THE INESSENTIAL STUDENT: THE CURRENT CLIMATE AND FUTURE VISION OF UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

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THE INESSENTIAL STUDENT:

The Current Climate and Future Vision

of University Continuing Education

by

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ABSTRACT

I examine trends in universities and continuing education in Canada from the standpoint of a nonmainstream student, and consider how students are defined in this context. I draw from standpoint, postmodern, and critical theories to understand the social construction of knowledge and identity. I develop a praxis model to expose hidden assumptions and dichotomies evident in literature relating to educational policy and pedagogical theory and practice.

Many universities state a commitment to provide lifelong learning and community outreach. The efforts of adult educators and continuing education departments can be hampered by institutional assumptions that continuing education is inherently "second best" to mainstream programmes. Continuing education departments are now asked to become more efficient and profitable by designing programmes to make university education more relevant to labour market demands. I argue that this "corporate agenda" will have a negative effect on the quality of education nonmainstream students receive, and on the university's role in sustainable community development.

Critical and feminist pedagogies propose an education that is empowering at both the individual and collective levels. While I challenge some assumptions in these models, they offer the best hope to develop the critical ability of people to engage in social transformation at the local and global levels.

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This thesis is dedicated to my friends from night school who have proven that the extension programme does produce excellent scholars--Olive Corning, Jean Stensrud, Heather MacNeil, Mary Barkhouse, the list goes on ...

Most importantly, this is for Claire Foote who was responsible for many of the good aspects of our extension experience, and who worked tirelessly on our behalf to help us overcome what was not so good.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE INESSENTIAL STUDENT

> Theories and goals of education don't matter a whit if you don't consider your students to be human beings.
>
> – Lou Ann Walker

In 1983, I began my university education by enrolling in an evening course. The experiences I shared with my classmates over the next several years planted the seeds for this research. Our progress through an off-campus, part-time degree programme was shaped by both the satisfaction of excelling in university studies and by the frustration of being peripheral, or "inessential" to the university as we faced administrative barriers and negative attitudes about our commitment and ability as students. The impact of these attitudes crystallized when I finally earned my first degree, only to hear people say, "but that's not a *real* degree, is it?"

In this thesis, I reflect on academic programmes designed for nonmainstream students--those people who by choice or necessity do not attend full-time programmes on campus. My experiences as a nonmainstream student provide a starting point from which I study the role and expectations of adult and continuing education in the university, and what effects these have on the students who attend such programmes. Continuing education programmes such as the one I attended grew from a vision of extending the university's knowledge to the community and a desire to promote "lifelong learning." I analyse these concepts and consider why, at the administrative level, these programmes are rarely linked

to the central activities of the academy, and why they are seen as a "second best" to on-campus offerings.

This perceived inadequacy has facilitated a troubling trend in continuing education. As financial constraints in postsecondary education have risen, corporatist interests have become increasingly evident--what Newson and Buchbinder (1988) call the "new agenda". Within this corporate agenda, continuing education has been identified as an ideal site for profit generation. The "Smith Report" (S.L. Smith 1991), commissioned by the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, presents its recommendations for the future role of Canadian universities. Eager to see what role continuing education might have to play, I was dismayed to find that The Report promotes the idea of transforming continuing education into "industry" programmes whereby corporate sponsors can purchase courses designed to suit their needs. This emphasis is counter to both the historical vision of lifelong learning and to the potential that I see for continuing education to participate in community development. Realizing that The Smith Report's recommendation reflected a growing "market approach" to continuing education, I decided to examine more thoroughly what I believe the future vision of continuing education should be.

THE CURRENT CLIMATE AND FUTURE VISION

My research focuses on the representation of students who are in the realm of continuing education programmes. This focus ranges from the effects existing policies have on students, to the potential roles students can have in designing and participating in programmes that reflect their own priorities. Within this student context, I examine the evolution of the field of adult education as a discipline and continuing education as a primary site of adult education. I argue that institutional attitudes about the role and status of adult and continuing education has had a direct impact upon the quality of education and services nonmainstream students receive. These attitudes create dichotomies between mainstream and nonmainstream students and programmes, whereby nonmainstream programmes are seen as a second best to the ideal of on-campus programmes. Nonmainstream programmes that are viewed as inefficient, may be redesigned to become more profitable. This can lead to programmes being redesigned to reflect the interests of corporate clients at the expense of the needs of students. Critical and feminist theorists and educators have developed pedagogies that challenge dominant forms of knowledge construction and dissemination. They promote approaches to learning that respect and integrate students' interests and needs. However, these fields also contain their own assumptions that can limit their potential to promote student-centred learning and social change.

Inspired by the legacy of the historical involvement of university extension workers in community development, such as the Antigonish Movement[1], many adult educators are now calling for a revival of that spirit (Welton 1987, Lovett et al. 1983, Cruikshank 1991, 1994a). These historical attempts at engaging in social change achieved varying degrees of success, and in retrospect may have had limited emancipatory potential. Rather than deeming the vision of community development as irrelevant, much can be learned from the models developed by critical and feminist pedagogical theorists that attempt to empower students to think critically about their identities, locations, and role in effecting social change. Supporting community development initiatives can assist these empowered students to utilize their education effectively. As Freire (1989) asserts, emancipatory education is only effective if people actively engage in social transformation.

ONE STUDENT'S STANDPOINT

I was an extension student for several years and earned my first undergraduate degree through extension and correspondence courses. My interest in this topic flows from a very personal understanding of continuing education. As I began to conduct my research, I knew that I did not want to separate my

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[1]As I will explain in Chapter 3, this movement, started by the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University in the 1920s, promoted education to support community development in economically depressed rural areas.

personal knowledge from my academic work. I have adapted ideas from Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990a) and Sandra Harding (1991) to develop an understanding of how I can use my "student standpoint" to examine the broader context of nonmainstream students and programmes, and to consider how students are defined within the educational models designed for them. To research from this standpoint, I developed a theoretical framework that draws from feminist standpoint theory, as well as critical and postmodern theories examining the social construction of experience and identity. The concept of praxis enables me to reflect upon and contextualize this experience and the construction of student identities.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist theorists criticize mainstream social science practices of creating value-free or objective research. All knowledge is constructed in a social context which invariably has an effect on the information that is presented. Claims of objectivity merely hide the biases and hidden influences of the information. An open acknowledgement and examination of a researcher's standpoint helps to prevent hidden biases. More importantly, researching from the standpoint of an "outsider" or marginalized position, enables the researcher to see and analyse things that those who are in positions of power and privilege are often blinded from seeing (Smith 1987, Kirby and McKenna 1989). A person who discovers a

disjuncture between her or his everyday life and official knowledge, can use this gap as a "point of entry" into analysing formal knowledge construction that organises information in certain ways that include or exclude various perspectives. Text is a primary source of knowledge construction, organisation and sharing among the institutions that rule our society. Textual analysis from the standpoint of a person outside these institutions, can help to identify gaps, assumptions, and hidden biases within these official documents. They can also help one develop a better understanding of how the institutions operate (Smith 1990b). However, in order to research from a standpoint, one must have a reflexive awareness of what that standpoint is. As we study how knowledge is constructed, we also learn about how our identities are constructed.

Social Construction of Identity: the essentialist vs. constructionist dichotomy

As a nonmainstream student, I was angered by the stereotypes I confronted regarding continuing education. As I sought support in the literature of adult education and feminist pedagogy, I confronted yet more stereotypes. Some of these stereotypes were negative, others positive, but all arose from essentialized constructions of "the student". It was at this point that I became interested in how such vastly different representations are created to describe the same institutions, the same people, the same society.

Contemporary theoretical debates surrounding essentialism and constructionism provide valuable insights into my objectives of understanding the definition and location of nonmainstream students in the university. Essentialism refers to the theoretical belief in the existence of an objective reality that can be discovered and recognized as irrefutably true. Constructionism argues against such truth claims, countering that all reality is shaped by social relations so that any reality we see is framed by our perspective. I recognize how categories are socially constructed, but I can see how they are "essentialized" in ways that promote or dismiss a particular standpoint--once they are constructed they are acted upon as if they are fixed and unchangeable. This interest has led me to examine the conscious and unconscious construction of dichotomies. It is too easy simply to dismiss these constructs as biased. I believe there is much to learn from an examination of essential identities and the dichotomies they create, both in "negative" (stereotyped) and "positive" (unifying) ways. This exploration is, to me, a necessary step in the process of praxis--a reflexive loop of action and reflection that develops a deeper critical analysis (Freire 1989, Hope and Timmel 1984). This praxis model can help me to examine the dichotomies with a view to moving beyond them.

THREE DEFINITIONS OF NONMAINSTREAM STUDENTS

The analysis I have developed of continuing education and nonmainstream students is comprised of three major sections: student as "other", student as "human resource", and student as "resourceful human". I will describe the meaning of education in relation to the student in each of these sections. As I will show, the ways students are defined in each of these approaches to continuing education, has a major impact on how programming is designed.

Student as "Other": This includes anyone who does not fit in the group that most universities identify as their main clientele, i.e., those who are not young, full-time, on-campus students. These "other" students begin from the position of being identified as who they are *not* rather than who they *are* (Barton 1992), and how their needs differ from the mainstream. Even as "other", there is a recognition of a need to provide students with some level of service. During this century, continuing education programmes have enabled the university to reach out to the community and share its wealth of knowledge. This commitment is driven, in part, by the belief in "lifelong learning" to give people the opportunity to grow intellectually and personally throughout their lives through access to education. However, I argue that this "otherness" limits the potential for such programmes. The focus on differences between mainstream and nonmainstream reinforces

stereotypes and dichotomies between continuing education and the ideal of on-campus education, or between highly motivated adults and disaffected youth. Such polarization loses sight of common or complementary aspects. The dismissal of adult and continuing education as academically legitimate limits both the potential of these programmes and perpetuates the stereotypes restricting their students.

Student as Human Resource: The "downsizing" of Canada's industrial sector and growth in the high technology and service sectors has led to an ever increasing demand for retraining. Education is promoted as the key to the country's future global competitiveness (S.L Smith 1991, Carnevale 1992, NSCHE 1994). This opinion is promoted not only by the corporate sector, but is supported by government, and increasingly by university administrations. Much rhetoric blames unemployment on the unemployed who lack marketable skills to get jobs in the field of new technologies (Hart 1992, Menzies 1995, Noble 1995). Such a diagnosis masks the underlying economic problems that make so many people surplus to the economy's needs. People are seen as "human resources" who hinder Canada's global competitiveness if they lack the necessary skills. Emphasis is on the quick and efficient transfer of knowledge to get these underutilized human resources back into the workforce. To challenge the ideal of lifelong learning as

articulated in adult education literature, education is no longer a foundation from which to grow, but a disposable product that requires replacement as prior information becomes obsolete. I call this a "revolving door" approach to education. Of critical importance, in my opinion, is the fact that the education provided is often not placed in the context of the needs of the communities and families within which students live.

Student as Resourceful Human: Emancipatory critical and feminist pedagogies seek to reclaim the "human" by providing alternative models to the dehumanizing practices that seek merely to inject set blocks of information into people's heads. This model emphasizes who adult learners are rather than who they are not, and what they have rather than what they lack. Efforts are made to integrate the social contexts of the learners within the design of education programmes. However, critical educators often tend to stereotype anyone in the mainstream as one who embraces the status quo or who eagerly supports corporate interests. Also, stereotypes regarding the students are still present, ranging from the ignorant oppressed who are in need of enlightenment to the critical thinkers craving a safe space to articulate their views and politicize their experience. Emphasizing the critical thinker is needed to challenge the capitalist, labour training approach, but may be too idealistic for the actual clientele. I will address

these limitations, but I continue to believe these models still provide the greatest potential for creating an empowering educational process for students, and for engaging people in social change. We are beginning to witness a revival of the historical commitment to community development that is strengthened by the critical analysis of radical educators.

MY LANGUAGE

> The sign of a sick civilization is the growth of an obscure, closed language that seeks to prevent communication.
>
> --John Ralston Saul

In education literature, the same words in different contexts, can elicit a wide variety of interpretations. I believe it is necessary for me to clarify the meaning I attribute to the main concepts that will appear in this document.

Nonmainstream Student: As I stated above, by "nonmainstream", I include those students who are acquiring an education through means other than the standard full-time, on-campus programmes. Marginalized people who are pursing full-time studies may be identified as "nonmainstream" because they, too, are regularly discriminated against by the institutions. However, there is a growing body of critical and feminist literature addressing the academic conditions faced by full-time students who represent marginalized groups based on such categorizations as race, gender, class, and ability. A student can appear to fit the

image of a mainstream student, yet be in a nonmainstream programme, as was the case with myself--a young person in an "adult" programme. The point to remember is that I was treated as a nonmainstream student. I was defined by my context rather than by my age.

Adult and Continuing Education: Adult Education, as I use the term, refers to the academic discipline that develops pedagogical theories and methods for teaching adults. Teaching models are designed to facilitate learning for a wide range of adults, from basic literacy to distance university education. Most of the literature I have been reading from this discipline relates to university level adult education. Continuing Education is the sector of the university most actively involved in the education of adults, by providing programming for people who do not attend full-time programmes on-campus.

Corporate Agenda: Primary goals of a corporate model are to increase profits, cut costs, and remove barriers that restrict the flow of the global free market economy. Structural adjustment policies that have responded to this corporate agenda have led to an erosion of social programmes that are identified as an "unnatural" impediment to capitalist market forces (Cruikshank 1996). Such impediments include labour and safety standards, health care, wage scales, and other universal programmes. Many now argue that our country's performance in

the global economy is taking precedence over its care for its own citizens (Saul 1995, Menzies 1996). When I speak of a corporate agenda, I am not speaking only of the private sector. This ideology exists in other institutions such as government and, increasingly, education (Newson and Buchbinder 1988, 1990).

Alternative Pedagogy: I will use the term "alternative pedagogies" when generally describing views that challenge dominant forms of knowledge construction and dissemination that reinforce the status quo. They are highly critical of traditional education practices that focus on a "one-way" transfer of information from teacher to student. Liberatory pedagogy has an explicit emancipatory agenda. Sometimes alternative pedagogies are not explicitly described as critical or feminist. Many teachers scoff at the work of "feminists" who are developing "new", "radical" teaching methods. They respond that they have been applying such strategies for years, but have been ignored due to the marginalization of education as a serious academic discipline (Gore 1993). Nemiroff (1992) also describes historical precursors to current critical and feminist pedagogies, that sought alternatives to the oppressive dominant models they faced. Of course, I will specify critical and feminist when I am speaking of work that identifies itself as such--and it will be these texts upon which I will be focusing most of my attention.

Critical Pedagogy: In traditional forms of education, the interests of the ruling class are reproduced, thereby excluding the interests and needs of marginalized groups in society--this is often referred to as "banking education" in that information is "deposited" into the minds of the students. Critical pedagogy, drawing much of its theoretical base from Marxist analyses, attempts to empower students to develop critical consciousness or conscientization--an understanding of the social causes of the oppression they suffer--as a step in developing ways to work toward fundamental social change (Freire 1989). "Praxis", as I have stated above, is the continuous cycle of reflection and action which is a cornerstone of critical pedagogy (Hope and Timmel 1984). Paulo Freire is widely recognized as one of the leading theorists in critical pedagogy. While there are many others now engaged in this field, I will continue to focus on Freire's work for the purposes of this research.

Feminist Pedagogy: A recurring criticism against critical pedagogy is that by focusing on class inequality, other categories such as gender and race have often been overlooked. Feminist teaching methods have arisen alongside the development of feminist theories and women's studies programmes. Feminist teachers realize that mainstream teaching methods needed to be changed to enable students to become critical thinkers. Many feminist scholars continue to find

Freire's concept of conscientization useful (Greene 1992) and have been working to blend the most valuable concepts of critical and feminist approaches. Feminist pedagogy continues to be a pedagogy "in the making" (Greene 1992). Many feminist scholars are intent upon ensuring that this process is visible through their descriptions of their own classroom experiences both positive and, more importantly, negative. Some of the articles that have had the most impact upon me personally are those which have broken from the standard academic discourse (Stetson 1985, hooks 1994), as they seek new innovative ways to construct academic knowledge. Feminist theory and pedagogy is intended to provide the academic space to encourage such innovation.

Community: This is a difficult term to pin down, as we all have our own ways of defining our social context in terms of the "community" with whom we feel comfortable and at home. When I refer to community and community development, it is primarily a geographical interpretation--the rural communities with whom a university may be interacting, or at least the group of people in a larger community who are taking the initiative to engage in social change to ensure the socio-economic survival of their region. Speaking from my rural bias, I want to promote the potential for developing small, sustainable communities where people can live and work.

SUMMARY

To examine the various models of continuing education in terms of how they impact upon nonmainstream students, I have constructed three types of nonmainstream student: other, human resource, and resourceful human. The structure of my chapters reflect these categorizations. To summarize briefly, the organisation of the chapters as they will appear in this document is as follows:

Chapter 2 will examine the role of experience in theoretical work as developed by standpoint theorists like Smith (1987) and Harding (1991). To understand how identities and standpoints are constructed, I will consider the theoretical underpinnings of essentialism, constructionism and the dichotomization that occurs in both. The exploration of dichotomies is central to my project, since I believe they provide important insights into how knowledge is constructed. I will argue that a "praxis" model can be employed to bridge dichotomized perspectives.

Chapter 3 will examine my understanding of the nonmainstream student as "other". I will start from my own observations and experiences looking at the adult learner as "other". How this otherness is created, its purpose, its implications, will all be examined by drawing from the framework established in Chapter 2. Limitations of traditional programmes will be identified in order to facilitate an understanding of the pre-existing model that is being altered by both human resource development models and by critical and feminist educators.

Chapter 4, will examine the nonmainstream student as a human resource. I will examine the growing trend to identify the adult learner as an inadequate employee--someone who needs to be retrained to become a useful contributor to Canada's economy. Instead of simply being a neglected wing of the academy, continuing education is now identified as a potential profit generator if it can address this market demand for a retrained workforce.

Chapter 5 considers the liberatory potential of critical and feminist pedagogies in human development, as opposed to resource development. Impediments to this potential will be explored--how nonmainstream students can be better served in this model, but how they are often misunderstood here as well. I will contextualize this analysis within the community, to see what future role continuing education can have in working with students to become active participants in community development strategies that reflect their own needs, rather than the interests of the corporate sector and neo-conservative government policies.

Chapter 6 will summarize my key arguments and provide suggestions for further research, at a more action-oriented level. I would like to see how the findings of this exploration can be used in practice to set the stage for the action phase of the praxis loop.

I want to state clearly that I do not intend to present a definitive explanation of who students are and what opinions and needs they have, as these differ according to time and context. I uncover some of the issues that I hope will make further research in this field more effective. I begin this quest from the standpoint of a nonmainstream student to explore the contradictions, dichotomies, essences and concepts that surround continuing education. I will examine the foundations of the values, the shortcomings, the threats and potentials of enabling adults to engage in lifelong learning for personal growth and social change.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTING ESSENCES AND ESSENTIALIZING CONSTRUCTS

If you can't change reality, change your perceptions of it.
--Audre Lorde

The theoretical and methodological approach I use in my research has evolved through my interpretation and adaptation of a range of contemporary thought from critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives. I have stated from the outset that I am working from a "student standpoint". This requires an understanding of feminist standpoint theory and how experience is used in one's research as a valid source of data. I use the term "standpoint" cautiously, as I acknowledge both its potential and limitations. The process of using experience as a basis for broader social analysis has been critiqued for its essentializing tendencies. Thus, my work integrates not only standpoint theory, but also other strategies of knowledge construction. Those whose work has assisted me the most include Dorothy Smith, Sandra Harding, bell hooks and Diana Fuss, in their analyses of standpoint, identity, essentialism and constructionism.

A key component of my work is an analysis of the social construction of knowledge. Harding cites a wealth of recent research confirming the recognition that "all scientific knowledge is always, in every respect, socially situated" (1991:11). Knowledge is invariably influenced by the people, time and the social

context in which it is created. To know how knowledge is constructed helps us to expose hidden assumptions that limit our understanding of the issues we study and the knowledge that we create ourselves. Disjunctures between experience and officially legitimated reality can provide a "point of entry" into understanding how knowledge is socially constructed (Smith 1987). A major site of the official reality of ruling institutions is the texts that these institutions produce. Smith encourages us to examine these texts from our standpoints as a way to understand the ways in which they operate and organise knowledge (Smith 1990b).

To work from a standpoint, requires the researcher to understand what that standpoint is and how it is informed by one's self-identification. Postmodern critiques of essentialism and "identity" sparked my interest in the dichotomy that has developed between essentialism and constructionism. This has led me to become interested in the ways dichotomies are constructed. When competing views are placed in stark opposition, what information is suppressed to ensure the consistency of this opposition? Such dichotomies are not natural occurrences, they are constructed, either unintentionally or with careful thought. I am interested in developing a greater understanding of this theory of opposition and the purposes these constructed oppositions serve.

Since both education and research are involved in constructing and interpreting knowledge, it is no surprise that theories of social research and

pedagogy are able to inform each other. My theoretical approach is influenced by pedagogical theorists such as Paulo Freire and feminist educators. Integral to my theoretical framework is the concept of "praxis"--the cyclical process of action and reflection--as it has been interpreted by Paulo Freire and others in the fields of critical and feminist pedagogy. I believe praxis is valuable in helping us see how identities and positions are created in opposition.

This chapter has four main sections. I first clarify the meaning I am attributing to the main terms and concepts used in this chapter. I examine standpoint theories in order to explain how my experiences are used as a "point of entry" (D. Smith 1987) to study the broader social context in which texts are created. I summarize my methodology of textual analysis in terms of how I can apply it in this study. I conclude this section with a critique of standpoint theories. Having determined the relevance of experience to my work, I next explore what I believe is a central tool to my analysis--the identification of dichotomies in the context of the essentialist versus constructionist debate. I explain my understanding of the purpose of dichotomies, and how they can be understood and surpassed through praxis. I will conclude the chapter with a brief description of the material I am using in my research within the context of my theoretical and methodological approach.

KEY CONCEPTS

Postmodernism is becoming increasingly difficult to define as the term is used in a dazzling variety of contexts[1]. For my purposes, I use the term postmodern loosely to identify the theoretical movement challenging modern rationalist theories that has developed since the Enlightenment (Foucault 1980, Hutcheon 1988, Lyotard 1984, Weedon 1987, Rorty 1989, Yeatman 1994). I wish only to focus on what postmodernism has to offer in terms of critiquing essentialism, dichotomies and identity.

When I speak of critical theory and pedagogy, I am referring to those works that challenge structural power imbalances and provide an analysis of the social construction of knowledge. Critical theory, according to Newman, "recognizes the influence of cultural values on people's reasoning and acting, and takes into account interaction, insight, feeling, intuition and other non-scientific ways of knowing...it enables people to change the way they receive and generate knowledge about themselves and the world" (1994:44). Such a theory is action-oriented. The goal of critical work is not simply to describe existing social conditions, but to challenge dominant forms of knowledge and engage in radical social change of oppressive social structures. When Marx developed his critical

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[1]Postmodernism is evident in realms as diverse as fine art, architecture, literature, popular culture and social theory.

theories of oppression, he focused primarily on social class and the exploitation of labour (Harding 1991). The Frankfurt School built upon the works of Marx to develop more comprehensive critical theories whose goals were the construction of a reflexive knowledge that would enable people to challenge ideologies that limit their emancipatory potential (Geuss 1981). Today, we recognize the influence of politics, economics, culture, gender, race and other social factors that operate to favour some people over others (Collins 1995).

EXPERIENCE AND A STUDENT STANDPOINT

My experiences as a nonmainstream student form an integral part of my interest and understanding of this research topic. In traditional forms of social science, the experiences of the researcher is deemed to be irrelevant or dangerous, because the data would be tainted by the researcher's own biases. However, my desire to study this field was driven, in part, by the general representation of continuing education and nonmainstream students. This representation often did not reflect my own experiences or understanding of the issues--such as the perceived academic inadequacy of continuing education. I was not satisfied to pass myself off as a unique case, because I didn't see my situation as being greatly different from those of my colleagues.

As I began reading feminist theories on the social organisation of knowledge, I came to realize that the gaps, or "disjunctures" (Smith 1987), can be used as a starting point for social scientific research. Known as "standpoint theory", the purpose of such enquiry is to enable people to look at their lives and experiences in ways that contextualizes their lives within social theories. It is recognized by many as valid source of data in sociological enquiry (Dorothy Smith 1987, Kirby and McKenna 1989, Harding 1991) to analyse broader social relations and the construction of knowledge.

I have been studying standpoint theories to develop an understanding of how my experiences shape my analysis, and how they may enable me to provide insights that may otherwise be hidden. I am examining how I have come to construct the identity of a "nonmainstream" student and how this, in turn, can facilitate my analysis of continuing education both historically and within the context of current changes in education. I will begin my explanation of how I use standpoint theory by describing how my identity as a nonmainstream student evolved.

