i.e. through T.V.), and there we find a Gresham's law of culture: bad drives out good, and the frivolous outdraws the serious.[39]

Has society no responsibility for its children, particularly those who cannot cope with autonomy?

It is inconceivable that many parents would tolerate this happening. Typically, many children from poorer families, for reasons already suggested, would lack this parental concern. There is no denying that some children would probably thrive and engage in significant and worthwhile learning within the learning webs, but it does seem likely that these same children would probably do well in <u>any</u> learning context. The children Illich expresses his greatest concern about would probably and ironically be the saddest victims in his suggested alternative. These children need <u>more</u> guidance and direction and <u>not less</u>.

Crittenden agrees that the new educational system would have opportunities for inequality and adds that there is no reason why the new network might not be as addictive as the compulsory system it replaces.[40]

Jerome raises what appears to be a valid point:

> Laissez-faire education runs the same risks as laissez-faire economics. Power and privilege accumulate like an avalanche. There must be safeguards, regulations, guarantees of opportunities, and these themselves perpetuate the system. Compulsory education was invented to help equalize opportunity, to even the score, to prevent exploitation. To some extent it has done so, but at the same time it has created... a new system of hierarchy and privilege as oppressive as the one it was meant to displace.
>
> If we simply closed down the schools, oppression would increase as the prosperous and the ambitious would accumulate more and more power and those less fortunate or those numbed by their social background would be trodden under. You can guarantee access, but little more (as we learn daily from our system of compulsory education).[41]

Furthermore, even if people rejected the notion that knowledge is only valuable when it is packaged by professionals, it does not follow that social equality would be a natural outcome. Illich argues that each man must be guaranteed privacy in learning, in the hope that he will assume the obligation of assisting others in their growth. As Jerome notes:

> That hope is vain and guarantees are worthless unless there is some social structure that supports and rewards such values... I have no faith that simply let alone, to use what resources he will, man will educate himself to be non-acquisitive, non-aggressive, that he will stumble on an integrated life; that he will be stimulated to profound searching and enquiry and creativity... I know that one cannot impose these values[42]

by <u>any</u> means.

Macklin reminds us that Illich's approach is not a libertarian one. A libertarian deschooling would take place within a consumer society. The highest ethic would be that of individualism, free from the constraints of any authority. The libertarian would treat what belonged to everyone as a marketable commodity and use it to advance his interests at the expense of others. The deschooler's position is similar to the extent that responsibility for education would shift from the state to the individual, but that a convivial society because of its supreme value of humane concern for individuals, would ensure that everyone had access to what was held in common.[43] The distinction is rather fine - a difference between selfish and altruistic motivation. It seems to reflect a misjudgement regarding human nature; that concern and good human nature alone will prevent individualism degenerating into libertarianism. The moment regulations and laws are set up to guarantee convivialism we have the makings of a system. It would have to be policed, and we are back to the sort of institutions deschoolers do not want.

Pearl examines some of the possible consequences of deschooling and deinstitutionalizing society. If a city is deinstitutionalized it will be buried in garbage in a very short time. A total de-institutionalization where every man sees to his own needs, including education, requires a world population very much smaller than today's.[44]

There is a certain logic in this line of thought, for in earlier societies which involved far less division of labour, the majority of men saw to their own needs and worked directly with what they produced. But these were also societies with relatively small populations, without the pressure on scarce resources under which our present mass technological societies operate. It could be that the sheer numbers of people in modern societies make this aspect of deschooling unfeasible.

Pearl also observes that human rights can only be guaranteed within an institutional framework. "Societies with primitive institutions never even considered individual rights."[45] The deschoolers feel that a convivial society will bring out the best in human nature. Illich never actually states whether sanctions would be employed against those who succumb to the baser aspects of human nature, or who fail to make use of freely available education and other publicly held "commodities". He simply fails to consider those humans who refuse to operate in their best interests, and this could be regarded as a weakness in his general theory. How he reacts to these people is a crucial test of how far he is prepared to go in rejecting all manipulative institutions and allowing the principle of autonomy to outweigh all others.

Pearl gloomily concludes that to deinstitutionalize everything is to "reinstitute the law of the jungle" which has even more oppressive consequences.

> Politics learned at the hands of Richard Daley, culture picked up at the feet of Johnny Carson, and interpersonal relations gleaned from groping in the street are the alternatives to school. That these alternatives are already too characteristic of contemporary American society is not a reason for removing schools but for reforming them,[46]

Of course these need not be the alternatives to school, but in Illich's networks there is little to <u>prevent</u> these sorts of influences assuming a more dominant role.