My Student Standpoint

I earned my first degree through evening courses in Pictou County, Nova Scotia provided by Saint Francis Xavier University's (St.F.X) Continuing Education programme of the Extension Department, supplemented by correspondence courses from the University of Waterloo. In night school, I was a young person in the milieu of adult students. I was treated the same as the older students, and grew to think like them in my assumptions about the university and what my role as a student was within this framework. We valued the opportunity to earn a university degree through part-time studies, but were frustrated by negative attitudes about the perceived inferiority of part-time programmes, as well as administrative "red tape". The process of constructing my identity as a nonmainstream student became evident when I later entered a mainstream full-time programme on-campus. My socialization as an "adult part-time student" did not prepare me for the experience of being among young mainstream undergraduates, many of whom had quite a different view of the education process than I had--such as the teacher-student relationship, social milieu and fulfilment of course assignments. In this setting, I clung to my identity as an adult student, to validate what I had accomplished as a "part-timer" when I faced negative assumptions. I associated more closely with adult students and junior faculty than I did with the mainstream students who were, on average, only 5 years younger than myself.

I began to research part-time education for my undergraduate honours thesis. I wanted to dispel negative assumptions and raise awareness about the importance and pedagogical value of nonmainstream programmes. Initially, this work centred on the AUCC Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education, known as the "Smith Report", after the Commission's chair, Stuart L. Smith (1991). This report was designed to be the blueprint to guide university policy in the 1990s, and was published just at the time I was seeking a focus for my research. This research led to my appointment as a student representative on a newly formed advisory board at St.F.X. The Board's role was to examine the current and potential role of the continuing education programme in Pictou County. Since then, I have learned more about the role of education in social development through my exposure to the programmes offered by the Coady International Institute at St.F.X. Community development practitioners from around the world study at the Coady Institute to develop participatory models of education and organisational planning. The goal of such programming is the empowerment of those people most marginalized by ruling institutions "to effect change in both local and global institutions and structures."[2]

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[2]"Coady close-up" pamphlet produced by the Institute.

As I researched continuing education, I found nonmainstream programmes treated as marginally in much of the academic literature as I was personally treated in the university. I found the validation I was seeking in adult education literature, but again, there were disconcerting assumptions and generalisations about adult students. Also, there was little analysis of gender and racial issues. I confronted conflicting descriptions of nonmainstream programmes which did not reflect my experiences. In an attempt to understand these experiences, and the relevance of this information to my interest in the topic, I was drawn to the work of Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990a), and other feminist theorists who show how experiential knowledge can be used as a valid source of research data.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Smith's theoretical and methodological model evolves from a critique of traditional sociological practices of scientific inquiry. Dominant forms of knowledge production, Smith argues, are designed to reflect the interests of those with the most power--traditionally white males in modern Western society. Objectified research attempts to separate the researcher from the research, promoting the concept of "value neutrality". In other words, the work a researcher produces, if conducted in a scientific manner, should not be tainted by the researcher's personal values and interests.

Feminist researchers respond that such processes merely mask values and biases by obscuring the researcher's role and intent (Smith 1987, Kirby and McKenna 1989). Objectified or abstracted theory is biased against women because, historically, women's knowledge has been labelled as subjective or biased, while the knowledge of men in positions of power has been defined as objective (Code 1991). People invariably bring to their work their own beliefs--their subjective selves. These feminists argue that to create objective research is to acknowledge openly this subjective self and examine its effect on the research. "Knowledge is neither value-free nor value-neutral; the processes that produce it are themselves value-laden; and these values are open to evaluation" (Code 1991:70).

Proponents of feminist standpoint theory argue that starting from women's standpoints can provide a wellspring of new knowledge (Harding 1986). The value of researching "from the margins" (Kirby and McKenna 1989) is that someone outside of an institution can see things that those who are immersed within may be unable to see. "When people speak from opposite sides of power relations, the perspective from the lives of the less powerful can provide a more objective view than the perspective from the lives of the more powerful" (Harding 1991:270). Both Smith (1987) and Harding (1991) recall the Hegelian model of the master and servant to show that theorizing from the standpoint of a marginalized location can provide a perspective lacking in the dominant discourse. The oppressed must

present this alternative standpoint in a way that can be heard by dominant forces. "It is only possible to see how the whole thing is put together from a standpoint outside the ruling class and in that class whose part in the overall division of labour is to produce the conditions of its own ruling and the existence of a ruling class" (Smith 1987:80). "Dominant groups can, of course, learn to see how race, gender, and class privilege structure social relations, but they do so through analysis and observation, not simply from the conditions of their own experience" (Anderson 1993:348). Standpoint theory draws a great deal from Marxist theory, in terms of utilizing the position of the oppressed to critique domination--a concept that Freire has also adopted.

Smith (1987) identifies a disjuncture, or line of fault, that divides what is officially presented and what we experience--when our actual experiences do not coincide with official discourse. This disjuncture provides a "point of entry" into an examination of the social relations that inform both everyday experiences and official discourse. The insider/outsider dichotomy can be transcended by studying the fault line that separates the two. Researching from this outsider standpoint is a starting point from which to develop a deeper analysis of the social context in which both dominant structures and personal experiences exist. Not only do women learn to theorize their own experiences, they can learn to examine the institutions in our society that shape these experiences in certain ways. Experience

becomes a "problematic" in that it becomes a subject of inquiry to understand the social context of everyday events. "For a further politicization my experience must be recounted within a broader socio-historical and cultural framework that signals the larger social organization and forms which contain and shape our lives" (Bannerji 1995:83). For example, Bannerji notes the individual acts of racism that she experiences can provide the seeds for an analysis of slavery and colonialism that can explain some motivations behind racist action and thought.

As women researching within the academy, we have the benefit of looking at our institution from the perspective of an outsider within. "It is when one works on both sides that there emerges the possibility of seeing the relation between dominant activities and beliefs and those that arise on the 'outside'" (Harding 1991:132). I believe that researching from the marginalized perspective of a nonmainstream student can contribute to a fuller analysis of university education. Menzies (1996) reminds us that those of us who work within institutions make a conscious act by "daring to stay outside." It is easy to become co-opted within the ideology of the institution, thereby losing the advantage of this critical perspective.

I am cautious about setting up the dichotomy of the oppressed student, and the oppressor institution, as it is a bit excessive to label a university student as oppressed in the wider social context regionally, nationally and globally. This dichotomy hides the complexities of power relations. People who have access to

university education, no matter how tenuous, still hold a privileged position over those against whom the gates of the academy are firmly locked, such as the poor, and people who contend with physical or mental challenges that are not adequately addressed and accommodated in the university.

An important concept in such an analysis is an understanding of the "relations of ruling" whereby institutions work with each other for their mutual interests (Smith 1987). This ruling apparatus is "a complex of organized practices, including government, law, business and financial management, professional organization, and educational institutions as well as the discourses in texts that interpenetrate the multiple sites of power" (Smith 1987:3). Working from a marginal standpoint enables the articulation of the perspectives of those excluded from the processes conducted by the institutions whereby certain interests are promoted at the expense of those who have no say. I am studying the commodification of education and knowledge that reflects corporate demands of human resource development. Therefore, my focus is on those institutions most directly involved--universities, the corporate sector and government.

As Smith (1987) argues for the inclusion of the "standpoint of women" in social science research, I believe there is room for the standpoint of the nonmainstream student in both sociological and pedagogical research. In fact, it is a critical element, since many policies and pedagogical decisions are being made

that are intended to be in the interests of these students. I am not arguing that my experiences as a nonmainstream student are a representative reflection of all students' experiences. Yet, I think that looking at my experience can be useful in identifying disjunctures between experiential and formal knowledge (Smith 1987).

Standpoints and Textual Analysis

A major source of the disjunctures I encounter as a nonmainstream student, come from the various forms of literature that discuss education. Documents from the institutions and their critics are often created in ways that reflect assumptions, both implicit and explicit that have consequences for the people discussed. As an outsider to the ruling apparatus, I am marginal to their processes of knowledge construction. My point of entry is to try to understand them through their documentation. Smith (1990b) argues that much can be learned about an institution by studying the documents it creates. Texts are a primary form of communication within and between the institutions that form the ruling apparatus. This is increasingly evident in the university. The transformation of decision making processes, "has consisted in a shift from oral contestation to textual manipulation and interpretation as a central tool for accomplishing the task of management in the universities of the 1990s" (Newson 1992:233, also Ashforth 1990). Newson and Buchbinder add, "Although academics and established collegial bodies may be

assigned a role in approving these documents, the process of drafting them and of reconstructing and integrating the submissions of academic units takes place through a more centrally controlled process--one which is less accessible and thus, less easy to develop a strategy for reshaping or defeating their intent" (1991:15).

Newson argues the processes of creating these documents are obscured. Documents are created by different sectors of the university, and are then "shuffled from committee to committee" (1992:234). Each sector makes its own interpretations and recommendations, which can affect the intent and meaning of the document, without a clear acknowledgement of how this shift has occurred. Texts enter what Dorothy Smith (1990b) calls "textual time". When text is cut from the context and the people involved in its creation, it is read without a full understanding of this context and how it has shaped the information. "Obscuring the decision-making process also makes it difficult to know where or how to apply political pressure" (Newson 1992:234).

Another consideration in dealing with text, is the issue of using documents for purposes other than for which they are created (Smith, 1990b). For example, teachers frequently use comments from student evaluation forms to explain what the students thought of the course or programme described in the research. In Chapter 5, I will explain my concerns with these course evaluations being used as primary sources of data to represent students.

Through the "disjuncture" between my experiences as an extension student and texts on the university or adult education literature I read as an undergraduate student, I came to realize that the experiences of nonmainstream students like myself were often not represented at all, or were represented in ways that I did not always agree with. I learned that this misrepresentation was not simply an oversight, or that my experiences were truly unique. In fact, many of my experiences were quite predictable in the context of a broader understanding of university continuing education. My standpoint as a nonmainstream student can help me to see assumptions that may be invisible from the perspective of the authors; that reflect certain interests and ways of constructing knowledge that either knowingly or unknowingly exclude other perspectives without explicit recognition of this exclusion. I believe that it is important to use a student standpoint when reading documents that have a direct impact on students.

Standpoint Theory Critiqued

Feminist standpoint theory is often charged with the accusation that it is too "essentialist", that it does not sufficiently contextualize experience, causing it to become "reality" in and of itself. While Harding defends feminist standpoint epistemology, she openly acknowledges its imperfections. In the process of promoting the validity of experience in research, critics argue that experiences can

become "essentialized" by becoming statements of truth that take precedence over other forms of knowledge. Too great an emphasis on the need for experiential data can lead to a scenario where only those who have personal experience are validated as understanding an issue and those who do not feel silenced. This is a concern I have with the work of Kirby and McKenna (1989). While they do not state this explicitly, they do little to dispel the feeling that only the oppressed have the right to conduct research on their oppression. I do wonder how many people in situations of real oppression have the opportunity to gain access to the university where they could have the time and resources to conduct this vital research. Those of us who are fortunate enough to gain entry into the "sacred grove" must be able to have some role to play in forwarding the cause of those who are denied access.

Harding asks what role is possible for people in positions of privilege who support the emancipatory goals of oppressed groups:

> How can we actively study and learn about our dominant group selves and our culture without either replicating the conventional ethnocentric perspectives that rely on our spontaneous consciousness of the experiences in our lives, or inappropriately appropriating the experience of those Others whose voices have led us to see the need to rethink our views of ourselves? We have not *had* their experiences and do not live their lives (Harding 1991:270).

These are not despairing questions, but ones which encourage us to find ways to avoid such pitfalls. There is a difference between an outsider coming in and doing

research *on* a topic--which produced the need for an epistemology that enables people to write their own views--and the work that Harding proposes, when she describes how men can do feminist work, and white, straight, middle class women can do work that attempts to integrate the interests of non-white, lesbian, poor women. Harding emphasizes that people in positions of privilege need to examine their privilege and dismantle the power imbalance from within. However, they must remain aware that they are assistants to the struggle of oppressed groups, not central to it.

This continues to be a hotly debated issue. It can be extremely difficult for marginalized groups to struggle to earn legitimacy only to see people in positions of privilege easily proclaim themselves to be "male feminists" or "heterosexuals against heterosexism." These attempts may come from very genuine expressions of support, but may be misguided or may highlight a person's privilege by one's ability to take a stand without fear of serious retribution, or lost status. One can understand when someone in a marginalized group questions the motives of a person in a privileged position who assumes their struggle.

However, Harding warns that our other option, to remain silent, makes us complicit in oppression by not challenging it. Praxis is a valuable concept here: to evaluate and reevaluate why it is you are doing what you are doing, whose

interests you are really serving, and to what extent you are collaborating with the people you wish to assist. As privileged people, "we can *learn* to experience the race and class relations in which we participate" (Harding 1991: 284). We can use our experiences of privilege to understand the social relations that ensure our privilege at the expense of others.

Bannerji also addresses this issue, citing the divisions that exist within the feminist movement regarding racism: "My emphasis is on the concept "social", which allows many or all to speak about the same problem or reality without saying the same thing" (1995:84). A diversity of perspectives gives a broader picture--all contribute pieces to the whole puzzle, since no one alone has the whole "truth". Harding argues that we must remain clear that experiences alone are not what is important--we must move beyond the experiences to look at "the view from women's lives" (Harding 1991:269).

Harding calls for a balance that enables us to determine the legitimacy of a statement beyond simply who said it, but we cannot discount the importance of time, place, and speaker. To expose the partisan stance of one side of a debate, does not ensure impartiality of the opposing side. "Understanding our experience is a crucial but initial step in creating a 'revolutionary knowledge' that seeks to understand social organisation and how we can change it to make it more inclusive

and egalitarian. Analysis of experience moves beyond description to an active process of understanding the relations of ruling" (Bannerji 1991:98).

Harding also warns that "our actual *experiences* often lead to distorted perspectives and understandings because a male supremacist social order arranges our lives in ways that hide their real nature and causes" (Harding 1991:282), such as the ways people come to believe the validity of the dominant discourse taught to them. Freire (1989) explains how oppressed people often aspire to the role of oppressor, since that is what is rewarded in society--this is the model of achievement presented to them. They see no alternative model that offers a social order that removes hierarchies of oppression. Those in power shape our perceptions of what is desirable and valuable, until we are able to critique these perceptions and recognize whose interests they really reflect.

To conclude, it is worth repeating that examining experience is not an end in itself, it provides a clue, a "point of entry" into understanding wider social processes. For example, a recently divorced woman discovers that her bank refuses to give her a loan, despite the fact she was a valued customer for years when she was married[3]. This experience can reveal a complex web of relations and assumptions--for whom institutions are designed, assumptions about the ability

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[3]Thanks to Katherine Winlo for this example.

or inability of divorced women to maintain economic security now that the "breadwinner" is gone. Although they dealt with the bank as a couple, the good credit rating was attributed to the man. The banker, no doubt, is aware of the statistics showing that a large percentage of women experience a lower standard of living following divorce. This, in turn, invites an examination of women's economic position in Canada. A wealth of information and analysis is found when one moves beyond the initial frustration the woman experiences in dealing with an uncooperative banker.

Mueller (1995) reminds us that standpoint research is not about people as objects of study. The focus is on social relations that organise those peoples lives in certain ways. In my opinion, to create "objective" work is to acknowledge the limitations of that objectivity--to understand the biases and standpoints of the writer, and to develop a greater sensitivity to being aware of who is excluded. One researcher cannot include every perspective, thus, it is better to be honest about these limitations. Researching from the standpoint of a nonmainstream student, I cannot provide all the information there is to know about how continuing education programmes operate. I am not invited to the meetings of the university Board of Governors, nor the cabinet of the federal government. However, I can provide a perspective that those in positions of power are normally unable to see.

ANALYSIS OF DICHOTOMIES AND ESSENTIALIST CONSTRUCTS

In reading the documents related to universities, students and pedagogy, I have become intrigued with the ways people and concepts are presented. Often, dichotomies have been set up in these documents that are based on an imposed opposition, in that the rigid division that is presented begins to unravel under closer examination. In the chapters that follow I will identify a number of such dichotomies such as liberal arts versus vocational models of education, and liberatory versus traditional pedagogies. The dichotomy between essentialist and constructionist understandings of knowledge masks the extent to which each side shares common characteristics. I am examining contemporary debates on constructionism and essentialism to understand the functions of such oppositions rather than to dismiss them simply as "biased". One function is to emphasize major characteristics to simplify an argument--to develop an understanding of one's own view by providing a critique of what is perceived to be the opposing view. Apparently essentialist identities are frequently revised, thus revealing that they are inevitably socially constructed.

Essentialism versus Constructionism

Although the common understanding of essentialism is the quest for one truth, the term itself does not have a single, "true" definition. Fuss (1989) identifies two general categories. "Real" essentialism is the belief in the existence of a true essence of something that exists naturally. The "nominal" form of essentialism recognizes that an identity or concept is socially constructed, but once defined it is acted upon as an essentialist or fixed category (Fuss 1989, Calhoun 1994). When I speak of essentialism, I am primarily speaking of this latter form.

Constructionism asserts that all knowledge is socially created. Critics of dominant Western forms of knowledge have rejected Enlightenment rationality--the search for one "truth". Thus, real essentialism has been largely dismissed by postmodernists, because it produces a narrow but objectified view of society, promoting a reality that is illusory. Postmodernists argue that the belief in objectivity--the ability to separate reason from its social and historical context is outdated (Nicholson 1990).

Hartsock (1990), citing such theorists as Foucault, Derrida, Rorty and Lyotard, explains that the postmodern response to universalistic themes is to promote context-based, pluralistic themes--identities are always fragmented and fluid, making it impossible to claim a fixed identity. The danger of such a conclusion is that political agency can be undermined when the focus is on

difference and fragmentation rather than on collective interests (Harding 1991, hooks 1994, Di Stephano 1990). Hartsock (1990) believes it is no coincidence that at the time marginalized groups are discovering the power of the "subject", the concept is being discredited theoretically. "Just when we are forming our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorized" (Hartsock 1990:163-164). This leaves no unifying categories left around which to organize. Hartsock criticizes the reluctance of postmodernists to offer alternatives for marginalized people seeking theories to understand their society and to engage in social change.

Calhoun argues that we need to reclaim identities from being thrown away as "essentialist". Rather than accepting categories uncritically, there are both political and intellectual purposes in reclaiming a shared identity that has been "repressed, delegitimated or devalued in dominant discourses" in order to "claim value for all those labelled by that category, thus implicitly invoking it in an essentialist way" (Calhoun 1994:17). I recognize the value of maintaining essential identities when engaging in political struggle. Schuurman (1993) sees the possibilities offered by a rejection of modernist assumptions, but argues against theorists becoming caught in a modern-postmodern dichotomy.

Calhoun sees the potential of bridging the essentialist/constructionist dichotomy: "To essentialist reason we *add* constructionism and to this dualism we add the possibilities of *both* deconstructing and claiming identities" (Calhoun 1994:19). However, Calhoun warns that the deconstruction of universalizing terms, like "woman" and replacing it with "black women, lesbians, etc." can simply replace one fixed identity with "more specific quasi-essentialism categories" (1994:18). Referring to the shaky alliance between feminism and postmodernism, Nicholson (1990) states that both challenge universalizing and objectified claims, and that postmodernism can help feminism overcome its own universalizing tendencies. However, Di Stephano (1990) notes that feminist theory depends upon that unifying concept "women", a concept that has no credibility to postmodernism. Hartsock (1990) argues that essentialist or "universalist" assumptions continue to persist within postmodern thought. Fuss believes that essentialism lays the groundwork for constructionism. In turn, constructionism is often quite essentialist. Harding argues that feminism stands "on Enlightenment ground" (1991:186). Those who criticize Enlightenment theories of reason and essentialism commonly carry many of the same assumptions in their own work. If these assumptions are not acknowledged, there is a danger of perpetuating the problems one is attempting to overcome. Nicholson warns that some feminist

scholars tend to "replicate the problematic, universalizing tendencies of academic scholarship in general" (1990:1), by not recognizing many of the assumptions rooted in these theories, citing Marxist-feminism as an example.

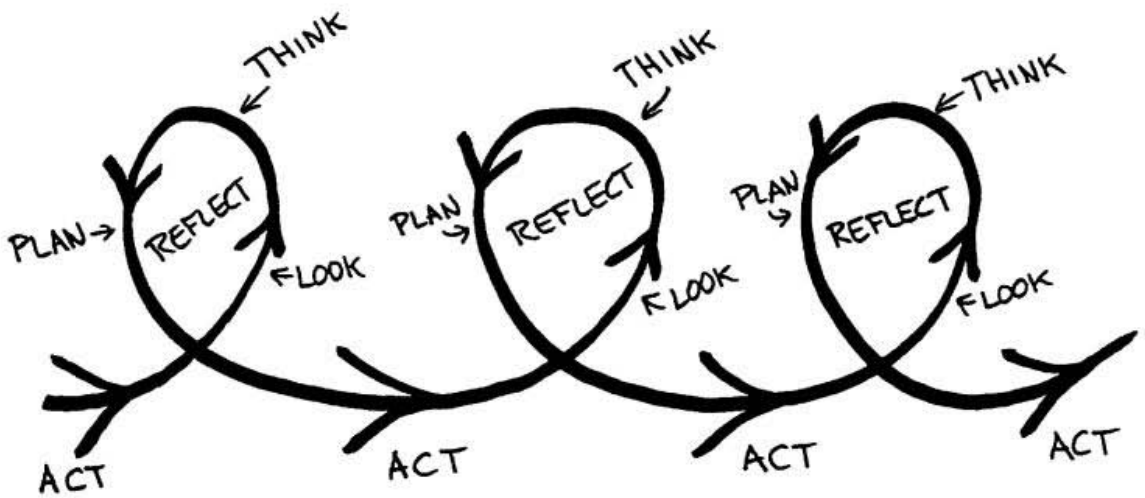
Conscious use of some assumptions and concepts may be viewed much the same way as using the language of the oppressor to challenge that oppression, as is articulated in Adrienne Rich's poem, *The Burning of Paper Instead of Children*: "This is the oppressor's language yet I need it to talk to you" (Rich 1993:41). This process involves fighting objectified essentialism with a conscious use of essentialism. Essentialism can be a problem--imposed and objectified; or it can be a problematic, consciously used to create identity in a struggle. The danger occurs when it is forgotten that these identities have been constructed with specific purposes in mind that may change as the process evolves. It is important to understand the distinction between the use of essential categories as a tool of oppression versus its use as a tool of the oppressed, by taking into consideration the very legitimate criticisms of essentialism.

Praxis

Understanding the purpose and function of dichotomies like essentialism versus constructionism can be achieved through praxis. Simply stated, praxis describes the cyclical process of reflection and action in developing critical

consciousness. It is a cornerstone of Freire's pedagogy, however this concept was already developed in Marx's writings--an example of Marx's influence on Freire's work (Freire and Macedo 1993). The Marxist usage describes the process of understanding the social construction of institutions to be more effective in changing them. The Freirean conceptualization of praxis is more broad-based, in that it enables us to analyse our own knowledge as well as our understanding of our social context both at the local and institutional levels.

Praxis can assist us to understand the construction of identities in the context of political struggle. Groups define their situation and goals, act upon this information, then reflect upon the results, enabling redefinition and new strategies for future action. This process can be visualized as a series of progressive loops:



--design adapted from Hope and Timmel (1985)

Young (1990) argues that in the process of emphasizing unity within a community, differences within that community are repressed. This does not take into consideration the negotiation process (praxis) that the people in the community engage in to find a balance between difference and commonality. Emphasis on dichotomies, such as individual versus group, does not facilitate negotiation. Praxis enables the conscious use of unifying principles, through a negotiation process of weighing the pros and cons of how the group's priorities are defined. Individuals define community. I, as an individual, have some say in defining the community in which I choose to participate--the ways in which I want to interact with others to effect change, or to set aside some of my own goals that appear at odds with the greater good at this particular moment. But I need to stay in one place for a while--both physically and mentally--to be effective. I hope that praxis can offer a balance by enabling stability, but resisting dogma. While "one truth" is restrictive and domineering, "infinite truths" are too fragmented when many conflicting voices are fighting to be heard. By bridging these dichotomies, we can hope to find the potential of collectivity, while not ignoring the diversity within.

Mohanty (1991), in describing "communities of resistance", explains how oppressed groups forge links by focusing on commonalities. The breakdown of an essentialist barrier can pave the way for the building of a shared link. Although constructed, it is acted upon as "real". An "imagined community" suggests

political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliances. It is not colour or sex that defines, but the ways we think of colour and sex. A community of resistance is a political definition, not an essentialist one. Perhaps this is a way to reclaim the political against the fragmentation of deconstructionism.

Through praxis, I am exposing stereotypes and dichotomies, not to throw them out but to understand why they were constructed in the first place. For example, in some feminist pedagogy literature, I am wary of what I call "rosy representations"--enthusiastic descriptions of liberatory classroom experiences that do not explicitly acknowledge problems that may have occurred. Glossing over problems presents the illusion that the process of teaching is linear and unproblematic. Those who try the model without success may blame themselves, thinking they did not do it "right", unaware that the authors may have experienced similar problems but chose not to write about them. In contrast, "gloomy representations" focus on the negative points of the opposing viewpoint without identifying the aspects that might be beneficial. This can force people to "reinvent the wheel" by not adapting the work achieved before them to suit their needs.

As much as I may be suspicious of rosy and gloomy representations, I can see their purpose. An identity is constructed within the context of the situation, who the intended audience is, and the stage of development the participants in this process have reached. Rosy representations can be an important tool of the

oppressed or marginalized to validate their own experiences or objectives. These may challenge negative stereotypes, and strengthen a group identity that is needed for solidarity and political action. If the intended purpose of the document is to "name" oppression, there may be examples of "gloomy" representations of the situation faced; i.e. the negative, oppressive features of the dominant group would be highlighted and critiqued. At times in my research, I have created an "ideal" extension student, who exhibits what I only half-jokingly call the "part-timer work ethic"--the hard working, eager, adult student with an insatiable thirst for knowledge. While this was an unconscious act at first, I came to realize that this was, for me, a response to the institutional dismissal of nonmainstream programmes based on their inability to provide a "real" university education, and thus "real" scholars. I could only complain about the bad things to people involved in the system who already knew the value of this method.

It is necessary to reflect on the rosy and gloomy representations that have been constructed. Possible beneficial traits of the opposing side might be acknowledged, and problems within one's own side might be recognized and examined. If the group is engaged in an internal debate to define priorities and formulate strategies, then simplistic rosy or gloomy generalizations can be an impediment. If these constructed dichotomies are not examined critically on a recurring basis, there is the danger of a political standpoint becoming so dogmatic

that it no longer reflects the needs of the people who created it. Or it may fail to encompass multiple sites of oppression--a criticism many Third World feminists have made of Western feminism (Johnson-Odim 1991). I found that, in my early research, I tended to avoid dealing with the recreational student--those who attended classes purely for the interest of the topic and intellectual challenge with no academic goals of earning a degree. I was afraid of perpetuating the stereotype that nonmainstream students are not serious or legitimate. Were I to persist in overlooking the recreational extension student, I could be in danger of reinforcing rather than challenging the market-driven model of extension education by dismissing the intrinsic value of learning.

The creation of the initial dichotomy may have a crucial role in activating a political struggle, to empower people to claim an identity and articulate their priorities. The oppressed gain a voice amongst themselves by sharing experiences and theorizing to see how they have been constructed as the "other" by dominant knowledge producers. Their goal is to challenge the labels assigned to them which they had no say in defining. When it is time to bring their collective voice to those with power, it can appear that the only way to be heard is to create another essential identity to offer as a replacement for the stereotyped identity they have deconstructed. There needs to be a recognition of diversity, in a way that does not threaten the cohesion of unity. Essential categories that construct dichotomies have

the potential both to educate and to repress, depending upon the level of mediation employed to re-evaluate these categories.

RESEARCHING FROM MY STUDENT STANDPOINT

This research has developed from an interest in theorizing my own experiences as a nonmainstream student. These experiences have been studied within the context of a broad range of literature that I have found useful in my analysis. To develop a better understanding of the institutional context of the current climate, I will analyse a number of documents created by universities and by government. Also, I will look at research done upon universities and their links to other ruling institutions in our society. I have read extensively from the literature of adult education to develop an understanding of this field's history, purpose and future goals.

The basis of my vision for the future of adult education is drawn from the literature of what I am calling "alternative pedagogies". By this I mean primarily Freirean critical and feminist pedagogies as well as some material related to education in the context of community development. Some of the literature, I think, would not explicitly define itself as feminist or critical, but it is also reacting against what is seen to be negative trends in universities. I am not suggesting that these are the only sources of alternative visions for education, but these are the

areas I have chosen for my focus. I am interested in the literature that explicitly claims to be more immediately responsive to students than the overall university. However, I argue that students' representations are still filtered through academic discourse in these texts, and this can produce a stereotyped student, reproducing oppressive models rather than breaking them down. Thus, critical analysis of these texts is vital.

I will, at times, refer to interviews I conducted for my honours thesis, and the results of a questionnaire I circulated in 1993 while I was a member of an advisory board at St.F.X. for continuing education in Pictou County. This questionnaire was administered by myself and the extension officer on my request, to elicit input from students that I could present to the advisory board. Although the sample was limited, I use them here because of the illustrative support they provide.

SUMMARY

My goal is to deconstruct oppositions that I have experienced personally and that I have identified in the institutional and pedagogical literature. The ability to see and understand these dichotomies is enhanced by my standpoint as a nonmainstream student. Some of the major dichotomies I will examine include: mainstream versus nonmainstream students and programmes, liberal arts versus vocational education, academic excellence versus community outreach, critical and feminist pedagogy versus traditional pedagogy, and individual versus collective goals. Instead of simply breaking them down, I am interested in why they are created in the first place and what are the consequences of their deconstruction. Sometimes these oppositions are vitally important to a cause, while other times they perpetuate stereotypes and mask a wealth of information lurking within the disjuncture.

CHAPTER THREE: STUDENT AS "OTHER"

> The values of learning, while personally profitable, are not narrowly selfish. Both knowledge and the continuing growth of the mind are essential to society as well as to the individual.
>
> --Cyril O. Houle

I have entitled this chapter, "Student as Other" to emphasize the fact that all continuing education programmes, whether paternalistic or liberatory, start from the recognition that there is a clientele to be reached requiring programmes and services beyond the standard programming designed for full-time, on-campus students. This distinction has resulted in the creation of a dichotomy between mainstream and nonmainstream, both in terms of programmes and individual students. The assumptions that underlie this dichotomy affect the quality and content of such programmes. Nonmainstream students are primarily defined in terms of who they are not, rather than who they are.

Over the past century, a clearly stated commitment by universities to community outreach has co-existed with a marginalization of those sectors of the university most directly engaged with the community. I argue that this marginalisation has undermined the efforts of community outreach to promote the importance of sharing the university's knowledge with a wider clientele and support the intrinsic value of learning for self-development and social participation.

To understand the university's commitment to nonmainstream programmes, I will provide a brief overview of the historical development of adult education in this century specifically as it relates to community outreach and the concept of lifelong learning itself. I will describe my experiences and observations as an extension student, not to provide a definitive picture of who an extension student is, but rather to provide a glimpse of the diversity--to show that there is no such thing as *the* definitive student. How my identity as a nonmainstream student emerged over the years is reflected in the broader context of continuing education. My identity was shaped by the students with whom I attended courses, by the negative attitudes about continuing education we faced, and by my growing awareness of the role of continuing education in our society. I have interspersed my own observations with relevant literature including the findings of Patricia Campbell (1994) who interviewed mature female students returning to university. Most of those women are full-time students, but they share many of the experiences of the nonmainstream students I am describing. Also included are recommendations made by the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) in their submission to the Smith Report (CAUCE 1991).

I will examine the development and consequences of the dichotomies affecting nonmainstream students and programmes by their designation as "other"

from the mainstream. The dichotomy I identify between the university's objectives of outreach versus academic excellence is examined in terms of how this split delegitimizes adult education as a discipline which, in turn, delegitimizes a primary site of adult learning in the university--continuing education programmes. I argue that this delegitimization affects the quality of education and services available to nonmainstream students.

In order to improve the status of the students, it is necessary to reform the reputation of adult learning approaches within the university context. To facilitate this reform, it is necessary to understand the guiding vision behind the development of these programmes in the past, to help us find a vision for the future.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The purpose of this section is to examine the historical development of key concepts and assumptions in university continuing education, and to consider why continuing education has been marginalized within the liberal arts model of the academy despite the apparent promotion of "lifelong learning" and community outreach. Lifelong learning is a concept that has been expressed throughout this century by educators such as John Dewey, Malcolm Knowles, J.R. Kidd, and St.F.X.'s own group of educators and extension workers involved in the

Antigonish Movement[1]. It continues to be identified as a key aspect of human social life. At Confintea V, the UNESCO conference on adult education held in Hamburg in 1997, the importance of lifelong learning was reinforced through the adoption of the proposal of "One Hour a Day". In recognizing that access to education is a human right, all adults should be entitled to a daily opportunity to set aside an hour "dedicated to one's own intellectual and educational fulfilment" (ICAE 1997). The goal of such a proposal is to enhance opportunities for social transformation.

Dewey, although primarily concerned with the education of youth, was a firm believer in the concept of lifelong education. Learning is an integral part of a person's entire life, not simply an activity limited to certain blocks of time in one's lifespan (Cross-Durrant 1991). The education a child receives should facilitate that person's capacity and desire to learn throughout adulthood. Equality of access should be ensured throughout life to facilitate the realization of this potential. Dewey believed that developing one's capacity to learn was of far greater importance than the transmission of "encyclopaedic" content (Cross-Durrant 1991).

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[1]For the purposes of this research, I am focussing on North American educators. There is a long and rich historical tradition in Europe which is worth exploring for those interested in the history of this field.

Knowles is a key contributor to adult learning theories and practices. He made a clear distinction between pedagogy, the teaching of children, and andragogy, the teaching of adults (Jarvis 1991). The term andragogy has been somewhat controversial over the years (Welton 1987) and appears to have fallen out of regular usage in much current adult education literature. Some cite the development of "andragogy" as part of adult education's move towards professionalisation and away from its role as a social movement (Collins 1995). By creating such a distinct theoretical and methodological category, I think Knowles is in danger of contradicting Dewey's conviction that learning forms a continuum throughout life. Certain strategies will work better with children than adults, but many people have also studied the pedagogical variations that exist by ethnicity, gender, and social class. I suggest that the age differences should be thought of in ways similar to these other categorizations. The arbitrary classification of education by age may inhibit the sharing of theories that could span age groups. For example, Brookes' (1992) employs pedagogical practices in her university teaching based on strategies developed by Sylvia Ashton Warner, a New Zealand educator who worked with very young Maori children. Knowles did a great deal to raise awareness of the existence and needs of adult learners. He also emphasized that education must go beyond the transmission of skills and information, to assist in the development of critical thinkers (Jarvis 1991).

Eduard Lindeman promoted the potential for social change that could be realized through adult education, by educating adults for democratic participation (Brookfield 1991). However, other educators such as Thorndike took a very individualistic approach, drawing heavily from the emerging field of psychology in their development of adult learning theories (W.A. Smith 1991). This trend tended to support the individualization process of adult education as it became professionalized and decontextualized from its social roots.

J.R. Kidd had a strong influence on adult education in Canada and was instrumental in promoting its role in international development through such vehicles as UNESCO and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) (Thomas 1991). He worked to break down myths that adults are hard to teach by encouraging adults' abilities and willingness to learn. Kidd looked beyond teaching individuals, by promoting the socio-economic potential of education in a nation's development. He emphasized the social significance of learning in that, "it will always be felt in all of the social, political and economic affairs of mankind" (Kidd in Thomas 1991:201). Adult education should form an integral part of community and national development strategies. The ICAE (1997) continues to promote the vital role education plays to empower citizens to engage in transformative social change and democratic participation.

Much of my personal understanding and experience of adult education has evolved from my exposure to St.F.X.'s Extension Department and the Coady International Institute that both evolved out of the Antigonish Movement (Coady 1939, Laidlaw 1961, Lotz 1973, Grace 1995, Alexander 1997). The Antigonish Movement arose in the 1920s to provide education, resources and, above all, motivation to enable people to work together towards ensuring economic viability in their communities. Two priests are recognized as the leaders of the Movement: Dr. James Tompkins and Dr. Moses M. Coady. The Movement initiated the development of credit unions and co-operatives for the fishing and agricultural communities, craft producers and consumers. Adult education was seen to be the key to the success of the Movement. Tompkins began the "People's School" in the 1920s which offered people in rural communities courses ranging from agriculture to liberal arts. The concept was based on participatory humanistic learning practices designed to develop group awareness and social change (Grace 1995).

The Antigonish Movement was considered radical in its day. Rather than simply educating individuals, it promoted the concept of collective action to address local problems. Tompkins helped raise people's awareness of their conditions to enable them to find solutions to their problems. This was an early form of conscientization without the Marxist analysis evident in Freire's work. However, it has been criticized for sticking too closely to the local community

level, lacking a structural analysis at the provincial level and beyond to promote social and political change. It was promoted as an "alternative to communism" (Lotz 1973), which is hardly surprising given the influence of the Catholic Church, and the growing climate of fear surrounding the spread of communism in the 1930s (Lotz 1973). This, no doubt, contributed to its reformist emphasis--enabling people to adjust to the economic conditions of the time, rather than challenging the economic infrastructure and political policies.

The Movement achieved international renown, prompting the establishment of the Coady International Institute which continues to bring together community development practitioners from around the world to study participatory development models and to share in the analysis of the global context of local issues. Over the years the Movement's reputation reached almost mythical proportions. Alexander Laidlaw, a chronicler of the Movement, cited this phenomenon in 1961. Even today, criticisms of it are rare in Canadian adult education literature. St.F.X. cites the Antigonish Movement as evidence of its commitment to community development in the region. The Extension Department's mission statement promotes the values and principles of the Movement by engaging in social change to create sustainable communities. "Given the challenges of the global economy, we are turning our thoughts and energies again to how the University can most fully serve the community" (St.F.X. 1996).

The decline of the Antigonish Movement was partly blamed on the process of academic legitimisation. Despite the pride evident at St.F.X. for the Movement, Laidlaw (1961) argues it was always marginalized by the University. Lovett et al. charge that by institutionalising the Movement within the Coady International Institute, the university essentially turned its back to the local level, "remaining somewhat aloof from the continuing problems of poverty and injustice in its own region" (1983:6, see also Lotz 1973 and David Smith 1995). Laidlaw believed that "the professionalisation had robbed adult education of 'its spirit and destroyed half its value for society.' Adult education had died as a movement only to be reborn in the Academy" (in Welton 1987:48). This is relevant to adult education as a whole. The focus on teaching methodologies at an individual level (e.g. Knowles and Thorndike) distanced the field of adult education from its social context.

I do not want to suggest that St.F.X. has severed all ties with its historical commitment to community development. The Extension Department provides a continuing education programme, organises workshops and conferences, and employs a staff of fieldworkers who are actively involved in projects throughout the region. Even Tompkins' "People's School" has been resurrected to teach community economic development. However, the problem remains that the work done by the Extension Department and Coady Institute is still not widely recognized by the rest of the University.

Outreach: Bringing the University to the People

I will now look more closely at the motivation driving the university's desire to reach out to the community and provide opportunities to people who would not have access to university education in a mainstream format. Why is such an endeavour held up as a source of pride by the university, yet marginalized at the same time? I will reflect on my own participation in continuing education, contextualizing my experiences within relevant literature.

When I first enrolled in an evening course, I saw extension as an opportunity to get a taste for university studies without moving away and committing myself to a full-time programme, and all the expenses that entailed. The simple pleasure of learning something new also attracted me. I chose courses that sounded interesting rather than those that might have provided a readily marketable skill; thus, I began my university career by studying "The Canadian Novel" rather than business administration. The legitimacy of taking a university course was also appealing. I doubt I would have gone if a similar course was offered from a local high school. Many of my classmates attended extension for reasons similar to my own. Most had other challenges, such as families and jobs that prevented them from studying full-time, or even from finding time to commute to the campus for evening courses. The convenience of extension ensured that there was not a large sacrifice of time from family and community. It was also

a "second chance" for those who attended university years ago, but due to marriage, financial constraints, or lack of interest, had dropped out. Others were unable to attend university when they were young.

People who may be intimidated by the university campus itself often appreciate the opportunity to take courses in their own community (Wilkinson and Heyworth 1985). Classes offered in a local school or community college escape the trappings of the "ivory tower", and help break down the university's mystique. Several students I know admitted feeling a bit overwhelmed by the campus and were reluctant to go to the university library. Some felt self conscious about their age--that they were too old to be there. They wanted to feel like they were part of the university "family", but often did not feel like they had been extended such an invitation on campus.

Robinson (1994) notes the reticence among the rural women she interviewed to relocate to an urban centre to pursue studies. Many of the women Campbell (1994) interviewed suffered low self-esteem due to years at home away from an educational setting or due to lack of educational success when they were young. Knights (1995) cites a study of women attending a college in Australia who were driven by a lifelong desire to return to school. They sought to redress past educational barriers. "Often this ambition was related to the feeling that they had not been given a chance to fulfil their intellectual potential at school" (Knights

1995:221). Much research has been produced exposing institutional barriers that have limited women's academic potential in the past (Culley and Portuges 1985, Spender 1981). I can see that programmes such as the one Knights describes provide important opportunities for older women who have suffered educational discrimination. While Campbell's interviewees did make the leap into a full-time programme, I suspect many others would find such a move too much of a risk. A part-time route provides an opportunity to explore options and check out different disciplines before committing to a programme. It was not until I had acquired several credits that the prospect of earning a degree appeared to be a tangible goal.

Students enrolled in credit courses may or may not be working toward a degree, but they like the idea of having a structured learning environment that challenges them and rewards them for their efforts (P. Campbell 1994). Taking a university course provides legitimacy to this endeavour, and opens the door for the future pursuit of a degree when the opportunity arises. When I enrolled in my first university course, I had little idea that I would eventually graduate with more than one degree. While most of the married classmates I knew had supportive families, many women are less fortunate. Knights (1995) identifies the lack of family support as a major barrier women returning to school face, particularly among lower class women. This lack of support is compounded by the women's own

feelings of guilt about doing something for *themselves*. Women who are in situations of domestic abuse have few opportunities to escape if they lack the education needed to secure a job. There are many stories of husbands sabotaging women's efforts to learn. I recall a letter in the University of Waterloo distance programme newsletter in which a woman described the abuse she endured, and the actions her husband took to impede her progress, such as burning her books and assignments. She finally left him and graduated, thanking the university's distance programme for providing her with an escape route. Such stories serve as a vivid reminder that people seeking the opportunities provided by continuing education are not all simply seeking recreation or professional upgrading.

Bowl (1992) believes that it is crucial for the university to provide access to university education to those who were denied such opportunities in youth, due to such constraints as poverty, war and gender role stereotypes. By enrolling in university courses as "mature students" they have a chance to grasp opportunities that were denied them in their youth. For some, it is a testing ground to see if they have the ability to study at the university level. The emphasis is on personal development to rebuild confidence in their intellect. It dispels the myth that university is beyond the grasp of the average person. Continuing education takes the high value people place on learning and extends it beyond the domain of youth.

The Intrinsic Value of Learning

Many people enroll in continuing education courses simply because a particular course interests them, or they feel the need to challenge themselves intellectually. I used to downplay the intrinsic value of learning in my work because I feared that it would reinforce the belief that this is just a leisure activity for the middle class "bored housewife". But if I am arguing that there is more to learning than economic value, this point must be considered and validated.

The driving force behind continuing and distance education programmes in the 1950s and 60s was to bring the diversity of liberal arts university programmes to people in the community who could not go to the university (Elias and Merriam 1995). Calls to make university education more directly relevant to the job market challenge this diversity, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4. A central motivation to continuing programmes such as the one I attended is the belief that the university has something to offer to people outside its traditional clientele. This mirrors mainstream liberal arts education that attempts to expose young minds to a wide range of disciplines for intellectual and cultural development.

I was always amazed at the broad course selection offered through the University of Waterloo's correspondence programme--that they would believe strongly enough in this liberal arts ideal to develop such a wide range of courses. Thus, a woman on a farm in Nova Scotia could learn about palaeontology, Latin

and early music history. One of my most cherished courses was that history of early music, and I still recall the strong sense of achievement I felt. I spent hours studying the texts and tapes, and it was one of my highest grades as an undergraduate. Will knowing how to read Gregorian plainchant notation ever help me in finding a job? Not likely, but this is, for me, a very personal example of the intrinsic value of such educational opportunities. The women Campbell (1994) interviewed may initially see university as something to get through, but often the personal development they experience once enrolled is as important as any job training they receive. They see this as a time to do something for themselves instead of continually setting aside their own goals to support others.

During my years at extension, there were a few elderly women who completed degrees. They were greatly admired by the rest of us for pushing themselves to work so hard for a purely personal reward. When I spoke of these women to people not involved in extension, some would ask why were they bothering, or worse, accuse them of being intellectual show offs—if there is no obvious job-related reason for getting a degree, then their motives were suspect. One woman I interviewed told me she faced such suspicious attitudes, adding, "they think you are nuts." When people wonder why the older women are doing

it, she responds, "I know what these people are about. It is stimulating, active."[2]

Among the women I have spoken with, the potential benefit for their families is defined as an important aspect of their educational experience. They see this primarily as something for themselves, but are quick to identify the positive effects for their families. One married woman joked that when she graduates her husband should get a degree too since she shared with him all that she learned in her classes. Another woman hoped she was a good role model to her children, to show them study skills, and that they have a range of educational options if they, like herself, are not ready for university at 18. This was expressed by one woman interviewed by Campbell, who said that she enjoys doing homework together with her daughter--sharing this experience is bringing them closer together.

I recognize and struggle with the fact that there is a class bias evident when promoting the intrinsic value of learning. University education is still seen as a status symbol. There is a middle class expectation of attending university. Also, one needs an income secure enough to pay for the tuition. Among those in the lower class, where university is held in high esteem, it is seen as a ticket out of low wages and hard labour. Others view it as yet another trapping of privilege from which they are excluded.

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[2]Extension student interviewed during my undergraduate research. For a fuller analysis of this research, see Irving (1992).

> Still only a small proportion of the population has access to higher education...Class remains important in shaping disadvantage but the conventional educational routes also severely disadvantage women (Spender and Sarah, 1988) and black people. Nor must we forget older people, lost to higher and secondary education for a host of historical reasons: family poverty, war, poor teaching practices, limited gender-based expectation, and so on. If we really believe in equal opportunities viewed throughout the life cycle, theirs is a compelling case for compensation for experiences not available to them when younger. (Bowl 1992:201).

Bowl cites the past emphasis of extension programmes whose "focus was on bringing the university's knowledge to the service of the wider community" (1992:200). He believes that this is still an important objective. Adult education programmes working with more marginalized groups, tend not to focus on the traditional allure of liberal arts but have a community development approach that tries to help people work together to solve problems at the local level. The competitive academic model of grades, prestige and scholarships is often not effective in this context. Also, people see through the ruse of retraining for jobs that don't exist in their communities--training that puts people in competition with each other. Thus, I would suggest an education model that puts people in competition with each other would not be beneficial to the community.

Establishment adult education has been criticized for the "entrenched individualism of adult education philosophies which emphasize self-directedness or the individual growth of isolated learners who strategically organize or

'manage' their own learning within the confines of their own privately determined goals" (Hart 1992:12-13). Thus, strategies that harness the individual enthusiasm for learning within a community development model locate that individual in a context that can be most effective.

DISCOVERING DICHOTOMIES

In this section, I will highlight the main dichotomies I have identified in the adult education literature and from the "disjunctures" I have experienced in continuing education. These dichotomies, I believe, result from the essentialized definitions of nonmainstream students and continuing educations programmes as "other". They are recognized primarily in terms of how they differ from the mainstream clientele and programming offered in universities, reinforcing misinformed stereotypes that contribute to the devaluation of nonmainstream students and programmes. Further, the sometimes arbitrary distinction between mainstream and nonmainstream can hide similarities. A problem in a nonmainstream programme may be a manifestation of a larger structural problem within the university.

Student as "Other"

When I shifted from a part-time to a full-time programme on campus, I discovered the full extent of "otherness" continuing and adult students experience in the mainstream university. Here, I regularly confronted mainstream assumptions about what extension was. I could easily have been made to feel that my part-time degree was something to hide--that I had not received a "real" university education because I was off-campus. On the contrary it made me even more determined to state my educational background to anyone who would listen. It has been important for me to show that extension students can make it to graduate school.

The extension courses I attended usually had a class size ranging from twelve to twenty students, which facilitated class discussion and helped to create a sense of camaraderie among the students. I liked the intellectual stimulation that the night courses provided. I was introduced to new fields of study that I shared with a small group of students with whom I became good friends over the years. I disliked high school intensely with its dull curriculum and rigid framework that primarily rewarded conformity. In these university courses, I was thrilled to discover a setting where learning could be challenging and exciting. I had finally found an educational niche. Unfortunately, while there was a value attributed to providing programming to students in the community, there was a prevailing insinuation that it was second best to on-campus education.

When I began full-time studies on campus, I realized my socialization as an adult student had not prepared me to be among younger undergraduates who had a distinctly different view of the education process than I had acquired. As an adult student in the full-time context, I expected to be treated with the respect I had been accorded as a young student in the adult context, where I had been treated as an adult along with the other students. Instead, I returned to the hierarchical realm, that recalled some of my frustrations with high school.

Pedagogically, I felt I was better off in extension than on campus where I was now supposed to be enjoying the "real" university educational experience. By enrolling in two or three courses per year, I had time to delve into the material much more thoroughly than if I were working under a full course load. I discovered how much of a difference this made when I did go full time and attempted to put as much effort into each course as I had when I was a part-timer. Thus the assumption that part-time students are less serious than full-timers or that it is easier was a sore spot for me. One student I spoke with felt uncomfortable telling the professor she had enrolled in the class for personal interest, fearing that she would not be taken as seriously as the "degree hound". In contrast, I would feel self conscious if I said I was there because it was a required credit--that I was not there for the pure benefit of learning what that professor had to offer. These conflicting feelings, I think, reflect the many ways we feel self conscious and

internalize the belief that we are not as serious as the mythical "real" students on campus. I have had to confront my own contradictory feelings in my earlier research on this topic by implicitly devaluing the "hobby" student at the same time as placing them higher because of their "pure" commitment to learning.