Musgrave observes that there is a great variation in norms and needs not only within one society, but internationally, yet the deschoolers analyse the major problem of all these different groups as being basically identical and prescribe deschooling as a panacea for all, ironically in the name of equality.[47] There is an

assumption that all men, once they come to see the "truth" will respond positively to the values and principles inherent in the convivial solution. Just as certain ethnic and social class groups do not prosper in our schools today because their values do not mesh with those of the schools, similarly it can be predicted that there will be groups who do not fare well in the learning networks. (It was earlier argued that they would probably be the same who are disadvantaged by schools). The deschoolers would undoubtedly retort that the consequences of not faring as well in the networks would be nowhere near as drastic. This is equally arguable, for failing to become educated in either system is lamentable, for reasons of personal growth to say nothing of social consequences.

There appears to be no provision in their alternative for acquiring even an elementary literacy, the basis for further and more advanced learning. At least in the existing schools virtually all children learn to read and write. What guarantee is there of this minimal requirement in the learning webs, if the deschoolers are not prepared to violate the freedom of the learner?

No matter what alternative is proposed to schools, it will be subject to the many complex and interrelated influences which affect schooling also, even if other institutions are de-institutionalized. Values, customs and cultural styles cannot be eradicated overnight. Because of this, they will continue to exert their influence for at least a generation or two after a totally convivial society has been established. Furthermore, there is always the question of distribution of wealth, privilege and power in a society. It is difficult to see how social classes based on one or more of these factors will not continue to generate a diversity of values, aspirations and life styles. Illich makes no mention that the convivial society will equalize everything, a prerequisite for all children to enter the learning situation with no disadvantages. It is even doubtful whether such a levelling process is meaningful or desirable. People vary enormously according to individual differences and values, just as much as racial and ethnic groups do. Each possesses different values, as he rightfully is entitled to. But this very diversity poses problems to a convivial alternative which can only operate effectively and benefit all equally if there

is general acceptance of the complex of values implicit in deschooling. It could well be that the deschoolers underestimate the Marxist argument regarding the potency of social class factors in any type of society. De-institutionalizing society will not necessarily eliminate those differences which affect people's ability to learn - racial, social, ethnic, economic and so on.

Unless the deschoolers are talking of a human nature which has never before existed on a large scale, one which voluntarily puts others before self, then there is no way in which they will be able to prevent material wealth, power and other forms of privilege being amassed by certain individuals and groups of people in any society. The children of these advantaged sectors of society will then acquire those values which generally lead to success in learning.

## Conclusions

What conclusions can we then justifiably draw regarding deschooling?

To begin with it is a broad and comprehensive ideology, integrating concepts and evidence from a large number of disciplines. For this reason a philosophical response, while essential, is insufficient in itself. Illich's vision of man and society is in some ways a Roman Catholic one (not surprising considering his background), but emasculated by his seeming lack of belief in Original Sin. Indeed he extensively draws upon religious metaphors and analogies to sketch out the way the school has replaced the Church as the central institution of society.

He has been likened to a mystic and a prophet whose penetrating vision enables him to see the impending apocalypse. Others have dismissed deschooling ideas as naive and dangerous.

However, the impact of the deschoolers has been felt. For instance, the Educational Development Conference of 1973-74 admitted

> that while it is always necessary to recognise the inadequacies of any institutional provision for education and while many of the specific criticisms made are valid, we reject the radical and revolutionary 'solutions' of the deschoolers as unrealistic and at times naive. We have accepted the general principle that in a society such as ours it is necessary - if we are to

> have any real influence on the course of education - to adopt an evolutionary, not a revolutionary approach. We see no point in becoming 'a voice crying in the wilderness', even although we know that radical critics may taunt us for accepting much of the status quo and that we forego the self-righteous glow which accompanies the utterance of shocking and dramatic educational heresies.[48]

Similarly the McCoombs Report on secondary education regarded deschooling as of sufficient importance in educational debate to comment on it: "The radical solution of complete deschooling is rejected." The Committee went on to detail reasons why.[49]

As Lister notes:

> ...In a remarkably short space of time, deschooling has entered the educational debate. The word itself has gone into several languages and its related concepts... are to be found in the committee prose of international organisations...deschooling has itself become part of the rhetoric of educational reform.[50]

There is much in Illich's writings which make a scholarly response difficult. As someone observed: "Prophets do not cite footnotes." It is extremely difficult to trace back sources in his work and to check the accuracy of his statements. Generalisations, often unsupported by empirical evidence, abound. A considerable amount of evidence is circumstantial or anecdotal. Statistics regarding economic costs of education tend to be selected to support certain lines of argument. There is an unresolved paradox in Goodman and Reimer's ideologies of libertarian anarchism - the attainment of the noblest visions of man in a society without institutions, at least of the sort which impose some degree of constraint.[51]

Illich employs language in interesting if not totally clear ways. The idea of "schooling" is often employed confusingly as a descriptive statement when it is really operating as a pejorative assertion. Associative arguments are frequently used - there is the implication that because one event follows another it has been caused by it e.g. increasing expenditure on education compounds educational failure, and also because two events exist at the same time, they are necessarily connected.