The main purpose of continuing education is to provide university opportunities to nonmainstream students. However, there is a dichotomy surrounding the students' location in the framework as the central focus of continuing education programmes, yet marginalized by the university as a whole. These students often experience a puzzling disjuncture when they try to understand the gap between the philosophical commitment expressed by the university for continuing education, and the experiences they face when confronting administrative regulations and restrictions. I believe the marginalisation of the nonmainstream student is linked with the lack of credibility of adult and continuing education as a whole in the university.

Recognizing the different needs of this clientele helps identify how standard policies may be inadequate for nontraditional students, thus promoting the provision of supplementary service. However, the presence of appropriate services and programmes for those who do not fit in the "mainstream" is often used to discredit nonmainstream students and programmes. Sadly, "different" is often also equated with "inferior"--the very strategies developed to assist adult students (such

as altering entrance requirements for mature students), may be interpreted by others as "evidence" of their inferiority. Within the academy, attitudes regarding academic excellence and meritocracy imply that removing barriers to access decreases overall excellence by letting in people who do not deserve to be there. This is evident in the backlash against affirmative action when it is argued that underqualified people gain educational or employment opportunities merely to fulfil a quota. This attitude does not consider who is defining excellence, or how this definition excludes people due to prejudice rather than lack of ability. Perhaps the mixed messages nonmainstream students receive result from confusion within the university regarding its mission and its own definitions of quality.

If a university education is a prerequisite for job security, then we need to enable more people to achieve this goal. However, this works at cross purposes with the attitude that by increasing access quality is diminished. Students are left to wonder what kind of education they are receiving, and how it will be valued by others. Students feel the effects of the attitudes that they are getting an education that is "second-rate".

Women students as "other"

There is a disturbing disjuncture evident in much adult education literature regarding the representation of women. By my own calculations of attendance rates

at extension courses and by the calculations of others (Rice and Meyer 1989, Copland 1988) women normally comprise the majority of part-time learners. This is not the case in adult education literature. When I researched my undergraduate thesis, I was puzzled that there was so little material dealing primarily with women students or feminist teaching methods in continuing education. Edith Smith (1992) clearly quantifies this absence through her survey of a wide range of adult education journals.

In surveys of the history of adult education in North America and Britain, women are rarely, if ever, recognized for their contributions to the field. I recently browsed through the tables of contents of old editions of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education handbooks that have been published every decade since the 1920s. These handbooks represent a wide cross-section of adult education research at the time of publication. I can see that from the start, women were indeed involved in adult education research. In the early editions, men's contributions of material in these handbooks outnumbered women's three to one. By the 1940s, this gap had narrowed to two to one. The edition of the 1960s, however, showed a startling regression in which men's contributions were overrepresented by a staggering eight to one. We have learned much from the research conducted to identify the consequences of the bias against women in the mainstream university (Lewis and Simon 1985, D.E. Smith 1987, Bannerji 1991).

As Edith Smith (1992) asserts, it is high time adult education examined the consequences of this imbalance.

Student support services (or lack thereof)

Since nonmainstream students are not the primary clientele of most universities, support structures for these students often fall short of students' needs. I found that a major problem with being in extension was that we often were not known to the department of our choice, beyond the one or two professors who offered extension courses. I could see the consequences of this when I faced administrative problems over which I had to elicit departmental support. Had I not taken a course on campus, I would not have been recruited for the honours programme. I would not have even known it was a possibility for me. This reflects the lack of counselling services--both academic and personal--and administrative support for many extension students.

CAUCE (1991) cites the profit motive mentality as one reason for this neglect. If continuing education is seen to be nothing more than a money-maker that supplements traditional programmes, emphasis is placed on getting away with as little as possible in terms of service. CAUCE notes, "The general attitude continues to be to fit the part-time learner into the system, not the converse" (1991:49), citing problems such as difficulties in transferring credits despite high

mobility of people today and the lack of services outside of regular office hours. Primary contact is with part-time faculty who are as marginalized as the students. Limited course selection and time slots, lack of financial support to students and minimal graduate programme options are other problems these students confront. "At some universities, part time students are asked to pay more for courses and, at many, are given very little academic recognition" (CAUCE 1991:50). If nonmainstream students are not offered supports similar to those mainstream students receive to help them through university, then the challenges are even higher for nonmainstream students to succeed. This, despite the prevailing attitude that continuing and extension courses are somehow easier or less rigorous than on-campus courses.

CAUCE (1991) notes the lack of involvement between full-time faculty and part-time students, in that responsibility for teaching continuing education courses normally is held by sessional instructors. While many of the night courses I attended were taught by full-time faculty, one of my best learning experiences in extension was with a sessional instructor--a course in English literature that I still recall fondly due to the teacher's pedagogical skill and respect for the students. I am deeply concerned about the CAUCE brief's negative assumptions about sessionals. I fear it reinforces the stereotype that part-time programmes are indeed inferior because they are often taught by sessionals. This could justify further

diminishing the value of the courses these students can choose from. Elsewhere, CAUCE makes accusations about academic snobbery, but I fear they succumb to it here themselves, by implying that sessional teachers are incompetent. However, the point that sessionals' position in the academy is marginal is a valid one. I suggest the issue at hand has more to do with the exploitation of the sessionals than their teaching ability.

A distressing consequence of structural marginalization is that often students internalize the otherness they confront. Some students I know have expressed reluctance to demand rights because administratively they see themselves as a low priority to the university. They admit being hesitant to initiate contact with the dean or his assistant because they know these people are already very busy with the on-campus students. They may resent such a feeling, but it does silence them, since they do not want to "impose". This hesitation may also be exacerbated by feeling intimidated by the university which can seem to be a monolith when you only know one or two professors and staff members. Where does one go with a problem? They may come from lower class backgrounds in which university education is really seen as a privilege. These students may not know what rights they have, accepting discriminatory policies as "just the way it is". They may not realize that rules can suddenly bend if one makes a fuss. My entire part-time academic experience was achieved by requests for an "exception" to be made to

the rules that prevented me, as a part-time student, from following the path I wanted to. Yet, these students argue that it is unfair that they be treated marginally when they pay the same tuition and have the same course requirements. They believe they should be treated equally or equitably.

CAUCE argues, "In terms of part-time learners, there must be a significant attitude change away from characterizing these individuals as 'less committed' students. Not only must the discrimination against part-time students be corrected, their needs and demands must receive a higher priority within the institution" (1991:58). Barton identifies prejudice against the adult learner as the main impediment to ensuring equality. Adults who go to school are assumed to be there for career advancement or to alleviate boredom: "Every reason except to get educated" (Barton 1982:141). Such an attitude falls far short of the ideal of promoting "lifelong learning" as described earlier in this chapter. The emphasis shifts away from the "teaching" responsibility of the university, towards seeing it as a "public service" activity. In Chapter 4, I will explore the consequences of such a shift, in that it facilitates the move to a marketing approach to continuing education rather than an academic commitment. The "otherness" students feel is not an isolated feeling of insecurity, but reflects assumptions that are linked to the devaluation of continuing education as a whole.

Continuing Education as Other

There are different approaches a university may take when developing continuing education programmes. The "laissez-faire" model focuses on removing simple barriers like age requirements or parental consent. There is no institutional change involved. The "separatist" model sees adults as separate from the rest of student body. A small array of support services are offered to respond to obvious perceived differences. Finally, the "equity" model develops appropriate delivery systems, integrated curricula and faculty, and support services to address the diversity represented by their clientele (Copland 1988).

Defining continuing education as a public service removes it from the work carried out in the rest of the university. Despite the stated commitment of universities to offer continuing education, this commitment is often weak at the administrative level. The efforts of committed staff and faculty who express their appreciation for working with adult students can be undermined by administrative apathy. Many of the problems that we complained about, as extension students, were caused by rather minor administrative restrictions which could have been easily remedied. The fact that these problems were minor was what made them so frustrating. It would not have taken much effort on the part of the university to remedy them, if the will were there. Negative assumptions also make such programmes susceptible to cutbacks or reorganisation. If they are perceived to be

merely a second best to what the university normally offers, then in times of fiscal restraint they face the threat of cutbacks, closure, or reorganisation to attract corporate interest as I will discuss in Chapter 4.

In my experience, there was often little formal organisation or continuity in the course offerings of the academic departments. We were angered that we could not major in a discipline. Following the overall restructuring of undergraduate programmes at St.F.X., part-time students did become eligible to apply for majors. However, there still was no academic assurance of course availability that would enable us to do so. There was a lack of commitment to ensure the provision of a coherent course of studies. We quickly found out that it is not a matter of what you want to study but what you can get. We believed that our passage through the system was facilitated not by the "system", but by the support of a handful of people working in our interests to overcome structural barriers. Primarily, these were the extension officer who felt as marginalized as the rest of us, and the assistant to the deans who guided us through the administrative obstacles. We often expressed to each other how glad we were to have these people help us.

Jevons (1987) is angered by the assumption that anything offered on campus is, by definition, superior to off-campus programmes. He describes a distance education programme at an Australian university in which the course materials

designed for distance courses were in high demand among students on-campus who found these materials to be more instructive than class lectures. Jevons argues that distance programmes are normally judged against an "ideal" of what on-campus learning should be. This approach fails to recognize that many on-campus students must cope with tedious lectures, overcrowded classes and lack of individual instruction. A few years ago at St.F.X. the general baccalaureate degree programme was cancelled because students were passing through the university without ever developing a connection with a department. Recalling the complaint that part-time students are often not known to a department, the problem was partly due to discrimination against part-timers, but it was also symptomatic of shortcomings within the regular programme. It was just more noticeable for us because we were on the periphery.

In the case Jevons describes, those who were able to see beyond the distance/on-campus dichotomy began to explore ways in which the innovations developed in the distance programme could be integrated with on-campus studies. Jevons encourages us to avoid becoming entrenched in such defensive positions and focus instead on what each model has to offer. We must constantly assess the standards by which continuing education programmes are being judged.

Outreach Versus Academic Excellence

Part of the "otherness" experienced by continuing education arises from the dichotomy of outreach versus academic excellence. Through much of this century, there has been a tension between the historical commitment to community development and academic credibility within the field of adult education. Despite these outreach efforts, adult education faced the opposing pull of legitimation in the academy which actually worked against developing educational programmes that reflected the needs of the clientele. The interests of the students became secondary to the interests of academic credibility (Welton 1987).

Work that is strongly focused on teaching practices like adult education, is devalued by universities that place primacy on research and see teaching as fulfilling a secondary role[3]. The Smith Report (1991) acknowledges the historical and current devaluing of teaching in the academy. Research continues to be the primary determinant of faculty tenure and promotion. The Report acknowledges that excellent researchers who are adequate teachers excel in their careers far beyond excellent teachers with adequate research activity. The Report criticizes the

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[3]One professor I had, was very explicit in defining an academic career primarily in terms of research and that teaching was a necessary evil to pay the bills--not an encouraging remark for a student to hear. This same professor later warned me against pursing graduate studies in education because my degree would be almost worthless if I wanted an academic career in a "real" discipline like sociology.

blatant inequity of tenure and promotion scales that are skewed to favour researchers over teachers. The Report calls for greater recognition of teaching excellence and for increased support for pedagogical research. Unfortunately, the Report undermines its own findings by recommending that professors who identify their preference for teaching excellence be given a heavier course load. This fails to recognize the labour intensity involved in effective pedagogical practice. Further, those who engage in pedagogical innovations would be unable to research and publish their pedagogical work if they were swamped with this heavier teaching load. Many adult educators work doggedly to interact actively with their clientele developing participatory learning models, but they are not spending much time justifying their academic credibility to the institution (Welton 1987). If research opportunities are denied, then the problem of credibility will not be overcome.

The nontraditional students who are invited into the academy through the outreach commitment become alienated within by elitism. Adult education becomes the sole realm of the university's commitment to the community and is effectively frozen out of the "real" work of the academy. In an attempt to make it more accepted academically and seen less as a "service", adult education has been engaged in a process of professionalisation, leading to activities that have more to do with academic career advancement than real support to the students. This has

been a controversial endeavour within adult education circles, as I have already described with the Antigonish Movement.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have examined some of the foundational concepts upon which adult and continuing education programmes are based. My purpose for doing this has been to develop an understanding of my own experiences with continuing education, and to highlight the major limitations experienced in these programmes. There is a prevailing assumption that many continuing education programmes need to be more responsive to the rapid changes we are now witnessing in our society. Many of the problems I have identified reflect old attitudes and assumptions that have contributed to the persistent marginalization of nonmainstream students and programmes. These people and programmes continue to be judged against an ideal image of mainstream university education that, some would argue, never really existed. Thus we see the development of dichotomies that contribute to restrictions and attitudes that affect the level of access to university education for nonmainstream students, that dismiss the value of the work continuing education programmes carry out, and that challenge the importance of university outreach.

However, I continue to believe that if we challenge these dichotomies, there is much to be learned and retained from existing continuing education programmes in terms of their guiding vision and commitment to community involvement, while finding ways to gain respect within the university. In Chapter 4, I will argue that by focusing on the limitations of existing continuing education programmes, those elements that do have great potential are overlooked, leading to the redesign of programmes that reflect more the interests and biases of the designers than the interests of the students they intend to attract. Many of the problems I have identified in this chapter are not addressed in the human resource model that I will now describe.

CHAPTER 4: STUDENT AS HUMAN RESOURCE

> Now we are enmeshed in the glory of a new all-powerful clockmaker god--the marketplace and its sidekick, technology.
>
> -- John Ralston Saul

In this chapter, I will examine and critique the construction of students in the context of "human resource" development. The university is being called upon by government and the private sector to take a more active role in training the skilled labour force needed to promote Canada's global competitiveness (S.L. Smith 1991, NSCHE 1994). Universities are criticized for not adopting a more market-driven approach to ensure their economic sustainability. There are a growing number of critiques of this corporate agenda in the university and in adult education. Among these, Newson and Buchbinder (1988, 1990, 1991) figure prominently. They examine the treatment of knowledge as a commodity and the effect this has on the work done in the university.

Nonmainstream programmes, as I will argue, are identified as key sectors of corporate-university cooperation due to continuing education departments' capacity to design and offer specialized training courses that could provide much needed revenue to universities (S.L Smith 1991, Carnevale 1992). In my examination of the corporate agenda's effect on continuing education programmes, I will focus on who is defined as the "student" by the institutions involved in the

process of designing programmes in the interests of capital. Newson and Buchbinder's work can be instructive here as, all too often, the corporations are pegged simplistically as "the bad guys" in critical education literature, without an examination of the more complex institutional relations involved. Why universities are responding readily to corporate interests is a key issue to be addressed.

Continuing education programmes are particularly susceptible to corporatist influences due to their perceived inadequacies. Some of these real and imagined shortcomings having been outlined in Chapter 3. If this assumption of inefficiency persists then they can easily be restructured to respond to a corporate desire to invest in "human capital" (Riel Miller 1994:339), where economic interests of efficiency take precedence over programme effectiveness in the interests of students. What processes exist to reduce any education that is not job-oriented to a leisure activity? I will argue that the problems identified in Chapter 3 are not dealt with here in ways that are advantageous to students.

Much of what I valued in traditional continuing education would not appear to have an economic value--collegial community, a chance to build confidence, and the personal value of learning. Nor is it the vision of extension departments active in community development and social change. Liberatory education objectives have no room in a model that perceives education merely as a tool for retraining an underskilled workforce. Corporatist models of learning can endanger people's

ability to critique their work lives (Hart 1992). Many adult educators are frustrated by the pressures they are facing, and are beginning to recognize the need for a reflexive analysis of their field to formulate an effective challenge (Welton 1987, Cruikshank 1996). Such a challenge is providing community-based alternatives to the competitive, individualistic model espoused by corporatism.

This chapter is organised into four main sections. First, I will provide background on the corporate agenda. This term means more than a direct response by university to private sector clients, it reflects a wider ideology shared by the ruling institutions (Smith 1987) that increasingly define our work, education and lives in economic terms (Cruikshank 1997). I describe the effects of the corporate agenda on universities and continuing education programmes. I focus on corporatism because it is viewed to be desirable in continuing education. Key dichotomies evident here include, short term versus long term programming, and liberal academic versus vocational curriculum. Further, I argue that this model produces a "revolving door" situation, in that students find the knowledge they receive is quickly outdated. Finally I will summarize the arguments of those who are resisting this individualistic, competitive, market-driven approach to education. It is widely recognized that the *status quo* is not an option, thus creative alternatives need to be presented to challenge the dominant corporate model.

ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

The Corporate Agenda in Our Society[1]

Since the early 1980s, we have witnessed a shift towards the political right wing in terms of economic and social policy, resulting in substantial government funding cutbacks to many social programmes. Briton (1996) provides an analysis of the "new right" attack on our social service system to make it conform to the market ideology. This ideology claims that social services are best maintained by the private sector that will allow them to adjust to free market forces, rather than being artificially regulated by the state. According to Briton, those among the "new right" identify issues they see as problematic in society and provide solutions that reflect their ideology. Beyond economic policy, this includes attacks on the provision of services and rights to discriminated populations ranging from women and aboriginal peoples, to gays, lesbians and immigrants, because such "special privileges" restrict the process of competition for individual success. They claim government social programmes and protective legislation interfere with the "natural" flow of the market economy. "These business rulers, currently facing the instability of extreme international debt and related Third World unrest, are

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[1] This is a brief overview to provide a context to changes in the academy. For a more thorough critique of this trend, I recommend Hart (1992), Menzies (1996), Noble (1995) and Saul (1995).

responding with unrelenting promotion of a global, corporate-controlled 'free trade' economy" (Bronson 1991:67).

It is ironic that the market is portrayed as having a life of its own that must not be fettered by government interference, yet the cultural diversity that has evolved along the way is seen as unnatural, requiring an artificial regulation of the people to ensure the natural progression of the market. The "new right" believes the self indulgence of the modern era, not right-wing economic policy, is the real culprit behind the social dislocation experienced today (Briton 1996).

This scenario can be bewildering for ordinary citizens. At the same time as people in many regions of the country experience increasing rates of chronic unemployment, the media reports on the prosperity of the Canadian economy as evidenced by the booming stock market and record bank profits. Menzies, identifying the growing sense of alienation between people and the economy that determines their security, states:

> The new economy promises to be less and less *our* economy--sustaining us all with jobs, livelihoods, leisure, and opportunities to participate, and simply a chance to live at peace with ourselves, our families, friends, and neighbours--because it is not grounded in the social environment of human communities, let alone the natural environment, with a finite sense of time and space. It is grounded instead in an entirely simulated environment: that of the corporate systems economy driven by global stock and bond markets and their constant appetite for profit margins (1996:13).

The corporate agenda does not just involve corporations. Saul (1995) cites a number of examples of how government has adopted the corporate ideology and language. The very notion of democracy is increasingly framed in economic terminology. Saul quotes a 1995 Canadian government foreign policy paper that states, "human rights tend to be best protected by those societies that are open to trade, financial flows, population movements, information and ideas about freedom and human dignity" (Saul 1995:60). Saul believes it is telling that "freedom" is tagged near the bottom of the list, as several dictatorships fulfil the first three criteria. Further, "freedom" has come to mean little more than the "absence of economic constraint", while "equality" is interpreted as promoting the opportunity to compete (Briton 1996:35).

To ensure that the corporatist climate is reflected throughout all sectors of society, corporations define their needs and priorities to other institutions within the ruling apparatus. Because of the wealth at stake, other institutions are increasingly eager to respond to their concerns quickly. Education is no exception.

Human Resource Development

The phrase "human resource" reflects the concerns I have with corporatist influences in education. I think it is necessary to consider the implications of a term that has slid so easily into the language of the 90s. It has even been

formalized in the name for the federal government department that administers unemployment benefits and coordinates retraining–"Human Resources and Development Canada". In economic terms, the word "resource" refers to anything that has the potential to be exploited for profit, such as forests, fish or coal. In this model, humans only exist within the context of profitability. Proponents of a market-driven perspective on education are quite explicit in their descriptions of people in economic terms. For example: "human resource inputs are shown to be consistently more important than capital...Our economic growth and productivity are becoming ever more dependent on human resources." (Carnevale 1992:49). David Smith echoes my own fears regarding the implications for education:

> "Establishment adult education speaks of *human resource development* in the same impersonal way engineers speak of water resource development or mineral resource development...The technocratic jargon disguises that development regularly works out as exploitation" (1995:74).

Grades and certificates are viewed in terms of how they can add value to this human resource.

This is not a new concept. Economic theories regarding "human capital" have for some time calculated the costs and benefits of educational investments in human resources to maximize employee productivity (Schultz 1971, Calzavera 1988). As I have stated, I do not hide the fact that I am deeply troubled by

defining human lives in terms of economic profit. Schultz criticizes those of us who share what he calls an "irrational moral queasiness" because people benefit by enjoying greater employment opportunities and higher wages through an efficient investment of human resource potential (1971:4). However, Onimode (1985) argues that in the real labour market the value of labour is more dependent upon the availability or scarcity of workers than the value of the individual's ability. In criticizing current practices of human resource development, Newman charges, "even a cursory examination of the literature on human resource development will show that those doing the thinking about training on behalf of management still regard workers as functions and not people, as anonymous units that go together to make up one particular kind of resource that is there to be calculatedly exploited along with the other, less animate resources" (1994:90-91).

Noble (1995) argues that resistance movements during the Industrial Revolution contributed to the eventual rise of the modern labour movement and progressive social legislation protecting workers' rights. However, the current predominance of market forces and erosion of social programmes is now undoing much of that progress labour has achieved in the past century. One explanation for the lack of resistance to this technological revolution in comparison with the past, is that people tend not to challenge the argument that restructuring is necessary to ensure competitiveness (Noble 1995). Thus, people get caught in dichotomized

thinking patterns. Those who argue against a change designed to improve economic competitiveness, are invariably accused of hindering progress and the competitive advantage needed to succeed. Collaborative models are not widely presented as an alternative to competitive models. Now, the language of competition is gaining wider prominence in the educational realm.

TRAINING HUMAN CAPITAL

The University Context

Budget cutbacks are placing increased pressures on the university to become more economically self-sufficient, thus administrators are looking for opportunities for the university to generate income by attracting support from the private sector (Newson and Buchbinder 1989). The Corporate Higher Education Forum brings together corporate executives and university presidents to work towards increased integration of corporate and university interests. (Newson and Buchbinder 1990). The university is redefining its priorities to provide the research and workforce needed by the private sector to ensure a competitive edge internationally (Newson and Buchbinder 1989, S. Smith 1991).

The emphasis on business interests within the academy has been called the "new agenda" by Newson and Buchbinder. "The 'new agenda' encourages university support of technological change and private sector development as the

dominant guiding vision of future higher education policy" (Newson and Buchbinder 1990:355). This is not just a two-way dialogue between university administrations and big business. These changes reflect the intersection of university, business and government policy among other "outside parties" such as granting agencies (Newson & Buchbinder 1990). This, I think, is an important point in the context of Dorothy Smith's (1987) concept of the "relations of ruling" in which institutions work with each other for their mutual interests. When I speak of a corporate agenda, I am not only describing direct private sector involvement in universities, but of an economic ideology that spans sectors in our society. Despite this intersection of institutions, the university still likes to think (or promote the image) that it stands alone, protected by "academic freedom". Yet, there is growing doubt about this autonomy: "While the universities ought to be centres of active independent public criticism, they tend instead to sit prudently under the protective veils of their own corporations...The universities, which ought to embody humanism, are instead obsessed by aligning themselves with specific market forces" (Saul 1995:70).

The corporate agenda claims to be assisting in the modernization of an outdated institution. The development of a wide array of liberal programmes during the expansion of the 1950s and 1960s reflected a democratization process that, critics argue, undermined the university's academic credibility (Newson and

Buchbinder 1988). Further, expansion was supported by substantial levels of government funding. As funding has declined, the resources needed to maintain former levels of diversity of research and teaching have diminished. The university has been called upon to re-examine its role in light of these economic constraints and the types of programmes that are desired in the current educational marketplace.

Universities are often criticized for not adequately producing the skilled labour force that the private sector demands (Jarvis 1985, Hart 1992), to ensure economic competitiveness. Edwards states, "A gap is perceived to have developed between the personnel needs of the labour market and the skills people require to enter/remain in that market. Bridging that gap has become a significant policy issue, in order that economic competitiveness within the global economy can be sustained" (1992:56). Hay and Basran refer to human capital theory when they explain how investment in this sector is believed to ensure national economic growth. This theory "focuses primarily on the economic benefits of increased investment in the area of education" (Hay and Basran 1991:36). Resource allocation to education is being calculated primarily in terms of the potential economic payback training provides.

Hart (1992) states that in such an economic model, the goals of society and economy are believed to be one and the same. The university is seen to be falling

behind in this shift. Thus, more private sector involvement is promoted to bring the university in line with "society". The fact that there are other elements in the makeup of "society" than economics is overlooked. There is political value in emphasizing retraining needs--if lack of skills is seen to be the problem, then the focus is placed on specific skills training instead of asking why the society is moving in a direction that is making so many people obsolete. Such an emphasis thwarts social analysis and critique.

Ensuring diversity within the workforce--including women, ethnic minorities, immigrants--is potentially seen to be a threat to competitiveness, because of the extra resources that are required to give these disadvantaged groups the opportunities they may need to be employed, such as improved access to education and affirmative action programmes (Hart 1992). This attitude ignores any sense of obligation to address the interests of all sectors of society. It also ignores the high level of education among women, by assuming it is their lack of qualifications that limit their advancement. Women are also perceived to be less capable at succeeding in science and technology (S. Smith 1991). Thus women, older women in particular, are streamed away from the very training programmes that government and the private sector promote as providing the best opportunities for employment security. Women who refuse to leave their communities, are seen as lacking the motivation needed to succeed (Robinson 1994). This assessment

ignores the very real reasons why these women are unwilling or unable to relocate.

Retraining programmes in Newfoundland following the collapse of the cod fishery have shown a lack of creativity in assisting women to find viable alternatives (Robinson 1994). Robinson found that employment counsellors decided what programmes were viable and what were not, and women were discouraged from applying for courses that did not have a clear employment goal as defined by the government. Thus, at issue is both what is taught and who has access to this education, and who is left out. Older people are not viewed as a good investment for training, especially women (Robinson 1994). They are not seen to have enough work years left in them to justify the "human capital" investment.

The retraining described by Robinson (1994) did not seem to be in the students' interests, from their own perspective. Shanahan (1992) and Edwards (1992) both see the retraining emphasis as a ruse to hide the real reasons for high unemployment. Rather than an undereducated population, it is economic policies and the "downsizing" of Canada's civil service and industrial sectors which have created chronic unemployment. Government and the corporate sector are understandably tempted to blame unemployment upon the unemployed themselves. People are told that they must retrain to keep up with the changing economic conditions. The assumption is that more education will fix current economic woes, both at an individual and national level. Hart (1992) notes that only 20% of the

unemployed lack employable skills. Thus, "unemployed people and public providers of education and training have become the 'scapegoats' for what is essentially a failure of economic policy" (Edwards 1992:57). As Overton's (1995) research on adult education policies in Newfoundland in the 1930s shows, casting such blame on the unemployed is not a new strategy. Overton contends that these adult education programmes acted as a form of social control reflecting government interests and undermining attempts among the unemployed to organise in seeking financial assistance from the state.

Funding Education

> "Conventional education and training institutions are being called upon to solve problems they were not originally designed to tackle and to do so with reduced fiscal capacity" (R. Miller 1994:353).

One of the most noticeable changes in universities over the past decade has been the change in the way universities are funded. Government cutbacks have prompted increasing student and private sector contributions to university budgets. I will now consider the implications of these changes.

Student Contribution:

The federal government states that since the Second World War, there has been a steady growth of public funding to post-secondary education, both through the establishment of research granting agencies like NSERC and SSHRC, as well

as through transfer payments to the provinces (at rates calculated in accordance with provincial populations). This funding now totals $8 billion annually, one half of the system's cost (HRDC 1994). The government sees its primary role in future educational policy as enhancing people's opportunities to improve their economic position. The government intends to move away from broad-based funding towards a "system of expanded student loans and restructured grants to individuals" (HRDC 1994:62). Loan schemes replace government responsibility to fund institutions directly, placing a heavier financial onus on the student. The government favours individual responsibility, stating that this structure encourages "mutual responsibility among Canadians for managing a greater share of their own social security" (HRDC 1994:63).

The rationale presented by the government for altering student loans is that the restructured loan programme will improve access to students by providing them with the financial assistance they need to pay for their education. "Clearly, it is politically appropriate to be demonstrating that access to the education system is open to everybody throughout their lives, so that an *appearance of egalitarianism occurs*" (Jarvis 1985:199, emphasis mine). However, Jarvis adds, "Those who are enabled to take advantage of educational provision are already the advantaged" (1985:213). If government stresses the need for post-secondary

education, then it cannot admit that this goal is beyond the reach of large sectors of the population.

I will leave it to the economists to study the more intricate financial implications of this move, but as a student, I am extremely troubled by the shift from broad-based to individualized funding and substantially higher tuition fees. Despite government assurances that restructured loan programmes for students will not reduce access, I think it is telling that they suggest the use of RRSPs for education (HRDC 1994). This assumes that the potential student is already in a financially secure enough position to have amassed enough RRSP equity to transfer to education. What are the long-term financial implications for middle-aged adults who spend their retirement savings on education at the same time as they are told that they should bear more responsibility for their own retirement income, given the shaky status of the Canada Pension Plan?

The Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education, in its "Green Paper" discussing proposed changes to universities in that province, identifies the increasing debt burden students face due to a combination of increased tuition, lower bursaries and limited availability of summer employment (NSCHE 1994). It fails to follow up on this by discussing its consequences for students' university access and participation.

The Federal Government uses the term "bootstrappers" to describe those workers who "are anxious to seize control of their economic destinies through training or higher education" (HRDC 1994:60). This reinforces the meritocratic myth that people succeed primarily by "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps", and those who do not succeed are those who lack this self-motivation. Jarvis asserts that educational participation is "not merely a matter of motive or intent by participants, but it is something that is clearly related to both the individual's position in the social system and also to his (sic) position in the life cycle" (1985:209-210). When the "appearance of egalitarianism" is illusory, it makes matters even worse for people. Very real barriers to people's participation are obscured if the assumption prevails that it is simply a matter of will that determines one's ability to attend university. Those who are unable to participate face not only the economic disadvantage of lacking the education they need to secure better employment, but must endure the perpetuation of stereotypes that they do not succeed because they choose not to make the effort. Furthermore, other barriers to access are hidden if financial cost is seen to be the only determinant in a person's participation in education.

I am also troubled by the assumption that financial cost is the best indicator of responsibility and commitment. Norrie (in Hobson and Locke 1995) believes "there should be no doubt" that rising tuition costs will make students more

responsible for their studies and universities more accountable for the quality of education they provide. Norrie implies that students are not currently taking their studies seriously--a very dismissive attitude to have towards students, in my opinion. He offers no data showing a link between the level of responsibility among students and the tuition they pay. I would argue that the opposite may occur. If students are forced to carry a profoundly heavier debtload, they will be pressured into seeking more employment, thereby reducing the time available for study. The Smith Report notes that over 25% of full-time students in 1990 work 10 to 30 hours or more per week (S.L. Smith 1991), but it does not follow up on the consequences of this for their academic achievement. To be told that loan repayment rates will be adjusted relative to wages earned when they do get a job, is small consolation when the interest is still accumulating on the loan, potentially limiting chances to get other loans and mortgages later. What about the adult student who may already have a heavy debt load through a mortgage, car loan, and children reaching university age? Those of affluent backgrounds who do not need student loans, upon graduation can have a $20,000-$40,000 advantage--money that could be invested in relocation, or a new business rather than paying off a student loan.

As for Norrie's second point, that universities will become more accountable to students, I confess I have my doubts. While it could be argued that

students gain more control by exerting their "purchasing power" to demand more student-friendly institutions, I doubt this will actually happen, in light of the corporate influence Newson and Buchbinder cite (1988, 1990). The process of making universities more "efficient" has centralized their management structures. Administration has grown in size and influence while faculty have become marginalized in the decision making process (Newson and Buchbinder 1988). Centralization of decision making makes universities less responsive to their marginal branches. In Nova Scotia, at the same time that government is withdrawing financial support, it calls for more direct government control over who is appointed to administrative boards in universities (St.F.X. Senate Ad Hoc Committee 1994). This runs counter to the idea that government, by reducing funding, is withdrawing from direct control over universities. External institutions like corporations and government are actually increasing their influence in universities, while most of those who are directly affected--educators, staff and students--are losing the levels of participation they once had.

Having universities compete for students who will be responsible for a larger chunk of the institutions' budgets is supposed to promote higher quality programming to attract students. However, the trend so far has been to strip down programmes to keep costs at a minimum; thus, we see the move towards cost-cutting measures such as more contract teaching positions, reduced support

services, and outdated learning resources. Universities see themselves increasingly in competition with private sector educational institutes, whose *raison d'etre* is to be profitable (Robinson 1994). However, private agencies are not subject to the same standards of quality control as public institutions. Robinson quotes women she interviewed who criticized private training programmes for their lack of support services, in contrast to the publicly funded community college that had counsellors to assist students with career, financial and personal concerns.

How can universities become more responsive to the concerns of students? Where are the mechanisms in the decision making process that ensure a significant student representation within this administrative framework? Increasing tuition will not make students more vocal in their demands for a good education if their time is spent worrying about money.

Corporate Contribution:

At the same time the government has called for increased research and development to enable Canada to grow economically, it has been cutting funding to the very institutions that fulfil this role--universities and their granting agencies. Private sector funding is rising to replace lost public funds, which in turn increases their influence on the types of research that are pursued (Newson and Buchbinder 1988). An example is the enactment of the controversial drug patent laws in the

late 1980s (Snider 1993). The government cooperated with pharmaceutical companies by giving them longer patent protection. In exchange, the companies would commit a percentage of their profits to research, thereby reducing the government's responsibility to fund university research. The problem with this is that the companies have more of a vested interest in what research gets done, and more importantly, what research does not get done.

The Smith Report sees private sector research funding as a vital component in ensuring the future health of universities, dismissing fears that private-sector funding will bias research objectives and results. However, when the Report presents its recommendations for continuing education, it explicitly encourages universities to respond to the "educational marketplace" by promoting short-term "industry" courses that would attract corporate support. It is telling that it is in continuing education where the marketplace ideology is most aggressively promoted. Elsewhere, the Report recommends the implementation of safeguards to ensure university autonomy, but with continuing education no safeguards are suggested. It is significant that the Report tells universities to *respond*, implying the universities have no role in *defining* the educational marketplace in which they are so profoundly involved. I now want to examine more closely these effects in the context of continuing education.

RETOOLING CONTINUING EDUCATION

Redefining the Purpose of Continuing Education

In most universities, extension departments and continuing education programmes have always been on the periphery (Welton 1987, D. Campbell 1984). As marginal sectors of the university, extension programmes are highly susceptible to the cutbacks that are now plaguing universities (Barton 1982). Centralization of power restricts the opportunities of peripheral sectors to protect their interests at the administrative level. Continuing education programmes are often misunderstood in the mainstream sectors of the university partly because many adult educators focus on teaching more than research and collegial development within the academy (Welton 1987).

> With one foot located along the periphery of the university and the other within the wider community, it is the CEU (continuing education unit) and continuing educators who provide a direct service--a goal of any university. However, being situated on this margin, it has a perceived and actual role of being less important within the mission of the university. It is unfortunate that this occurs because this 'front-line' aspect of an institution provides for many an opportunity for creative and innovative development (CAUCE 1991:49).

Continuing education departments have been targeted as prime sites for specific job retraining to improve their efficiency and profitability (S. Smith 1991). This is based on the assumption that they currently are costly and inefficient, despite the fact that these programmes often are financially self-sustaining (D.

Campbell 1984, CAUCE 1991, Cruikshank 1994b). Emphasizing profit generation limits these departments' ability to work at the grassroots level, since they must recover costs from clients (Cruikshank 1994b). In other words, those most in need of these services are also the least likely to be able to afford them. So much for helping the "bootstrappers".

CAUCE (1991) disputes the claim that part-time students are more expensive than full-timers. While admission and registration costs may be higher, these students are often cheaper in terms of instruction since most are enrolled in evening courses taught by sessionals who are paid one-fifth the salary of a tenure-track professor teaching a daytime course (CAUCE 1991). There is very little in the way of support service provision, and the part-time learner "is given lower institutional priority" because of the "quota game":

> It simply does not look good to tell government and the public that you cannot take any more full-time students and then turn around and take a lot of part-time students because they can be taught cheaply on the periphery. Indeed, depending on how costs are allocated, it can be demonstrated that many universities actually generate a profit on their CEU programs at the margin (CAUCE 1991:51).

As full-time education becomes increasingly expensive, continuing education will become even more important (CAUCE 1991). When I was studying through extension, part-time students could not apply for student loans unless we were enrolled in three courses--a difficult feat for those with jobs and children. Further,

other forms of economic assistance for part-time students, such as grants and scholarships, are almost non-existent. I fear for the part-time students if tuition costs rise in accordance with the federal government's proposed funding changes.

The Smith Report acknowledges that teaching ability overall is vastly undervalued in universities. Consequently, administrations and mainstream faculties are not always aware of what is happening in those programmes that are primarily engaged in teaching, reinforcing the assumption that they are ineffective--a perpetuation of their definition as "other". If they are not seen as really academic, it becomes easier to sell out such programmes---whether or not the "human resource" ideology is explicitly embraced within the departments. Recall my observations about sessional teachers in Chapter 3, that continuing education courses are often taught by sessionals with the implication being that this reduces quality. While I question the assumption that sessionals are, by definition, inferior teachers, it is significant that this perceived lack of quality is acceptable in continuing education. This loss is offset by the fact that sessionals can be paid low wages, and can easily be laid off. Sessionals have no power to challenge such decisions in a centralized power structure.

Some would argue that it is time for a redefinition of these programmes' priorities. However, which direction these priorities take is critical. "Adult education has now become a profession and must, by necessity, become more

entrepreneurial as it develops a business approach to program delivery" (Hass 1992:27). I question this assumption that professionalisation must be entrepreneurial. As I noted in Chapter 3, professionalisation in adult education has in the past emphasized academic credibility. Thus the focus is shifting from research and collegial development to a private sector ethic of market development. The Nova Scotia Green Paper echoes the Smith Report's recommendation that continuing education programmes become profit generators. The Green Paper promotes "modularization" of programmes that can be marketed and franchised (NSCHE 1994:10). The emphasis is on the development of marketable packages, not on the development of curricula and outreach strategies designed to enhance learning opportunities for nonmainstream students and programmes designed to reflect the interests of communities in which they work.

Extension staff who once were committed to social justice and community development issues, "have been reduced to entrepreneurs who simply market courses to two major target groups: (a) business and industry, and (b) anyone interested in self-improvement or recreation who can pay" (Cruikshank 1994a:37). Rising tuition costs are eroding the ability of many people to enroll in continuing education courses. As individual students fall by the wayside, the corporate clientele will have even greater influence in programme design. The focus shifts from community-based learning to profit generation (Cruikshank 1994b).

Corporate Pedagogy[2]

So far, I have examined the shift towards a corporate agenda and its impact upon continuing education programmes and students. I will now examine more closely what this shift means to the curriculum and teaching practices within continuing education. The key dichotomy here lies in defining the purpose of education as training workers versus educating critical thinkers. Many practices of corporate pedagogy perpetuate the problems of banking models of education.

As I have stated, continuing education programmes are seen as good sites for retraining the unemployed. Adult educators engaged in critical pedagogy have farther reaching goals than skills training--they see their classes as opportunities to empower people at the community (grassroots) level to identify and deal with problems collectively. Some argue that this vision of student-centred education is some flaky relic of the sixties that has no place in today's competitive marketplace (Nemiroff 1992).

Bowl (1992), in describing the growing financial stress placed on adult education programmes over the last decade notes that supporters of a vocational approach are "inclined to see liberal adult education as confined to a leisure interest in arts and the humanities" (Bowl 1992:199). The emphasis on liberal arts

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[2]Collins (1995).

education, as described in Chapter 3, is devalued here. To challenge this attitude, Allen (1996) cites student survey results that show there is a general agreement that a baccalaureate degree is a foundation for future education. Allen (1996) exposes the fallacy of the short-term retraining logic by providing government statistics that show low employment rates for graduates of such fast-track programmes. As Robinson (1994) notes in her interviews, women were dissuaded from long-term programmes--the very programmes that could produce the best chances for economic security.

I don't think I ever saw my part-time degree as a ticket to a good job, but rather as a foundation toward more specialized education later on. In contrast to the short-term emphasis on job retraining, the extension students I have known are not looking for a quick fix to their economic situation. If they were, they would probably be looking somewhere else. Many of the people I spoke to over the years also saw their degree as a stepping stone to later specialized training in such fields as psychology, social work and education. Earning a liberal arts degree through extension enables them to build upon this base, so that they will be ready to enroll in a more advanced programme when the opportunity arises. Those with clear career goals recognize that such goals are not to be achieved overnight.

Arts students in particular, often do not cite immediate job opportunities as their main motivation for attending the programme they are in. However,

increasingly people are trained to fulfil roles in the economy, not to participate as citizens in society. "When establishment adult education sets out to educate for change, the purpose is to help people adjust to change, not make changes" (David Smith 1995:74). In other words, people are not educated in such a way that empowers them to work towards social transformation that is in their own best interests. Rather they are taught simply to adapt to changes imposed upon them from the institutional level. Such training makes people fit into a structure that is actively alienating them.

> Within that framework, people become clerical or assembly-line workers; stripped of all identity and moral claim except that which relates to the skill needs (such as they are) of the new economy...what should be a debate between two moralities--one of people and human communities, the other of corporations and corporate economies--is silenced (Menzies 1996:16).

Hart (1992) fears that workers will lose their ability to formulate an understanding of their socio-economic location, thus defusing organised labour activity. The focus on "employer and production needs" undermines the potential of "education to bring about change in the workplace and the wider social context" (Hellyer and Schulman 1989:572). Opportunities for intellectual growth and analytical ability promoted in the traditional liberal education and critical models is lost.

Guinsberg expresses his doubts regarding the quality of the education that is being peddled:

> Though even the crassest of university administrators in the executive suites hesitate to plunge the entire institution headlong into an industrial productivity mentality, one need look no further than the tendency at most of our institutions toward enlarged class size, increased teaching loads, and reduced writing requirements to recognize the illusory notion that we can employ fewer and fewer resources to turn out the same number of graduates. Sure we *can*. What *kinds* of graduates will emerge from this 'more efficient' form of education is, of course, quite another question (Guinsberg 1996:68).

In 1966 Maslow warned against the objectives of efficiency, "that is, with implementing the greatest number of facts into the greatest possible number of children, with a minimum of time, expense and effort" (in Nemiroff 1992:32). Over twenty five years later, Shanahan is even more blunt in arguing that education is now evaluated in terms of "return on investment." The efficient provision of minimal education ensures maximum profit by "policy-makers...who can only think in terms of the immediate 'integration' of unemployed persons into 'mainstream society', in the crudest economic and political way, by the most instrumental of means and at the cheapest cost" (Shanahan 1992:27). Students are streamed into programmes that will ensure their viability in the workforce. Curriculum is influenced by the dichotomy of provider and receiver. Ignoring the different backgrounds and needs of the students, emphasis is placed only on what they are perceived to have in common--a lack of specific skills that would make them more attractive to employers.

Knowledge becomes a commodity (Bronson 1991). Courses are designed to ensure speedy delivery of the educational product. A pedagogy of efficiency sees the potential of technology as a more cost-effective means of service provision than employing qualified teachers (Cassin and Morgan 1992). I am reminded of a distance education technology demonstration I attended a few years ago. The person conducting the presentation emphasized the revenue potential of the technology, through the sale of the programmes to companies and other service providers. At this point, I began to wonder whether the programmes were being designed primarily to attract buyers rather than finding the best design to meet students' needs.

I am not arguing that we should turn our backs on the potential benefits of emerging information technologies to increase access to distance education opportunities for people who have no access to a campus. I do warn, however, that we must be extremely careful about *how* we use these tools. Lalita Ramdas, president of ICAE, reminded participants at Confintea V that we should beware the "arrogance to think that information adds up to knowledge."[3] Using technology in ways that simulate ineffective classroom practices of instruction, is not an effective use of the technology's potential. Further, there is a growing

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[3]Oral presentation at the session, "New information technologies: a key for adult learning?", Confintea V, Hamburg, July 16, 1997.

critical analysis among those working with marginalized groups, or who work in developing countries, who are acutely aware of how the technology reflects the culture from which it was developed. Hart warns against the "glorification of technology", reminding us to explore "the underlying *social relations* within whose context new technology was produced, and which this technology itself contains" (1992:13).

While I am suspicious of some "module-type" training packages, not all pre-packaged or correspondence courses are pedagogically inferior to an ideal of on-campus learning opportunities, as Jevons (1985) clearly reminds us. The resource materials that comprised the correspondence courses I took from the University of Waterloo were comprehensive and challenging. It was the combination of the material and the support services and instructor feedback that created a productive learning environment for me. Successful programmes like Waterloo's, show that creative educational alternatives can be developed using a variety of media. My concern is that the intense amount of work required to develop such programmes may be deemed economically unfeasible if profitability is given precedence over pedagogical effectiveness. What is done with the technology is key.

I was disheartened to read the federal government's attitude towards lifelong learning, as stated in their discussion paper outlining proposed changes to

employment insurance and education, entitled Improving Social Security in Canada. They see learning as, "fundamentally an individual task" (HRDC 1994:58). This negates any recognition of collective learning, or the social element of learning, such as the context of the institution, teachers, peers, and community. Adult education literature attempts to integrate a broad cross-section of society when defining the "typical" adult student in nonmainstream programmes. Diversity is expected and efforts are increasingly made to integrate the different needs and expectations of the clientele. Such efforts may exist more in theory than in practice, but I think the potential for flexibility exists in these programmes.

I am concerned that if a heavy emphasis is placed on short-term job-specific training, people will not have the flexibility to learn at their own pace and to balance the varying demands on their time. I think the pedagogical value of the flexibility provided by part-time programmes should be explored further. Excessive emphasis on efficiency can lead to programmes being designed to ensure profits rather than ensuring effective learning opportunities.

Language

A trend that I find particularly troubling in this climate, is the growing redefinition of words to legitimize programmes designed in the corporate interest. Hass notes that technological advances will shift the site of adult education from

the public to the private sector, adding, "There will be a shift from government power to societal power" (1992:33). I am puzzled about his wording here. Is the private sector "society"? It is not the definition of society that I subscribe to. I often see such programmes adopting the jargon of emancipatory education, divorcing the words completely from their original meaning.

"Needs assessment" in the field of adult education describes the process of evaluating the types of programmes needed by people in a community. However in the corporatist context, it now means what can be most successfully marketed. Pedagogical decisions are made in terms, not only of cost recovery, but of profit generation. An advertisement for a private training institute in St. John's specializing in computer and business training, claims that it "uses an integrated, holistic learning method that is unique in educational methodology."[4] By this it means that it provides flexible hours for learning and allows students to plan their schedule. Nowhere is it suggested that students have any influence over the content or style of the courses, just the timetable. In alternative pedagogies, words like "integrated" and "holistic" reflect programming commitments to ensure that the courses reflect students' stated needs and that the programmes fit within a larger social development framework.

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[4]"Special celebration day for local academy June 14." The Early Shopper, 1 (3), advertising insert for The Evening Telegram, June 10, 1996.

"Learner-centred approach", which in critical and feminist literature means assisting students to participate in social change, comes to mean nothing more than "individualized instruction" (Gaber-Katz and Horsman 1988:117). The Nova Scotia Green Paper, in describing the province's universities states, "Each institution is student-centred, with close attention to what and how value is added to the students" (NSCHE 1994:8). The focus is on how to increase the economic value of the human commodity, rather than operating in ways that reflect the expressed interests of the students themselves.

Revolving Doors

A curriculum defined by technological advances becomes obsolete as the technology ages. Information with a limited lifespan needs constant replacement and upgrading, thus students develop a "revolving door" relationship with education. In Chapter 3, I explain the concept of lifelong learning as defined by education theorists earlier this century--the continuous path of personal development and growth by ensuring access to educational opportunities throughout one's life. Compare this ideal to the federal government's definition: "This concept of Canadian workers updating, improving and upgrading the knowledge and know-how they bring to their jobs periodically throughout their careers is known as *lifelong or continuous learning*" (HRDC 1994:58). From this

perspective, the purpose of "lifelong learning" is linked primarily with the latest technology and the demands of the job market. To remain employable, a person must keep returning to school to learn new skills to replace old skills. This is not lifelong but disposable learning.

Training programmes profit from this planned obsolescence by only providing people with skills that constantly require updating. Of course, this is desirable in a market model--providing a consumable product that needs replacement. Rapidly emerging technologies are assisting this trend. For decades typewriters evolved with new features, but the keyboard remained essentially the same. A person did not need a training course to learn how to use a new typewriter. Each release of a new version of a major software package, however, heralds the arrival of new workshops and courses to help people figure them out. It is like changing the typewriter keyboard every time a new model comes out.[5]

Suzuki (1989) argues against emphasizing new technology in university education because of rapid obsolescence. Such skills training has the potential to reduce one's flexibility. The NSCHE Green Paper (1994) recommends that each university in Nova Scotia should become more specialized and cut back on the broad base of disciplines they currently offer. The student union at St.F.X does

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[5] Thanks to Sue Adams for this analogy.

not support this loss of diversity:

> For today's student, it is not only important to specialize in one particular area, but also to ensure that you are able to diversify in order to meet the needs of a constantly changing job market. This need for diversity leads me to question the Overview's attempt to limit certain basic programs to certain Universities. The idea that an Engineering student, for example, has no need for anything apart from training in his or her particular field is certainly not correct. (St.F.X. Student Union 1994:1-2)

Hart (1992) uses the term "flexilives" when describing the situation people face in the endless cycle of skills upgrading that we are told is now a permanent feature of our worklives. This built-in obsolescence is particularly unhealthy for people who are told that their past experiences and knowledge are no longer relevant (Hart 1992). The sense of cumulative or developmental learning is lost. The process is not rooted in the intellectual growth of a person but in the transfer of bits of information to improve the efficiency of the human resource. Allen (1996) calls this recurring process of skills upgrading, "recycling". He critiques short-term technical and community college programmes for not providing general knowledge to assist in employment potential. Allen cites federal and British Columbia statistics that show many graduates from these programmes subsequently enroll in different programmes because they are unable to find work with their initial training, or because it has become outdated. He distinguishes this process from a mainstream university education which he sees as being developmental.