Illich's language often lacks objectivity and is highly charged with emotive expressions which elicit strong reactions.

His terminology and expressions are rather appropriately reminiscent of "hell-fire" preachers, e.g.

> The child must confront a man who wears an invisible crown, like the papal tiara, the symbol of triple authority combined in one person... Classroom attendance removes children from the everyday world of Western culture and plunges them into an environment far more primitive, magical and deadly serious.[52]

Such evangelical expressions abound and are not designed to evoke a thoughtful and reasoned response. It seems strange that if the deschooling case is so overwhelmingly powerful, Illich must resort to exploiting the emotions of his readers.

Non-sequiturs are also plentiful e.g. the idea that once people are "schooled", they become easy prey for other institutions. Deschoolers have a tendency to create caricatures of what they describe, notably schools. Very few schools today fit the extreme example Illich portrays as commonplace. His description of school is quite simply obsolete, for the many reforms of schooling this century have made a significant difference, despite Illich's cynicism and belief that the reform movements are part of the crisis of education. Innumerable examples of innovations and alternatives in education exist to support this contention.

Jackson confirms the scant evidence on which the deschoolers base their iconoclastic condemnations of schools and observes their lack of historical perspective in acknowledging any significant change over the period of time compulsory schooling has been in existence.[53]

Furthermore, there is no logical or empirical evidence that schools are inherently bad and inherently unreformable. Like most institutions, they possess good and bad characteristics and people react differently to them. Some children do gain fulfilment and some degree of education through having attended schools. Others, because of factors within the school itself and society in general, gain little beyond an elementary literacy.

A critical weakness in deschooling theory is the deschoolers' misplaced optimism concerning the goodness of human nature and the belief that changed institutions can bring about a widespread and permanent change in human nature. History, time and again,

reinforces the notion that a revolution in society does not automatically herald in a new man. Part of the problem of the great advances in technology is that man's moral capacity has not improved to match the new and awesome responsibilities engendered by his scientific genius.

Institutions seem necessary to limit the excesses of man's nature. Appeals to his sense of humanity and goodness do not always work. From this misjudgement of human nature stem what some would regard as naive proposals, e.g. regarding the freedom and autonomy for children.

Linked to this is another basic weakness - a lack of clear understanding of the concepts of education and freedom. Illich overlooks the fact that education involves people accepting the constraints of being initiated into a public form of knowledge and understanding and that limiting the freedom of children for educational reasons through compulsory schooling paradoxically increases their choices and freedom when they possess the experience and maturity to benefit from it.

The deschoolers exhibit a serious lack of understanding of Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories on cognitive and moral development in proposing that children should decide what and when they will learn something. "To deschool means to abolish the power of one man to oblige another man to attend a meeting."[54] Illich seems insensitive to the many scientifically accepted differences between adults and children.

To decree that "childhood" is an invention of two or three centuries ago does not eliminate vital developmental differences between a person of say seven and forty three which have a direct bearing on the desire and capacity to learn. A similar lack of appreciation of the structure of knowledge can be attributed to them.

They profess a concern for the rights and dignity of children and ironically act as people did in previous centuries in treating children insensitively as adults with adult capabilities. By proposing that all should learn through learning networks and by self-direction, the deschoolers ignore wide individual differences in motivation and cognitive and learning styles.

Illich often allows himself to slip into the is-ought fallacy, e.g. in describing institutions and schools, his rhetoric flows almost unnoticed into prescriptive statements. Illich's categorization of institutions into manipulative and convivial, while providing a useful perspective, does create an rigid mental set of believing that once institutions have moved into the manipulative stage, the process is irreversible, and the only solution is abolition. This is partly a weakness in the deschoolers' whole case. They paint a picture in black and white terms and then insist that the solution is either more of the same or total revolution. To detract from this view is to invite the inevitable charge that one's mind is "schooled" into accepting the need for schools. Any analysis and alternative different to deschooling lacks credibility.