One may begin to feel like this is a conspiracy--keep people so busy retraining that they don't have time to critique the economic policies that have placed them on this educational and employment hamster wheel. I know this sounds paranoid, but as Menzies notes, "the manufacturing of official reality doesn't require deliberate choices to include or exclude or anything resembling a conspiracy. It operates at a systemic level, through the centrality of experts in official discourse and expert-framing institutions" (Menzies 1996:15). When institutions are finely coordinated, conspiratorial plots are not necessary, These institutions ensure that there is no time left for critical thinking among the citizenry to challenge their interests.

Students need jobs when they graduate, and no doubt they want an education that will help them find employment. There are increasing demands from students to make their university education more relevant to the job market, particularly given the heavy debt loads they may acquire during their programmes. However, I question to what degree this technological emphasis is responding to student demand. I would like to see a needs assessment process that respects people's needs and interests as a basis for determining appropriate training. I think it is important to provide a diversified education that enhances their skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and interacting with people--the very skills that are claimed to be offered by liberal arts education. However, the dichotomy that

has developed, emphasizing skills training versus the "leisure" pursuit of liberal arts, obscures the employment potential of the latter and does not challenge the efficiency of the former. This dichotomy, liberal versus vocational, is central to this debate and, as such, requires deeper analysis.

The Liberal Arts Versus Vocational Training Dichotomy

Traditionally universities like St.F.X. have offered students the opportunity to pursue a "liberal arts" education--the acquisition of knowledge in a variety of disciplines. However, due to rising tuition costs and an increasingly competitive job market, any educational programmes that do not directly develop a marketable skill are increasingly called upon to justify their existence. Newson and Buchbinder (1990) note that corporate influence on university operation will prompt the academy to change some of its "cherished traditions". This term makes those roles that are not market driven sound quaint but out of touch with contemporary society, and illustrates a conflict of identity within the university--the "sacred grove" that provides a safe place to pursue research no matter how arcane (but then how safe was it really) versus the rationalistic model of it being a partner with the corporate world.

Hart explains that this shift from liberal arts education's emphasis on critical intellectual development to career development began in the 1970s. Hart sees the

long standing liberal/vocational debate as "a value conflict between an economistic or technocratic orientation towards society and its problems, and a critical, or democratic orientation based on the values of a populist, grassroots participation of people in social, political, and economic institutions" (1992:60). Liberal education has always had some sort of vocational utility, and has experienced an ongoing struggle in balancing academic and utilitarian goals. The emphasis on market interests has "neutralized" this tension (Hart 1992). The Smith Report, emphasizing the need for more specialized training, strongly recommends that science courses become compulsory for arts students. It does not state that arts courses should be compulsory for science students. Thus, we continue to produce scientists who are unaware of the social context within which they conduct their research. "What the corporatist approach seems to miss is the simple role of higher education--to teach thought. A student who graduates with mechanistic skills and none of the habits of thought has not been educated" (Saul 1995:71). Educating people about economic structures, power relations, and their participation within them are important for producing a well-informed worker. Vocational training can be almost useless outside its "vocation" (Allen 1996).

Briton, in identifying a shift from the cultural purpose of education to its commodification, argues that this trend challenges the primary vision that has driven adult education for much of this century: "as adult and higher education

programmes become more and more commodified, they become less and less cultural practices: they cease to draw upon the history and traditions that invest life with meaning to foster learning" (1996:42). In an upswing of economic ideology, cultural values can easily get lost. There is a need for a reflexive practice to survive these ideological swings between the dichotomized extremes.

Allen (1996) challenges the argument that a liberal arts degree is less advantageous in terms of employment and income than technical training. He argues that the image of the B.A. educated burger flipper is a myth that needs to be dispelled. It is encouraging to hear an economist defending liberal arts education, however I am concerned that he bases his defense on employment opportunities and earning power. If the impressive statistical support that he presents portrayed a different story, would he be jumping on the technical/vocational bandwagon as well? Integral to my argument is that this obsession with employment and economic advantage to Canada's prosperity ignores a whole other dimension to the meaning of education. The basic assumption that education is and should be evaluated in economic terms is not challenged in Allen's article. Letting the marketplace determine what types of education should exist ignores the liberal and critical ethics of personal and intellectual development to create better citizens.

Traditional liberal arts programmes have been justifiably critiqued in that the society they were preparing their students for was defined by white affluent males. The liberal tradition has tended to be elitist and accessible to only a few. The past few decades have seen a considerable broadening of the curriculum and the emergence of disciplines and programmes that provide alternatives to the "dead white European male" model. However, Bronson argues that such movements towards more social responsiveness to the educational needs of working class, ethnic and racial minorities, are merely "concessions made by the ruling elite in relatively secure, expansionist periods, when they feel that the cost of social stability are preferable to the hazards of organized working class protest" (Bronson 1991:66). In other words, in the times of growth and prosperity, new academic disciplines were allowed to develop, but these are now a luxury our economy can no longer afford. "Despite a vocabulary of reflection, participation, and empowerment, underlying structures of a hierarchial and unequitable organization and distribution remain intact" (Hart 1992:63). In the rush to retool the curriculum in favour of corporatist interests, any aspiration liberal arts education had towards "empowerment" and social preparation, is devalued or lost (Newman 1994). When education becomes redefined in terms of its vocational applicability, we must remain cognisant of who defines what learning has employment potential.

In the midst of this atmosphere, the personal academic motivations that extend beyond employment potential are overlooked. Even when financial goals are the initial motivating factor, the appreciation broadens once enrolled. Campbell (1994) found that some of the women she interviewed were drawn to child psychology courses, not as a result of career plans, but due to the fact that they were mothers. They expressed enthusiasm for these courses at a very personal level, just as I enjoyed studying mediæval music.

Competition reinforces dichotomies rather than creating an environment for developing alternatives. I recently spoke with a man who had attended an art school in New York. He was impressed with the variety of programmes at his school and what this means for the students. There are three main groups of students attending this institution: engineers and architects, graphic designers, and fine arts students. As he sees it, such a mix gives the artists an opportunity to critique the work of the engineers and architects to foster a greater appreciation for the human relevance for their work. It exposes the arts students to this more industrial world with which they would not otherwise normally associate, giving them ideas for the practical application of their learning in the job market. The significance of this is the recognition that maintaining diversity can help us move beyond the dichotomy, without the loss of employment potential.

The Individual versus Collective Dichotomy

A major concern with the restructuring of continuing education programmes is the separation of individuals from their social context. Too many programmes that emphasize retraining for the job market do not consider what that job market is in the local area. How "community development" is defined is a key issue--it can range from a primarily economic focus to collective action dealing with a wide range of social problems, such as environmental degradation and substance abuse. An approach that recognizes this range often makes good economic sense, but there is not a clearly defined capitalist profit motive. I am concerned about the effects the corporate agenda can have on the programmes whose *raison d'etre* is to work with people at the community level--the very people whose lives are often being disrupted by corporate downsizing, outsourcing, and automation. People are finding that their communities are becoming increasingly irrelevant in the global economy and need to have the support and inspiration to create viable alternatives.

Cruikshank (1997) identifies two models that continuing and extension programmes have followed. The "Cambridge" model simply offers university evening courses to individuals, while the "Wisconsin" model incorporates a broader social development mandate. She cites the extension departments of

St.F.X. and Memorial as examples of this model. When a market approach is implemented in continuing education, programmes are designed to ensure the greatest profit--a shift, Cruikshank argues that "completely negates the values upon which these departments were built" (1997:6). She blames this shift squarely on the economic and government policies responding to economic globalisation which, "is built on the ideology of unfettered competition, privatisation of public sectors and unrestricted trade" (Cruikshank 1997:2).

Alexander criticizes adult education programmes that reflect an "adjustment mentality" because, "they attempt to do patchwork to meet the short-term goals of raising the disadvantaged to middle-class standards rather than attacking the causes of being disadvantaged" (1997:185). Such work subverts any opportunity for social critique. Guinsberg argues that "effectiveness cannot be separated from an ethical view of lifelong learning: beneficial to society, collaborative rather than competitive, and keeping faith with our highest professional values" (1996:67). In my opinion, continuing education programmes that are committed to community development, need to study how they can enhance people's opportunities for living and working within their communities. By focusing on highly individualistic objectives of retraining and competition, the corporate agenda threatens the foundation of continuing education as a site for university and community cooperation.

ALTERNATIVES

Cruikshank (1994b) recognizes that many of the current changes are not simply results of funding cutbacks, but reflect the growing corporate ideology in the university. The focus of universities as public institutions appears to be changing significantly without consultation or input from the public it is supposed to serve. Newson and Buchbinder fear that corporate interests may adversely affect the social role of the university. "We favour a conception of the university actively serving and reflecting wider social interests than the narrower interests of the private business sector" (1990: 356). The role of adult education and continuing education is increasingly dictated by this broader shift (Hart 1992). Targeting narrow segments of society who can afford to pay for these courses magnifies class differences and subverts the social, community outreach role of continuing education programmes (Cruikshank 1994b). Educators active in social change are critical of programmes that only maintain the status quo. It is increasingly difficult to advocate social change within a framework that expects cooperation in the delivery of "marketable" programmes. Many of these educators are now leaving the field in frustration. This leaves fewer voices of resistance, thus further accelerating the pace of change (Cruikshank 1994b). Therefore, this is now a critical time to develop strategies to challenge the negative impacts of the corporate agenda, both in university continuing education programmes, and in society.

Encouraging Critical Thinkers

The ruling apparatus works hard to ensure that legitimated forms of knowledge production and dissemination reflect the interests of those who form the ruling apparatus. The goals of critical pedagogy appear at odds with the job training emphasis, critical employees are not what are required. Adult educators, particularly those engaged in social action, can find themselves at odds with the university that employs them. Critical and feminist pedagogies are extremely marginal in universities (Gore 1993). This is particularly the case when a university has embraced the marketing approach that it believes is "neutral" (Cruikshank 1991). If educators fail to resist the "new right" then people will not learn how to critique these forces. It is "imperative that educators begin to view adult and higher education as a cultural practice and draw upon its critical potential before the possibility of generating a critique completely disappears" (Briton 1996:43).

There is a strong belief among these educators of the need to integrate the lived knowledge of adult students into their job training, rather than ignoring who they are, what they know, and where they want to live and work. Shiva (1993) calls the imposition of dominant knowledge forms "monocultures of the mind". To challenge these monocultures, Menzies echoes Shiva's call for an "insurrection of subjugated knowledge"--knowledge that people bring to and accumulate through

work and living (Menzies 1996:140). Menzies adds, "This shared knowledge is a powerful force that we can use to begin redefining the corporate agenda on globalization and the new economy" (1996:140).

Enabling students to understand critically the economy in which they participate runs counter to the "commodification of knowledge" where the emphasis is on ensuring conformity and consistency in the transfer of information that will ensure the predictability of workers' activities. Dorothy Smith (1990a) describes how agreed upon forms of dominant knowledge construction are necessary to ensure effective communication and participation between ruling institutions. Critical knowledge is unpredictable--subversive yet vital to the survival of those outside the relations of ruling. Millard (1987) believes that North American universities could learn much from the participatory models being employed by Latin American and African adult educators.

Challenging Dichotomies

An important step in developing alternatives to the corporatist model is to situate students and the knowledge they acquire within the context of the communities where they live. My goal is to break the dichotomy of individual versus community by restoring the critically thinking individual within a social context.

A key role of extension is to bring the wealth of the university's resources to the community, to those who were denied access at another time. I will openly acknowledge that my concerns related to university involvement in the community reflect my own "small town" bias, having spent almost my entire life in small communities. My experiences have reaffirmed my commitment to promote the survival of small communities. What commitment is there to maintain educational opportunities in regions where there are few opportunities to develop linkages with the largescale private sector? Will the quest for private sector funds involve an abandonment of a commitment to serving rural communities that lack a large industrial base or middle management clientele towards whom to sell educational packages? To tell people to pack up and move to greener pastures without encouraging them to explore options that enable them to stay is, in my view, extremely irresponsible of government, the private sector, and also of universities who turn their backs on their own stated commitments to community service.

In St.F.X.'s Strategic Plan released in 1991, the "spirit of the Antigonish Movement" is evoked as it explicitly makes a commitment to the University's involvement in community development (St.F.X. 1991). The future of this role within continuing education could be threatened if tuition costs continue to increase substantially, placing universities' programmes beyond the reach of most people in the community. However, I am encouraged by recent activities by the Extension

Department promoting community development in this region, through their staff of field workers. The Extension Department's director is proud of the fact that St.F.X. is one of the only universities in North America that continues to have an active staff of fieldworkers.

A friend, concerned about my marginal employment status, told me I should be applying for "good" jobs wherever they may be available. I was told to take advantage of the fact that, as a single person, I could relocate to a more lucrative region than the Maritimes. After giving this some thought, I countered that because I am single with no dependents, I am not forced to crisscross the country seeking work to support a family. I have been fortunate to have jobs I enjoy in a community that is important to me, and where I want to make a contribution. The importance of community, or the social impact of the work I do has little value in a narrow economic sense. The individualization process does not recognize the value of a person's contribution to community. However, I would argue that it should. Making small communities sustainable by keeping people there does have a very important socio-economic value.

One major limitation to adult and continuing education departments' abilities to develop programmes that reflect community needs is linked to the marketing approach currently employed and the narrow segment of society it attracts (Alexander 1997). Alexander believes that those programmes most actively

engaged with communities are grassroots projects that are free from institutional constraints experienced by academic programmes: "Many adult education institutions would do well to learn from their meagrely funded, yet highly responsive, community-based counterparts" (Alexander 1997:188). This is not to suggest that continuing education departments simply copy the work that community groups are doing, but that they adopt the strategies community groups use to deliver the knowledge and skills universities have to offer. For example, Alexander (1997) emphasizes the importance of "bridging programmes" for women to enable them to take the first steps to gain access to appropriate job training and academic education.

It must be stressed that such co-operative ventures between the university and the community need to be driven by the needs the communities identify themselves. Recalling Overton's (1995) warning that adult education programmes can be used as a form of state-sponsored social control, when I speak of the value of university involvement in community development, I am not referring to those programmes that originate as government initiatives. Mayo and Craig argue that the long-term success of community empowerment is "formulated within the framework of alternative critical, economic, social and political perspectives" (1995:10). Activists for social change must challenge repressive institutions rather than adapt to them. Cruikshank (1997) believes that communities and extension

departments must unite in challenging the corporatist ideology that is threatening both extension departments and social programmes. She shares Alexander's belief that extension departments need to form stronger links with community groups to enhance their mutual survival by critiquing and strategizing to combat the negative impact of corporatism.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have argued that the "corporate agenda" as identified by Newson and Buchbinder (1988) has the potential to undermine the social goals of continuing education that have been established this century. The emphasis on retraining as it is currently developing appears to reflect more the interests of corporations and government than the interests of the people for whom the programmes are purportedly designed. Dichotomized thinking places value only on education that has a clearly defined employment objective. Such a narrow focus only assists people in conforming to the existing structures that are a major cause of the inequalities that people are attempting to overcome. Critical educators are calling for an education that develops people's critical thinking abilities to enable them to construct alternatives to these systems of inequality.

I acknowledge the fact that people need an education that helps them secure employment, but I believe it can be done in ways that respect the students' interests and learning potential, and the communities in which they live. Welton criticizes the university's participation in a process that caters only to a small, high-tech elite, and asks, "Who are we, as adult educators, choosing to serve" (1987:56)? To enable citizens to become active participants in grassroots movements to strengthen their communities, they need access to the types of education that would develop their critical awareness. This goal is promoted by alternative educators, whose work I will explore in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENT AS RESOURCEFUL HUMAN

> We, as university adult educators, must become actively involved in helping to raise and support alternate visions of society. If we fail to do so, we abdicate our responsibilities to the communities in which we live.
>
> -- Jane Cruikshank

My research has been driven by a belief in the potential for socially aware university education that enables people to find an alternative vision to the dehumanizing processes of global economics and banking education models. However, these alternative visions are not above critique themselves. To challenge repressive models, we need a fuller understanding of our own practices to ensure that we do not replicate the very models of dominance that we seek to break down (Hale 1986, Lather 1991). Transformative learning cannot be cut off from the communities in which students live. The classroom has the potential to be a site for meaningful social change and community development. Universities, drawing inspiration from the history of community participation, can provide support to communities struggling to survive.

Dichotomized thinking about alternative pedagogies versus traditional teaching models can blind critical and feminist teachers to some of the shortcomings of their own pedagogy, as well as overlooking other effective practices. While I support the potential of transformative learning experiences, I am suspicious of the literature that does not acknowledge the problems that

invariably arise from this dynamic process. Reading as a student, I am interested in the ways students' voices are filtered through teachers and researchers. There is a danger, here, of constructing student stereotypes that fail to recognize their diversity, as well as the diversity of the classroom context.

This chapter is comprised of three major sections. First, I will provide some background on critical and feminist pedagogies. The central focus of this discussion will be the profound influence of the works of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, followed by feminist critiques of his work. I will next critically examine key concepts of critical and feminist pedagogies, revealing a number of underlying assumptions and dichotomies that affect students' learning experiences. These concepts include: participation, the use of experiential learning, language, and the creation of a "safe" learning environment. Central to these concepts is the issue of power relations between teachers and students.

My intent is not to provide detailed analyses of specific teaching practices, but to examine the rationale behind these concepts. The material is largely created and read by teachers or researchers--not by the students. Reading from a student's standpoint, I identify areas where there is a danger of emancipatory goals becoming undermined by repressive assumptions. Despite efforts to challenge assumptions, I argue that an "essential student" continues to persist in the literature.

I will consider how individual empowerment can be transformed into social action in the community. To address the individualist versus collectivist dichotomy, as outlined in Chapter 4, we must remember that individuals exist within communities, and communities comprise of individuals who each possess complex and conflicting interests and needs. While this sounds simplistic, it is surprising how often it is overlooked. There is a need for educational opportunities that balance individual and collective goals.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGIES

As I have stated earlier, I am focusing on Paulo Freire's contribution to critical pedagogy, although I recognize that his work alone does not represent the extent of this field. I am intrigued by Freire's work because of its resilience over the past three decades. I am interested in the links between Freirean and feminist pedagogy, the field that has spoken most directly to my own developing understanding of learning.

Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Freire (1989) argues that oppression is perpetuated through the dehumanization of people. The "oppressed" are objectified, and are seen as less human than the oppressor, encouraging competition and domination at the expense

of others. Dehumanization is perpetuated through formal knowledge production (education and media, for example) to reinforce the dominant ideology that justifies inequality. The "banking method" of education (the one-way depositing of information from the teacher to the student) minimizes creativity by instilling the dominant values of the oppressors uncritically into the minds of the people. Students have no opportunity to question the validity of the material or to reorganize it in ways that are relevant to their own conditions. This process is inherently dehumanizing whether the teacher is aware of it or not (Freire 1989).

The oppressed are told that their suffering is caused by their own individual failure to succeed. We regularly hear the accusation that people are unemployed because they did not pursue adequate education, and are a burden to society due to this personal failing. Recall my observation about the term "bootstrappers" in Chapter 4. The only model the oppressed see when they attempt to improve their conditions is to adopt the role of the oppressor, since they do not have the opportunity to critique their position in its social context and seek other alternatives (Freire, 1989). Freire, like Dorothy Smith (1987) argues that the oppressed are in the best position to identify their oppression and find ways of overcoming it. "Conscientização" or conscientization--the development of a critical consciousness--enables people to understand the social base of their oppression and to begin to work towards restoring their humanity. The oppressors must also be educated to

see how their actions dehumanize all people including themselves. Freire does not explain clearly what he means when he speaks of people becoming more fully human other than to say that emancipation and the eradication of alienation are the goals (1989).

From this theoretical social analysis, Freire has developed a radical pedagogy to ignite the process of conscientization and social action. Freire's "problem posing" model of education is based upon communication in which the teacher and the students learn from each other[1]. "Whereas banking education anaesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality...(enabling) the *emergence* of conscious and *critical intervention* in reality" (1989:68)[2]. The teacher reorganizes and reoffers the students' concerns in the form of problems, to help students understand their situation as a problematic which can be analysed. Dialogue is a necessary element in liberatory pedagogy in that the process of "naming" problems is essential to

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[1]One of the simplest and clearest texts on implementing Freirean strategies I have read is Hope and Timmel (1984). This is a handbook designed from the experiences of community development workers in Africa. Educators in both non-formal and formal academic settings in the North can learn much from the participatory strategies developed in the South.

[2] This quote is a clear example of Freire's essentialist concepts of reality for which he has often been criticized. In his recent book, Pedagogy of Hope (1994), Freire begins to reflect on the essentialisms and dichotomies that he constructed in Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

liberation. As Kidd and Kumar ((1981) remind us, discussion does not necessarily equal dialogue--more that talking about issues, dialogue involves collective negotiation that leads to transformative action. Praxis, the cycle of reflection and action, is necessary to engage in transformative dialogue--the ongoing social interaction whereby participants develop a critical analysis of their lives and the world around them.

Freire has been widely and legitimately criticized for his sometimes sweeping universalizations and for his belief in inherent human values, as evidenced by his use of the terms "the oppressed" and "humanity". Unfortunately, some of these criticisms have obscured the importance and impact of his work. Freire's work has challenged our ideas about education and our own complicity in the oppression exerted by our society's dominant institutions and forms of knowledge construction. The universalistic tone of his work invites others to produce applied strategies from his basic theories. "We can stay with Freire or against Freire, but not without Freire" (Torres 1993:140).[3]

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[3]It is not my intent here to present a detailed analysis of Freire's work that would merely replicate several excellent summaries and analyses. For more in-depth discussions of his theories, I recommend McLaren and Leonard, eds. (1993), Allman (1994), and hooks (1994).

The Feminist Response[4]

Weiler identifies a number of dichotomies in Freire's work, such as humanization versus dehumanization and oppressed versus oppressor. "As universal goals, these ideals do not address the specificity of peoples' lives; they do not directly analyze the contradictions between conflicting oppressed groups or the ways in which a single individual can experience oppression in one sphere while being privileged or oppressive in another" (Weiler 1991:450). In other words, dualisms can obscure complex social relations. Ellsworth (1989) warns that such concepts used in critical pedagogy are actually "repressive myths" which, if left unexamined, can perpetuate inequality. Weiler recommends "coalition building" as a way for groups to identify common goals so they can work collectively to move beyond the dichotomizations that isolate marginalized groups.

Ellsworth (1989) also supports this strategy, as she witnessed her students overcome a struggle surrounding issues of conflicting minority interests by engaging in such coalition building. Ellsworth recounts the events that arose from a course she taught on racism. She erroneously assumed that all the students who participated in her course shared common beliefs in confronting racism. She did

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[4]Feminist pedagogy is not simply an outgrowth of Freirean pedagogy. It has its own historical development within the context of the women's movement and feminist theory. However, for the purposes of this research, I am focusing on the material that develops a dialogue with Freire.

not anticipate the diversity of interests that the students represented. Many resisted certain anti-racist strategies that, they argued, hindered their efforts to overcome oppression against other marginalized groups. Once the students realized how their different forms of oppression had similar sources, they were able to form coalitions to negotiate strategies that were mutually respectful of each group's interests.

Ellsworth's article is a powerful and honest account of just how difficult it is to work with the emotional and complex issues linked to oppression. Citing the postmodern critique of Western concepts of universal truths, she argues that critical pedagogy's dependence upon rationalistic assumptions can perpetuate inequality rather than challenge it. However, I am concerned about assumptions and generalizations she makes about critical pedagogy in that she appears to lump all critical pedagogy together. As the oppressed do not form a cohesive whole, neither do the oppressors. She draws most of her criticism from the work of Henry Giroux, with occasional references to Paulo Freire. This does not represent the extent of critical pedagogy work in 1989, yet she expands her specific criticisms of Giroux to sweeping statements about critical pedagogy, without explaining why she chose Giroux to represent the whole field.

Freire's ideas have had a profound influence on the work of bell hooks (1994). His theories of oppression and resistance enabled her to develop a

meaningful cycle of praxis in her own work. She recognizes the sexism and rationalism that many other feminists have identified in Freire's work. However, she believes that the trap of dichotomized thinking prevents many from benefiting from the importance of Freire's message. By labelling him as sexist, he is lumped in with the rest of the patriarchal canon that has been deemed irrelevant to the interests and needs of women. She believes that her feminist approach to constructing and deconstructing knowledge enables her to extract from Freire's work what is really important to her, without succumbing to its limitations.

Weiler (1991) also adapts Freire's ideas within feminist pedagogy. Despite her criticisms of Freire, Weiler sees that Freirean and feminist pedagogies share common ideas and goals regarding oppression, conscientization and social change. Both Freire and Weiler emphasize that all learning must be grounded in its social context. Thus their work, too, must be adapted to fit the context in which it is applied. With this brief theoretical background, I will now examine some of the strategies that are intended to help students contextualize abstract theory and challenge the oppressive practices of dominant forms of education.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

> The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy.
>
> – bell hooks

In the two previous chapters, "Student as Other" and "Student as Human Resource", I identify a number of problems with traditional and corporatist educational models that, I argue, reflect the biases and interests of those who design or fund programmes, rather than serve the interests of students. Students may face restrictive practices derived from assumptions that continuing education programmes and part-time students are somehow inferior to "real" mainstream university education. In cases where economics assume a role of primacy over pedagogy, we see courses and programmes designed to reflect corporate employment demands or economic models of profit generation. People engaged in alternative pedagogies have developed strategies to enable students to participate in educational programming that reflects their own interests and not the agenda of someone else. When I began studying feminist theories, I was excited to see how I could develop social theories to analyse my environment. This stood in stark contrast to courses in which professors "taught" us about social inequality at the macro level, but who offered us no opportunity to understand it within the context of our own lives, dismissing our individual stories as statistically insignificant.

I have selected strategies that, I believe, distinguish alternative pedagogies from the mainstream. The purpose of these strategies is to engage students in a more empowering learning experience that enables them to question and challenge dominant ideology and structural inequality in ways that are personally relevant, as well as understand how knowledge is constructed, both by others and by themselves. I am focusing on five main issues: participation, experience, language, safe spaces and power.

Participation refers to the dynamic classroom interaction among students and their teacher that provides an alternative to traditional lectures. The student is no longer a passive recipient of objectified knowledge, but participates in the creation of new knowledge. Participation can also include students' involvement in course design. The experiences students bring with them to the classroom are often analysed and theorized, enabling students to recognize and validate their own wealth of knowledge. Participation and expressions of experience are mediated by language. A major adjustment students face is the acquisition of the academic discourse. Alternative pedagogies challenge the dominant discourse by deconstructing language usage. Issues of safety are particularly important to feminist teachers who argue for the need to create a learning environment where students can feel comfortable in sharing their experiences and explore their developing conscientization. The underlying common thread throughout all of these

issues is power--how it is negotiated and how it plays itself out both explicitly and implicitly in the classroom.

I have experienced these strategies as a student in a feminist classroom and have seen how they can be both empowering and repressive. My critique is not intended to dismiss their potential, but to highlight opportunities for their improvement from a student's perspective. Further, most of the literature on feminist pedagogy relates to full-time, on-campus programming. Where relevant, I expand on the themes to integrate concerns of particular importance to nonmainstream students.

Participation

Active participation of students in the learning process is a mainstay of alternative pedagogies (Gore 1993). Unlike banking models that impose knowledge reflecting dominant interests, here there is a genuine attempt to integrate the needs identified by all participants involved. This is an important step in enabling students to understand knowledge and how it is produced. "An educational method, which relies only on lectures by experts, followed by questions and answers, is making a statement about where one expects to find the solutions to problems. Dividing people into groups of three to share their ideas and then arranging a climate of genuine listening when each has a chance to share in the

whole group, affirms the value of the wisdom of ordinary people in quite a different way" (Hope and Timmel 1984:5).

As I discussed earlier, programmes designed in the interests of technology or economic efficiency can remain blind to the needs of students. If people do not see that an education programme has any relevance to their lives, it is no surprise that we continue to hear their cynical response to government retraining initiatives: "training for what?". A participatory model seeks to be more directly responsive to students needs by inviting student participation in programme and curricular design. A participatory process also claims to be adaptable to different learning needs and styles by recognizing that everyone does not learn the same way. Hopefully, it is more responsive to people with different learning abilities, although I have found little if any mention of this in the literature describing university continuing education. This is a key gap considering that a significant percentage of the clientele may very well have had undiagnosed learning disabilities that hindered their educational progress as youths in mainstream programmes.

While I support participatory education, I can see problems in the literature arising from the constructed dichotomy between participatory and banking methodologies in research and curriculum design. Participatory methods attempt to overcome the problem of marginalization by ensuring that people's voices are

heard and integrated into the process (Kirby and McKenna 1989, Maguire 1987). However, if the students participate only to see these misrepresented by those in positions of power, they can become dismissive of the process, feeling more "ripped off" than if they had not been invited in the first place.

Hale (1986), drawing from Dorothy Smith's work, shows how hidden assumptions subvert the intentions of projects, perpetuating the very problems they were designed to solve. Questions regarding who is invited to participate and how that participation is organized are vitally important. She cites a "grassroots" development project in rural India that sought local input in the design of an education programme for women. Although a participatory approach sought village level input, the only people who actually participated were the elite males of the village--not the women for whom the training was to be provided. The women, denied access to the design process, were later accused of being ignorant or resistant when they failed to attend classes. By only addressing the interests of the men, women's priorities were ignored. The project also did not recognize the impediments preventing women's attendance, such as childcare and other labour activities. Not only were the women unable to benefit from this project, their situation worsened through the reinforcement of negative stereotypes labelling them as incompetent and apathetic. Such accusations hide both the structural barriers and methodological errors within the project that silenced the women (Hale 1986).

Fisher (1987) describes a feminist class that included a number of "returning women"--adult students attending school after an extended absence. Fisher outlines her "learner-centred approach" that enables students to participate in evaluation. At the start of the term, her students determined their objectives for the course and how they wanted their progress to be assessed. She does not explain her role in the process, leaving the impression there is a high level of academic competence among returning students, since they appear able to make these assessments effectively at the beginning of term. She does not note the feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem that might be felt by women returning to an intimidating academic setting such as I described in Chapter 3 (P. Campbell 1994, Grogin 1991), some of whom are escaping abusive domestic situations (Tarule 1988). How can a student who has low expectations of her own abilities effectively set up challenging guidelines without input from the teacher? What are the strategies that might facilitate this self-assessment? Some of the most rewarding learning experiences in which I produced my best work resulted from assignments that I was initially convinced I could not accomplish. Fisher, by challenging the imposition of external criteria within the university that have traditionally favoured white males, establishes a dichotomy to present an opposite model in which the teacher's role is removed. I believe that strategies for participation need to take into consideration issues of safety and power dynamics between professors and

students, both of which will be discussed later in this chapter. By presenting a rigid dichotomy between banking and participatory models of education, the varying degrees to which participation may or may not exist can become obscured.

Not only is participation important in the design and learning process, it is a key element in the subsequent course evaluation process as well. In assessing the effectiveness of their teaching strategies, educators often present quotes from students' evaluation forms (Wilkinson and Heyworth 1985, Fisher 1987, Brookes 1992). I do not discredit these data entirely, but I am concerned about how representative they are of the students' real opinions of the pedagogy. Course evaluation forms shape voices in certain ways through their design and administration. In my experience, these forms are often presented with no prior warning, inhibiting students' opportunity to think thoroughly about their response, and are completed, in class, with a time limit of 10-15 minutes. They normally consist of quantitative questions that force students to answer in certain ways, with a few of inches space at the bottom, "How would you improve this course?" Anonymity is assured, but what about small seminars where handwriting or expressive styles are more noticeable than in a lecture course of 100? Guarantees of fairness and anonymity are not always enough to evoke honesty from the students. We may feel paranoia that stems from a very real awareness of our dependent position as students.

When I administered a series of student evaluations for an academic department, several students expressed concern about anonymity, even when it appeared to *me* not to be an issue, as these were graduating students in a large class, until I remembered my own apprehensions when I filled out such forms. I also became aware of what I might say before handing out the forms that could affect the results. Are factors such as the timing of the evaluation considered when the results are analysed and appropriated for research purposes? I am also wary of collecting data for one purpose and using them for another without reflecting on the implications. Course evaluations invite suggestions to improve that particular course. They are not presented to the students as tools for gathering data for other research. I was never told that what I said in a course evaluation might someday represent my understanding and assessment of the effectiveness of a pedagogical theory described in a professor's subsequent research.

Learning about critical and feminist pedagogy improved my participation as a student because I learned *how* I was learning. Past educational experiences made more sense to me, and I could see why some pedagogical practices worked while others did not. It revealed the underlying power imbalances, and what were appropriate actions for a teacher. This complex process of learning is something that cannot be conveyed easily on a standardized form.

Experience

An important aspect of student participation in a feminist classroom is the shared analysis of personal experiences. Abstract concepts can often be better understood by people if they can relate them to their own lives. The process of theorizing experiences can enable students to participate more fully in the learning process, by discovering the links between personal and global issues. Like Freire's conscientization, Weiler believes the goal of the feminist theorist and teacher is to make "students themselves theorists of their own lives by interrogating and analyzing their own experience" (1991:462). This provides a stepping stone, like the "points of entry" described by Smith (1987), towards understanding the wider context of social relations. By engaging in a praxis-based model of reflection and action, students learn to see their participation or marginalization in the structures that organize their lives. Teachers also must constantly critically re-examine their own perspectives and assumptions. The experiences adult students shared in the classroom through my years of extension were important to my learning--I enjoyed and learned from many of their stories, and was frustrated (as indeed they were) when a professor dismissed the validity of their stories.

Fisher (1987) emphasizes the importance of incorporating the life experiences returning women bring to the classroom, and how these experiences can be used to develop a better understanding of the broader issues being studied.

This is similar to Freire's efforts to design curricula through dialogue with the students. Fisher sees the classroom as a potential source of support for returning women who, as a result of their conscientization, are becoming more alienated from their former lives and communities and from others who have not reached this level of awareness.

Fisher recognizes the importance of developing a sense of trust between the students. In describing various formal and informal class activities, she notes, "These collaborative, social experiences make possible friendly exchange with other enlightened women who share their emerging concerns and values" (1987:91). I am troubled by her hierarchical categorization of her students as "enlightened", compared to people outside who, by implication, are "unenlightened". She does not pursue the implications of the women's alienation from their communities as a consequence of their developing critical awareness. She implies that the classroom environment she has created is a solution to the problem of their alienation from the "unenlightened" community. Elsewhere in the article, Fisher alludes to the resistance of younger students to the presence of the returning women in the classroom. The little disjunctures between her positive portrayal of the camaraderie in her class and these brief references to discontent point to underlying classroom dynamics that she does not pursue. I suggest she is forcing a sense of unity in her analysis for the sake of forwarding her argument.

As a contextually-based model, one might assume experiential learning would escape the charge of essentialism. However, in critiquing the role of experience in liberatory education, Fuss (1989) warns that it can indeed become essentialising if it is not brought back to the theoretical level. Throughout most of her book Essentially Speaking, Fuss calls for a re-evaluation of essentialism to draw from it what can still be useful. As I discussed in Chapter 2, the rush towards constructionism has led people to forget what theoretical value may still exist in essentialist concepts. In her concluding chapter, however, Fuss appears to contradict much of her earlier thesis by arguing against the use of experience in the classroom because it is inherently essentialist. She claims that hierarchies develop in the classroom where those who have experience in an issue silence those who do not through their "authority of experience": "I am always struck by the way in which introjections of experiential truths into classroom debates dead-end the discussion" (Fuss 1989:117). This statement surprises me, as her language suggests experience is invariably an invasion in the classroom. Discussion could very well be stifled if experiences were greeted by her in this way. Experience, rather than being framed as a "truth", should be valued as a perspective--another angle from which to view complex issues.

Fuss uses only examples of marginalized groups dominating classes. My first question when reading the scenario presented by Fuss was, "Where is the

teacher in this situation?" I would not blame essentialism in what I read in Fuss, but the misuse of the pedagogical intent of introducing experience into the classroom. In her critique of Fuss, hooks (1994) articulates precisely many of my concerns. Challenging the inevitable essentialisms of experiential sharing in the classroom, hooks states that simply dismissing experience as essentialist negates its very purpose--"to deepen discussion" (1994:86). Pedagogical practices must be employed to ensure that such essentialist dichotomies do not develop. It appears as if Fuss resents the intrusion of information that may challenge her own curriculum. In response, hooks states:

> I welcome that knowledge because it will enhance our learning...if my knowledge is limited, and if someone else brings a combination of facts and experience, then I humble myself and respectfully learn from those who bring this great gift. I can do this without negating the position of authority professors have, since fundamentally I believe that combining the analytical and experiential is a richer way of knowing (1994:89).

She describes her practices with experiential learning as a way to "help create a communal awareness of the diversity of our experiences and provides a limited sense of the experiences that may inform how we think and what we say." (hooks 1994:84). Praxis enables the students to broaden the context of their experiences, and to learn from each other.

Sharing experiences is intended to invite discussion, if handled in ways that do not create "hierarchies of truth", by remembering that the purpose of using

personal ideas and events is to understand them in a social context. They can also help students understand abstract theories better by having an example that has significance to them. Brookes notes that students "enjoy relating academic material to themselves" (1992:50). Something that on the surface may appear to be obscure, may become clear when contextualized at a personal level, assisting the students to determine the relevance of the material for themselves.

Lessons can also be learned from one's lack of experience, inviting questions about people's location in society that has separated them from such opportunities or experiences. Brookes argues that the role of the teacher is to help the student "ascertain what is missing...to recognize patterns and themes" (1992:40). One can respect the validity of a person's experience without pronouncing it as a universal truth. Fuss does not acknowledge the pedagogical practices that contextualize expressions of experience in class. Many pedagogical scholars acknowledge the potential for some of the problems Fuss discusses, but they do not argue that experience is the problem. They look for ways to make it more effective (Ellsworth 1989, Ettinger 1994, Adams and Emery 1994).

Mohanty (1991) asserts that the use of experience is political not essentialist. Examining different perspectives assists us in understanding the range and fluidity of power relations. Once again, the praxis model enables us to critique these changes from our different perspectives. Time is needed to solidify and

unite, but as power shifts, reflection and redefinition are necessary to respond to changes. Too much emphasis on fluidity undermines political agency. It is in the interests of those in control to keep opposition fragmented. The process of appeasing some groups and turning others against each other by emphasizing difference, inhibits a recognition of shared oppression (Mohanty 1991).

One danger that should not be overlooked in experiential learning is that a burden can be placed on those with the "authority of experience". A student may be identified as representative of a group or issue, whereby the onus is placed on that person to educate others (Ettinger 1994). I recall one night course I attended where there was one black woman--the only member of a visible minority in the class. She was normally rather quiet in class, yet, whenever the teacher discussed issues of race, he regularly sought her input. Thus, he not only forced from her a level of participation that she normally did not offer, this participation was restricted to the topic of race because he identified her as *the* person in the class who could provide information. Ettinger (1994) calls this the "Pocahantas paradigm", evoking the American folk tale about the indigenous woman Pocahantas, who protects the white man she loves, John Smith, "from the more threatening elements among her own people." Smith is protected from attack, not by a revision of his own attitudes and actions, but by her intervention. This is an

example of the recurring dynamic in which minorities are obliged to comfort those in dominant positions who may feel anxious about being confronted by the privilege they hold at the expense of others. A person with power, faced with the consequences of that privilege, often responds by accusing the "other" of making him or her feel personally responsible for systemic inequalities--"guilt is a convenient way to claim powerlessness in the face of responsibility" (Ettinger 1994:54). Breaking this paradigm opens the way for people of privilege to examine openly how they benefit from and participate in everyday acts of oppression, and how they can act to overcome such imbalances.

Those representing minority or oppressed groups can also find themselves being expected to be a teacher. Far from forcing one's agenda on the rest of the students, as Fuss asserts, some students may be treated like a "case study" or teacher against their own will or interests. There is a fine balance to be maintained here--enabling people to voice their experiences and raise awareness against being expected to do the work of educating others about their oppression.

Language

Studying our experiences in society is important, but so are the experiences of our learning process. The language we use affects the ways we are able to define our experiences and participate in theoretical discussions. As we struggle,

as students, to find a new voice to articulate our growing conscientization, it is easy to adopt the language of the professor or theorist who is offering us new ideas. As I developed critically, I became aware I was using a new language which was both empowering and alienating. This language was tangible evidence of my learning, but I had an uneasy feeling that something was not quite right.

One of the first articles I read on pedagogy that resonated with me, was due to its format of intertwining the voices of a student and a teacher (Lewis and Simon 1986). It is the student's writing that has the most impact. It is more immediate and "honest" to me, while the teacher's style is more burdened in academe. This leads me to question what happens to students' voices when they are interpreted by the teachers, and are not given their own unadulterated space. Further, what happens to students' own voices when they adopt the trappings of academic discourse?

Students face a dichotomy between academic language and local language. Adopting a theoretical and abstract language can alienate us from old friends and family as we come to be identified with the perceived snobbery of academe. Freire (in Shor and Freire 1987), addressing the issue of local language usage versus the language of "intellectuals", states that intellectual concepts such as "ideology" have evolved over a long time and cannot simply be cast aside. However, he also encourages the recognition of local metaphors and parables which can operate in

tandem with intellectual concepts. Thus the dichotomy can be overcome by the reflexive process of blending languages to expand rather than to silence someone by giving more legitimacy to one voice over another.

Alternative language usage, as seen in the work of contemporary feminist, critical and postmodern theorists, challenges the dominant academic language that forces a unitary voice on a multitude of perspectives and experiences. Yet there continues to be a pull towards conformity in these alternative models. Conformity is necessary to some degree to enable us to understand each other. However, it does shape our voices in certain ways. Sometimes words of liberation can be as personally limiting as the words of the oppressors. Reflexivity can assist us in understanding the meaning of the words we use. By being explicit and cognisant of how we use words, we can challenge the appropriation of our language by other groups, like "student-centred" to describe nothing more than a flexible timetable.

When I re-read my undergraduate thesis, I recognize immediately the words and phrases that belong to my supervisor. They convey important concepts, but sometimes they jar in my head because they are her words and not mine. I notice that my best work in that document comes through in my own words. I had to go through a process of distancing myself from some of the literature that had a major impact early in my own work, so that I could sort out what were my own words and beliefs, and what I was simply "parroting" from others. Some terms I adopted

were important for me when I came to understand their meaning and importance to my work. Recently, I have found myself removing some of the words of my teachers that no longer quite fit within my language--the pedagogical purpose of their use has been accomplished and now they seem to be a template that I have outgrown. I am reminded of the little stickers that my mother put on the piano keys to teach me piano scales--once my fingers learned which key was which, the stickers became redundant. I am trying to reclaim the fluidity of my own language without losing the integrity of the theories I am working with.

Part of the emancipatory process is seeing how our thinking is changing. Language is often the most visible sign of this development. We can take more control of that development by ensuring we are not simply appropriating the words of others, but are developing a language of our own conscious choosing.

Safe Spaces

The level of comfort or discomfort students feel with the language of the classroom is one element of the larger issue of safety. Participation and the willingness to share personal experiences in a classroom setting are also linked closely with one's feeling of safety. This is a key goal in feminist pedagogy--the creation of a refuge in a hostile academic environment. It is premised on the belief that the level of comfort a student feels affects the learning process. As dominant

models of education have promoted "objectified" knowledge that merely reflects the interests of those in power, anyone who does not identify with that dominant culture can be made to feel unwelcome and is discouraged from presenting a challenge (Smith 1987). Through the strategies I have already discussed, as well as other ethical and sensitive classroom practices, feminist teachers hope to establish a level of trust and safety in the classroom that will facilitate effective dialogue and learning.

However, the creation of a safe space can be affected by dichotomized thinking that presents a liberatory classroom as providing an opposite model to a hierarchial classroom. The creation of a safe place sometimes assumes that all students are marginalized and that they need a safe place to make sense of their oppression. Ellsworth (1989) describes how the feeling of trust often did not exist in her class, making it not a safe place to talk for many of her students. Trust has to be earned through conscious effort. It is not enough to assume common interests will lead to an open trustful environment. Freire often does not consider the problems that arise due to multiple layers of oppression, privilege, and experience, and how these affect the level of comfort felt by the students.

In a feminist classroom, safety may be addressed in reference to gender, but potentially to the exclusion of race (Ellsworth 1989, Ng 1994), ability or sexual orientation (Gardner, Dean and McKaig 1989).The question that arises in my mind

is, how might safe spaces differ between younger and older students? I have heard adult students express anxiety about being the only "old" person in a class full of young undergraduates--they feel like they are treading on the young peoples' "turf". This is added to the performance anxiety of having been away from school for years, fearing that they have lost their study skills and memorization ability. Such feelings all play on their experience of the dichotomies in which they are caught: mainstream and non-mainstream, extension and on-campus, adult and young. I would like to see more research conducted on issues of privilege and marginalization based on age differences of students, particularly considering the widening age diversity in university classrooms today.

Students who represent the identity of the oppressor may feel that this alternative classroom is not a safe place for them as they feel guilty or defensive when they are told of their privilege and how it oppresses others (MacIntyre 1987, James 1994, Ng 1994). Ettinger (1994) calls the privileged students in her class "People Lacking an Agenda (PLAs)." However, I argue that they do have an agenda, implicitly or explicitly, to remain comfortable and not deal with issues that challenge their privilege. "Incorporating anti-sexism/racism into our daily practice is by definition unsafe and uncomfortable, because they involve a serious (and frequently threatening) effort to interrogate our privilege as well as our powerlessness" (Ng 1994:44-45). By overemphasizing the need for a warm

environment, such reflexive analysis may be thwarted. Learning can be enhanced by challenging people in a way that encourages reflection rather than defensiveness. James observes, "If students become uncomfortable or angry as they learn about the mechanisms in our society that have privileged and/or disadvantaged them, and about their role in maintaining this situation, this may well be the very crucial starting point of a self-reflective journey" (1994:50).

Recalling my discussion of "rosy representations" in Chapter 2, the purpose of emphasizing the warmth and friendship in a feminist classroom, I think, is to reaffirm and legitimize the positive goals of feminist teaching. There is a role for fostering an environment that increases confidence among students to explore challenging issues, but it is not an end in itself. The bonding phase of group actions, by affirming the positive, is good as long as potential problems or diverse opinions are not glossed over.

Power

Participation, experience, language and safety in the classroom are all closely linked to underlying issues of power. The very structure of the mainstream university imposes authority on the teacher, and students have been conditioned to defer to this authority. Critical and feminist teachers want to challenge this hierarchical structure, and attempt to break down the authority of the teacher to

create a more equitable relationship between the two groups. Hart (1992) calls for "an education which is oriented towards cooperative relations among the participants' needs to create moral environments which touch the deep structure of non-hierarchical, egalitarian relations" (1992:195).

However, some of these attempts merely mask the power imbalance, rather than work with it. Again, the trap of dichotomies lures some people into thinking that the only way to combat the rigid hierarchical structure of the traditional university setting, is to revoke the teacher's power and ensure the classroom is a truly egalitarian setting. Mumford (1985) challenges the assumption that we can simply toss out the idea of hierarchy--the teacher must show that she knows what she is teaching. A more realistic way to deal with the imbalance is to analyse it, describe its implications explicitly, and attempt to work with or through it.

Nancy Miller (1985) describes the uncertainty she felt in relinquishing the power that is an integral element to a teacher's identity. This has led her to explore "how to create a critical identity which understands the discourses of mastery without succumbing to their seductions. For seduced, we are simply the old slaves, or worse, the new masters" (1985:198). Gardner, Dean and McKaig add:

> the goals and dynamics of (a feminist classroom) are to encourage nonhierarchical, mutually supportive, and empowering modes of thought and behavior. However, the patterns of interaction that

> emerge often conflict with this ideology. This schism is intricately tied to how students and faculty members respond to differences that often reinforce patriarchal values rather than those commonly associated with feminism (1989:64).

As much as feminist teachers may shy away from hierarchical models, they still must function within an institution that defines, to a large degree, the power they have over students. Some teachers now realize that, rather than simply abandoning their authority, they need to accept and utilize the power they have in ways that are ethical and respectful of the students' interests (Mumford 1985). Ellsworth (1989) is concerned that uncritical uses of terms like "student empowerment" and "dialogue" give the illusion of a nonhierarchical classroom environment which ignores the very real power imbalance between teacher and student, and between the students themselves. We need to recognize how these imbalances exist and find ways to work with them.

Kelly's strategy for dealing with the power imbalance is for the teacher to state her or his framework explicitly and then engage in an open debate with the students (Brookes and Kelly 1989). The struggles that may arise from this process are beneficial, Kelly adds, since it is through struggle that students gain empowerment. It is not something given by the teacher, as is implied in the work of Freire. While I agree that shifting the balance of power is not a simple matter, I am troubled by the adversarial tone of her approach. I question how willing

students are to initiate such a struggle, given that most students go through many years of being taught to defer to the authority of the teacher. I fear the ones who are most disempowered may be the least likely to "struggle" for their voice until the situation reaches an intolerable level. Those representing the more powerful groups of society are much more likely to engage in such a power struggle (Gardner, Dean and McKaig 1989, James 1994, Ng 1994).