Deschoolers, through a confusion in their understanding of teaching, tend to label most of it as indoctrination. An examination of the principles and procedures involved in education and engaging in the activity itself, preclude a teacher from indoctrinating in any sense. This is not to deny that some teachers do not intentionally or otherwise teach in a manner which does not facilitate understanding or utilize the giving of reasons.

Deschoolers reject the teacher's authority both as a representative of that culture and society and as an authority on what he teaches. Neither position is really tenable if we accept that children do not possess the knowledge and experience to make reasoned and mature decisions about what they will learn.

A basic weakness in deschooling theory relates to the schools' relationship with society. Whether or not the school has the dominant role today is an empirical question. For any society to survive however, one function of schools must be to transmit the cultural heritage. A mass and compulsory public schooling system with all its faults, at least attempts to provide this minimal guarantee. A deschooled alternative, which by definition rejects compulsion, removes even this minimal condition. It is a pious exercise to hope that man's good sense will see to this eventuating. It is analogous to having expected 19th century capitalism to voluntarily ensure the establishment of a social

welfare system without central government legislation.

A practical dilemma exists also in the transition from a schooled to a deschooled society, particularly if the principle of majority rule is accepted. If the hidden curriculum of schools moulds people's imaginations as effectively as the deschoolers insist it does, then it is difficult to envisage more than just an elite, let alone a majority, embracing the new philosphy and changing the old order.

Yet, despite these major flaws in deschooling theory, there are a number of very valid criticisms and concepts worth considering. One of these relates to the multiplicity of the school's roles. Illich is probably right when he argues that schools have assumed too many functions which over a period of time have contributed a miseducative dimension to schooling. Linking the acquiring of an education to the distribution of life chances is unjustifiable and for this reason using schools as certification agencies needs to be changed, leaving other institutions to undertake the tasks unrelated directly to acquiring a liberal education.

There is merit in people being allowed to learn outside of schools, provided adequate guidance is given to them. For schools to monopolize education and refuse to acknowledge the validity of what is acquired outside of them is unrealistic. Certainly because of the ways schools are constituted today, education and schooling are not synonymous. Yet to define education "as the whole process of growing up"[55] without indicating that not all directions of growth are equally good, and without acknowledging that education has a value component, is a central weakness of the theory. The dangers of the hidden curriculum cannot be over-emphasised. It is a timely warning to teachers and others to be constantly aware of the values implicit in their actions and in the ritual and operation of any institution. There is a need to ensure that those values are not counter-productive to any educational engagement. Everyone in society must be vigilant in seeing that institutions function according to the aims for which they were established and that they do not assume a will and life of their own, unrelated to people's needs. While there is merit in people not acquiring a dependency on institutions throughout their lives, the nature of man, the

impersonal nature of mass technological societies and a severely reduced role of the family make the existence of institutions, particularly those associated with a welfare state, inevitable. Nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism surely indicates that many men will not voluntarily care for their fellows.

Similarly, on a wider perspective, Illich's criticisms of Western technological countries as being dominated by the consumer ethic and unrestrained growth, are worth heeding. We do have limited resources, and those we do use, we do so indiscriminately to satisfy artificial "needs" generated by advertising. Our rising materialistic expectations not only ultimately contribute to polluting our world, but serve to reduce the ability of Third World countries to reach a minimal level of human existence.

It would appear that patient reform rather than total revolution of schools is the answer.[56] It is difficult to accept that an institution such as the school, which has weathered turmoil, change, and revolution over such a long period of time, and which has been adapted to the circumstances of every country in the world, is totally bad and unreformable and requires legislating out of existence. Reform reflects human optimism that man is in control of his destiny and can alter the structures by which he orders his life and which make a civilized community possible.

Deschooling, paradoxically, reflects a pessimism that man is unable to alter significantly what he creates and that drastic and total cuts with the past must be made if he is to have a decent and humane future.

The deschoolers regrettably risk condemning themselves to irrelevance by their dogmatic insistence that all reform is ineffectual. The tide of change which is a reality, may well simply sweep past them as men often painstakingly but less dramatically, continue to adapt their social structures to changing circumstances.

It could well be that the deschoolers gravest error is their misconception of human nature. The belief that the best in it will flourish simply through a change of institutions is the resurrection of an age old fallacy.

Perhaps their greatest contribution, and by no means an insignificant one, is analogous to the effect Freud and Marx have had on Twentieth Century man. Just as he might never look at the inner man or history in quite the same way after Freud's or Marx's insights respectively, so might man never look at schools in quite the same way after Illich.

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