Lewis recounts her experiences in a graduate classroom, where the women were made to feel extremely uncomfortable by the actions and language of some of the men. The women did not challenge the classroom dynamic until the situation reached a crisis point (Lewis and Simon 1986). I was struck by the self-critical, disempowered language used by these female graduate students, who I thought would have more confidence to assert their position than, say, an undergraduate, or an adult student returning to school for the first time in years. While these students did eventually achieve a more equitable balance of power, I believe that such negotiation should be achieved without students having to endure the intense levels of pain and self-doubt as expressed by Lewis and her colleagues. Do not assume that a warm, collegial atmosphere (such as that described by Fisher 1987) will always work, but also do not assume that students will take the initiative to fight for the position they desire.

Most discussions of power in the classroom are based on the assumption that the teacher always has a great deal more authority than the student. This dichotomy of powerful teacher versus powerless student, can obscure more complex and diffuse sites of power. MacIntyre (1987), James (1994) and Ng (1994) each provide examples of where their authority as teachers was undermined because of their gender and/or racial identity. In each of these cases, white, middle class, male students publicly attacked the teachers' practices and curriculum. These challenges included submissions of formal complaints to the administration. James experienced a mixture of power and marginalization as a black male. He noticed a gender-based pattern to this marginalization:

> White females are more likely to talk of being intimidated and feeling uncomfortable, males accuse me of being biased, defensive...It seems that males, White males in particular, are quite clear about the power and privilege accorded to them by race...(females) understand that in our male oriented society, while I might have male privilege they have race privilege...my power and privilege as a Black male educator must be seen in relation to how Black males are socially constructed in today's Canada (James 1994:51).

Ng, as a woman and as a member of a visible minority, was doubly discredited. Not only was her teaching challenged, she was ridiculed personally. One white male's threats of legal action, because he felt marginalized in Ng's class, led to the administration pressuring Ng to alter her curriculum and teaching techniques--the Pocahantas paradigm in action. This shows an impressive (I use

the phrase sarcastically) response to a student's concerns, when one thinks of the many marginalized students who get nowhere complaining about the discomfort or discrimination they feel in their classes. Not only did this student feel that he had the authority to disrupt the class, threaten the professor and challenge the administration, he was listened to, reinforcing the fact that he *did* have the power to behave this way and subvert standard complaint procedures.

In relation to non-mainstream students, discussions of power issues in the classroom often overlook the implications of the age of the students. Women extension students I have met often express that they should have the same rights as mainstream students, but they feel they do not have the power to assert their rights. Based on my own experience and discussions with professors, adult students are often more willing to speak up in class to question or challenge the teacher than younger students more recently trained in docility. There may be authority at some level accorded by age. However, this authority is often undermined by insecurities about returning to school in middle age or long-term low academic self-esteem (Campbell 1994). Power dynamics in the class can become more complex with age differences--between younger and older students, older students and younger professors. As I stated earlier, Fisher (1987) briefly notes a level of distrust between younger and older students, and sets up a

dichotomy by assuming antagonism between them. Does this assumption express itself through an implicit preference for older students in her class interactions? If so, it is no wonder that younger students would feel resentful.

One adult student I spoke with recalled a discussion with her daughter who was a full-time student at another university. When this woman expressed her enthusiasm for her night courses, her daughter replied, "I hope you aren't one of those 'keener' mature students." The adult students were perceived by the younger students to be troublesome since they talked more, showed more enthusiasm and engaged in debate with the professor, making the trained docile younger students appear disinterested by contrast. In classes with a wide range of age groups, I often see that the younger students appear more afraid to ask questions than the older students. Also, they may be more accustomed to holding positions of some authority elsewhere in their lives--in their careers, as parents, as community leaders--that accords them the authority to speak in a public setting.

I recall a political science course taught by a young professor that was attended by several people in their 50s and 60s. These students had witnessed many of the events in Canadian political history that the professor was now teaching us out of a book. The professor was visibly uncomfortable at times when the students would speak up and recount their personal experiences surrounding these events. Once he accepted the fact that these students could and would

challenge his knowledge, he began to realize how their input could be useful in the class. Someone who has the potential to question the professor's knowledge can be silenced by an authoritarian teacher, or can addressed in a way that encourages mutual respect among all participants.

The authority of age differs by gender. Beyond a certain age, males' authority tends to be sustained to a greater degree than for females. I recall two school teachers in my home community who were taking night courses together to upgrade their certification. The man was in his mid-40s, the woman in her early 50s. Often the same people in the community who admired the man for his ambition, thought the woman was wasting her time, or worse, was seeking academic prestige for selfish purposes.

The Essential Student

To conclude this section, I want to restate the importance of acknowledging the diversity represented by students, particularly among non-mainstream students. Many of the problems I have already discussed thus far are related, at least in part, to essentialist assumptions about the student clientele who appear to remain constant in time and space. In previous chapters, I have critiqued essentialist definitions that portray nonmainstream students as being inferior to mainstream students, or as human resources who lack skills necessary to contribute to our

economy. In critical and feminist pedagogies that emphasize the importance of recognizing the diversity of their clientele, essentializing definitions are particularly troubling. Not only do students reflect the wide diversity in our society overall, people's behaviour and responses are affected by time and the conditions in which they live.

Radical pedagogical writing describes the experiences of committed teachers in energetic or challenging settings. They do not usually write about the courses they found to be tedious. Students do respond to the "mood" or commitment of the teacher and/or institution they experience at any given time. The people with whom I studied in night school often commented that seeing a professor make an extra effort to overcome the limitations of extension (for example, providing extra learning resources and holding "office hours" before class) increased our desire to work harder. I remember losing interest in a course when it became evident the professor had lost interest in teaching it. This situation can be magnified for part-time students, since their whole educational commitment at that time may centre on only one or two courses.

To what extent do teachers force their own participatory ideal? Sometimes we must accept that a group of students just isn't going to react in the ways that the teacher has experienced before, thus requiring alternate strategies. To react against the banking model, we may feel stuck in the dichotomy of clinging to the

opposite extreme. The demonized "lecture mode" is not seen as an option even when it may actually have pedagogical potential for the group one is working with. I am also concerned about this literature's common neglect of the wider context of the university. The feminist literature I have read mostly recounts experiences in small class settings, however, the economic constraints facing universities are contributing to larger class sizes that make labour intensive participatory learning models extremely challenging. How might empowering models of learning be applied in a class of 200 students or in a distance education package? By maintaining the lecture/participatory dichotomy, the development of creative ways of dealing with large classes or other programme formats is thwarted. Gardner recognizes the danger of this dichotomy:

> The more I contemplated what a "truly feminist" classroom environment might entail, the more my thoughts began to mirror the dualistic thinking so accurately described by Lorde (1984). For example, if professional authority and expertise were emphasized in the traditional classroom, then these qualities would be devalued or absent in a "truly feminist" classroom. Instead of being *the* source of knowledge and socially distant, I would become a peer and facilitator of knowledge (Gardner, Dean and McKaig, 1989:65).

The shortcomings of feminist pedagogy may not be addressed in such a debate. Weiler believes the goal of the feminist theorist and teacher is to make "students themselves theorists of their own lives by interrogating and analyzing their own experience" (1991:462). I would add that teachers must also learn and relearn their

own assumptions from their contact with students, and must critically re-examine their own perspectives.

A "participatory" class can become almost as restrictive as a traditional lecture model, if one forgets the diversity of students over time and space and that what works one term may be inappropriate in another setting. Ellsworth's reconstruction of a course that was problematic taught me a great deal. Her problems began when she designed her course around her own assumptions of how she thought her students would think, and what their shared political objectives would be. I was impressed that she would admit publicly that her assumptions undermined the success of that course. It would be easy for others simply to accuse her of being an ineffective teacher. Her strategies had worked in other settings, but this mixture of students and timing relevant to other events on the campus created an atmosphere that required different strategies. We cannot assume that our political objectives are the same as those of our students. Social empowerment is a popular theme in much of the literature on literacy education. However, do we have the right to attempt to force an elderly man to achieve conscientization when his only motivation for requesting literacy tutoring is to be able to read stories to his grandchildren?[5] While it can be frustrating to witness

[5]Again, thanks to Sue Adams for this example.

oppressed people's expressions of powerlessness and despair, we must be reflexive in examining our own practices and agendas when we wish to intervene in situations that we define as oppressive.

I would like to see more articles like that of Ellsworth, not to challenge the validity of feminist pedagogy but to expand it, and to acknowledge that students do behave differently, unpredictably and dynamically in classroom situations. The first time I was in a feminist course and was told to keep a journal, it was initially an intimidating, but ultimately empowering process. A few years later, in another feminist course, I was again given a journal assignment. This time, due to a combination of factors, it was an onerous, frustrating and unproductive task for me. The journalling exercise alone was not what determined how much I learned, it was the context in which that assignment was given--the teacher, the course, my own frame of mind at the time--that contributed greatly to the effectiveness or futility of the exercise. Were I to write a paper about the pedagogical value of journals based on that first course, I would say dramatically different things than I would were I to write on that topic using only my experiences in that second course. Both would provide valuable information, but neither would represent a complete story. Researchers should be more forthcoming in acknowledging such limitations when they present their pedagogical success stories in the literature.

Participation, experience, language, safety, power and the essential student, as I have discussed them above, all exist within the walls of the classroom. However, the driving force behind emancipatory education is to enable students to see their world in ways that help them organise for social change. With that in mind, I now leave the classroom and contextualize the empowered student within the community. Integral to this process is an examination of the potential role of the university to assist the empowered students whom it has assisted to create.

COMMUNITY

> Educational theory is in dire need of a theory of community, and of educating for community, thus going beyond an analysis of educational practices which focus on transformative processes within the learner herself.
>
> -- Mechthild Hart

The traditional image of the university as an ivory tower needs to be challenged. By overcoming dichotomies such as individualist versus collectivist goals and the campus versus community, we can begin to examine what resources the university can contribute to the process of social change at the community level. There is much to be learned from the practices of adult and continuing education programmes of the past. However, their limitations must be taken into account when adapting such practices. As I argued in Chapter 4, the corporate model provides little encouragement for building sustainable communities--by

sustainable I mean communities that are able to thrive by integrating the economic, social, environmental and cultural needs of the population. Therefore, we need to focus on alternative practices that recall the community commitment of the past, as evidenced by the Antigonish Movement, but which incorporate emancipatory practices developed by critical and feminist thinkers that enable people to understand the global context of their local participation.

I began to discuss the tension between individual and social in Chapters 3 and 4, but return to it now to consider an individual's place in the community and how university and community can cooperate to enable people to engage in local level activism. This process must acknowledge the locations from which the students arrive when they come to school. Elsewhere, I discuss the danger students face in becoming alienated from their community as they develop intellectually and critically. All too often, alternative pedagogies forget the everyday experiences of the students outside of the classroom. We are taught to theorize our experience, but what do we do with this knowledge? I believe there is a role for the university's more active involvement within the greater community. The students themselves can be key players in this process to demystify the academy and introduce people to the types of support universities can provide in their development strategies.

The University in the Community

The alienation from community that a student may face that I described earlier in this chapter, arises partly from a community-based suspicion of the university. Sometimes the only contact many people in a community have with a university is occasional visits from researchers or images of academic "experts" interviewed in the media giving their pronouncements on a local situation. These rare contacts may only reinforce people's suspicions of the "ivory tower." This can be particularly evident in poor or marginalized communities where few people have access to university education. When social scientists come to conduct research in a community, they may be accused of doing work that merely reflects their own professional interests, or the interests of grant funders. "This preoccupation can result in the failure to carry out research of critical concern to the citizenry because such research does not fit the research agendas of the anthropology and sociology disciplines" (Neis 1992:329). There may be well founded suspicions at the community level that would need to be addressed to facilitate future university based co-operative projects.

Cruikshank (1996) notes that global economics are so pervasive that people feel powerless to effect change. While universities have jumped on the corporatist bandwagon by offering courses in international trade and economic relations, rarely do they provide courses that focus on "local politics and local economics

and in democratic decision making at the local level" (Cruikshank 1996:57) that would help people find ways to challenge corporate forces. The corporate emphasis attempts to make the individual more competitive, not more cooperative. Community economic strategies can attempt to overturn this competitive model to ensure community sustainability through cooperation. Instead of competing for limited resources, people can find ways of building a socio-economic resource base that benefits the community as a whole. Employing emancipatory pedagogical practices, and teaching extension courses on issues that can be seen every day at the local level can enable people to be more critically aware of how their communities operate both locally and within the larger global context. The problem is that community development, like continuing education, lacks academic credibility, thus universities continue to lag behind in their commitment to provide the resources to facilitate information sharing that would propel this process.

Models for Change

Hart (1992) calls for a revival of the community development commitment within the university. There is considerable debate as to what the role of community development is, but she cites a definition from Kenneth Haygood who worked with Memorial University's Extension Department. It is a combination of education and action with local groups to work toward collectively agreed upon

goals. Hart adds that this may be the "purest" form of adult education since it integrates self-reflective learning and problem solving at the social level. The collaborative skills that are developed enable students to work within the community.

Cruikshank (1994) recognizes that there are many community groups who have the expertise to engage in social activism whose activities should be supported by the resources universities can offer--such as education and research support. This is, after all, what the Coady Institute is engaged in by providing training and consultations with partner organisations throughout the Third World. There continues to be a belief in the university's role to provide a creative space for movements to develop theoretically and critically (Harding 1991). Such movements are comprised of individuals. Those individuals who attend emancipatory academic programmes, could break the individual versus collective dichotomy by sharing the strategies and analyses developed in the classroom with the community.

The Extension Department is now trying to revive the community development role more visibly. The "Ideas Fair" is a showcase of local economic initiatives to maintain services and employment in the area. The annual Topshee Conference each year invites activists and academics to discuss regional development issues. The conference in 1996 focused on alternative economics and reviving sustainable communities. There was also a collaboration between the local

women's association and the Extension Department, inviting women involved in community development from around Northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, to share ideas and "network". The Sisters of St. Martha at St.F.X. have built up a reputation for social action that began with their active involvement in the Antigonish Movement and continues today. While these are specifically community development projects, I believe that formal university education can play a greater in this process by educating people in ways that enable them to participate more effectively, through the development of theoretical ability to critique their social context, and the confidence to believe they can contribute. Also, through community cooperation, universities and professors can learn much from the relationship as they develop strategies that they wish to test out at the community level.

Again we must be careful about imposing too strict a dichotomy between individualist versus collectivist goals. After all, communities comprise of individuals. Nemiroff is wary of some critical educators who overemphasize the social, collective level of educating students at the expense of the individual student. "All relationships with the students seem to be theoretically mediated by a complex and inaccessibly articulated educational theory that could lend itself to overt political posturing by the teacher, to be taken up with gusto by those students who have been trained that 'doing well' in school consists of pleasing the teacher"

(Nemiroff 1992:67). While emphasis on the individual subverts collective potential, collective emphasis that hides the individual can become insensitive to individual needs.

By squaring off the dominant model against the critical model, the bits in between can get lost. In critical work, there is sometimes a tendency to overlook programmes that are not explicitly emancipatory or cutting edge, but which do serve an important role in students' social development. This can obscure the good work people are doing in places where critical and radical models would be viewed with suspicion, or not be understood. Weiler (1988) cites older women teachers who scoff at this "new" feminist pedagogy, arguing that what feminists are now claiming as a radical shift in education, they have been quietly doing for years in their classrooms. Such moderate programmes could be enhanced by encouraging students to explore ways in which their individual education can assist them in contributing to their community more effectively.

Bowl's survey of continuing education students in England reinforces his commitment to ensuring the availability of a liberal arts education for anyone who desires it. The liberatory potential here is not explicit, but he firmly believes that such programmes enable students to develop the "intellectual tools" to engage in social change. "There is a focus on praxis, if hardly revolutionary practice" (Bowl 1992:212). While these people may not topple Parliament tomorrow, they may

start thinking about their lives in new ways. This could encourage them to become active in community projects or municipal politics. Newman (1994) cites the work of Jane Thompson who taught academic disciplines in ways that were relevant to the lives of the working class women with whom she worked. Subjects like law, literature, sociology, politics and history were framed in ways that enabled women to theorize their experience at the community level.

Cruikshank (1989) argues that for extension departments to realize their potential for promoting community development, greater efforts should be made in developing professionals in this field to create effective strategies for participation. However, such activities should be carried out with acknowledgement of the dangers of co-option that always lurk when professional models are developed. A major problem Cruikshank sees is the lack of networking among community development practitioners, particularly women. She recommends the establishment of a "centre for social change" that would be modelled after such programmes as the Coady International Institute and the Highlander Center in Tennessee. Each year, community development practitioners come to Coady to reflect on their work, share ideas, and develop new strategies. I confess I was pleasantly surprised to see that she cites the Coady Institute as a good model on which to base a future site for women community development practitioners to network. However, having witnessed some of the highs and lows

of this dynamic process of bringing together such practitioners from around the world, tensions are inevitable. Often, problems arise when conflicts in the wider social context surface within the group. For example, debates about gender and liberation theology have, at times, caused heated debate and friction between students. While I applaud Cruikshank's idea, we must remain aware of the fact that people engaged in similar activities do not always share the same vision, and that we need to acknowledge diversity.

Highlander was established by Myles Horton in the 1930s in the Appalachian region of Tennessee. Highlander is not based at a university, but it provides a fascinating model that I believe a university could learn from. It has worked in many struggles on behalf of marginalized people, ranging from the early days of labour rights and the civil rights movement, to the environmental issues concerning people today. Deschler and Selener (1991) describe Highlander's involvement with a community resisting the development of a toxic waste dump in their locale. "Adult education in social action, therefore, has a role to play in providing learners with the tools and information to permit them to arrive at economic analyses of the organisations, communities and social structures they are trying to change" (Newman 1995:256).

Deschler and Selener (1991) make an important point when discussing the toxic dump actions in which Highlander was involved. Many citizens supported

the dump because of the jobs that were to be generated in this economically depressed region. I am reminded of Cruikshank's (1990) warning that often in community development strategies, unity among the citizenry is assumed, just as unity within the classroom is sometimes assumed in pedagogical literature. The diversity, conflicts and controversies that are evident in any community must be anticipated. She adds that even when some of the sources of conflict or diversity are recognized, all too often gender continues to be overlooked.

As the old adage goes, there's strength in numbers. I believe that a major cause of low recognition of the work of adult educators and extension departments is their low profile and isolation from each other. Establishing a centre such as Cruikshank suggests would provide an opportunity for people engaged in these activities to get together to share ideas, and to improve their academic credibility.

Another potential for university input could be for educators to identify emerging grassroots projects that could be formalized in an academic context to provide a model for others. Newman (1995) reminds us that many non-formal initiatives have grown over the years to become established educational programmes, citing centres that have resulted from adult education initiatives among Aboriginal people in Australia. Such initiatives include bridging programmes to assist Aboriginal people to enter mainstream educational institutions, and training programmes designed to produce more indigenous adult

educators. Such activity is most vividly portrayed through the success of the Tranby Aboriginal Cooperative College. "Tranby provides an example of Aboriginal people resisting white control" (Newman 1995:252). Based on Newman's description, this college sounds like an encouraging example of professional development as promoted by Welton (1987) that has so far escaped the dangers of co-option as warned by Laidlaw (1961). It provides an education that people want, and that promotes economic survival in the region.

SUMMARY

Shor and Freire (1987) warn of the tendency of critical educators to envision excessive expectations of the liberatory potential of their work. We must attempt to be realistic in our goals. Too much emphasis on the liberatory power of education can lead to disappointment and cynicism if this potential is not fully realized. We are not creating revolutionaries, but assisting people to critically reflect upon their world (Shor and Freire 1987), and hopefully bring that newly developed knowledge to effect changes in their social context, no matter how small. Polster echoes this warning, in that we must recognize "the constraints that a form of social organization imposes upon liberatory education" (1992:261). In some settings, even small steps towards social change can be viewed with hostility by those in power.

This process is driven by a Utopian vision of a better future. Utopia may be overly idealistic, but it still can be held as a vision to work toward as we take small steps to improve our conditions. It may be difficult to see the potential for agency when the discourse stays at the mass level of "the oppressed." Yet, a global vision is necessary to understand the wide range of causes and effects that filter down to the local level. Conscientization, hooks (1994) reminds us, is not an end in itself. The liberatory practices in the classroom are only the first step in a continuous cycle of reflection and action that people may engage in to effect social change. Reflection comprises of assessing past practices within the frame of new information and theories, and tested against the ideal vision the activist may hold.

Referring to the Utopian vision of Freire, Newman argues, "Utopias are the stuff of dreams and we may discourage and disempower people we are helping to learn if we ask them to strive for the impossible" (Newman 1994:36). While I do not disagree entirely with Newman, he does set up a Utopian/realist dichotomy. I dream of a Utopian future, not to delude myself it will happen in my lifetime, but to inspire my work. I try to remain reflexive in considering what ideals are illusory and which ones are attainable, and what purpose those illusory ideals have to give me the energy to work towards the attainable ones. As We need to find ways to "recapture the vision" (Cruikshank 1991) of developing educational programmes that help people change the structural barriers that constrain them.

CHAPTER 6: CURRENT CLIMATE AND FUTURE VISION

> The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created.
>
> -- bell hooks

Many of the problems that currently exist for nonmainstream students and continuing education programmes result from long held assumptions about such students and programmes. Throughout this thesis, I have identified a number of these assumptions and the effects they have had on the quality of education and service students have had access to. By setting up the dichotomy between mainstream and nonmainstream, attitudes have developed in which nonmainstream programmes have been considered inferior to the work of the "real" university.

Attempts to improve outdated nonmainstream programmes come with their own sets of assumptions as to what is best for the student, and what is best for society. These models must be examined carefully to determine whose interests they really reflect, and how they too are limited by assumptions about students. I believe firmly that analysis of these models from the standpoint of students is vital to ensuring future educational models.

I have drawn from my own experiences at St.F.X. which have informed my research and analysis. This thesis is not intended to be a description or critique of the programmes of St.F.X. specifically. My intent has been to develop a

theoretical framework and highlight key issues that could make primary research of individual programmes and institutions more thorough. As standpoint theorists remind us, the purpose of researching from a standpoint is not to present the experience as an object of study, but to provide a point of entry into understanding the social relations that organize that experience.

By studying standpoint theory, I have come to a greater understanding of both the importance of this work, and of the ways in which students' experiences can be utilized to contribute to knowledge in the field of education. In order to accomplish this work most effectively, we must have the ability to understand fully what our standpoint is. A reflexive process in developing a standpoint, and the knowledge created from that standpoint, is necessary to avoid reproducing the very dichotomies that create inequality in the first place. Rather than throwing out "identity" because it has been dismissed by postmodernists as essentialist, praxis can help us to make conscious decisions as to how we construct and maintain identities that advance our efforts to effect social change.

CURRENT CLIMATE

As I describe in Chapter 3, traditional programmes for nonmainstream students are not particularly emancipatory, however, they are not as inefficient as administrators looking for a "fast buck" would like us to believe. Concepts such

as outreach and lifelong learning for self-development are worth keeping. The objective of social change has been, at times, implicit (providing a liberal arts education makes a person a better citizen in a democratic society) or explicit (providing the opportunity for group learning engages the community in a process of social change). While the critiques that challenge the effectiveness of these models are valid, we run the risk of replicating oppressive ideologies if we pronounce some types of education more valid than others without a critical, reflexive analysis of these types, and whether there is potential for their reform. As I argue, the blanket dismissal of nonmainstream programmes as second-rate, not only perpetuates discrimination against nonmainstream students, it shuts down the opportunity to develop innovative models that could best utilize the advantages of these programmes.

I am fearful that the prevailing corporatist ideology will subvert the intent and promise of continuing education to allow a wide range of people to enjoy the opportunity to develop academically and intellectually. Proponents claim to be providing the type of education people want and need to participate effectively in the national economy. However, the actual strategies being employed are designed to make people adapt to an economic model that often works against their own interests. Defining education primarily in terms of economic development only serves the purposes of those in power who profit most from the economy. People

are packaged as human resources ready for exploitation. Programmes that are designed for economic efficiency can result in highly structured "pre-packaged" courses that offer no flexibility to adapt to the clientele or location.

Lifelong learning as a process of intellectual development is replaced by what I call disposable learning. Rather than building upon the knowledge, both formal and experiential, that students possess, emphasis is placed upon teaching employable skills to replace old skills that are no longer valued on the labour market. In addition, some forms of education are more highly valued than others. Liberal arts programmes are criticized for not providing employable skills. The dichotomized thinking that dismisses liberal arts this way stifles an examination of the ways in which studies in the arts and social sciences can offer and how their effectiveness can be improved.

The retraining model I describe is unlikely to provide the most effective learning environment or curriculum that responds to students' individual and collective interests and needs. Any commitment to community outreach expressed by the university in the past is subverted in this highly individualistic retraining model. They ignore the potential of community economics as a viable alternative that acknowledges the social context in which all individuals live. Dichotomized thinking stifles the voices of those educators and students who are seeking creative strategies to help people deal with our changing society.

I remain firm in my conviction that better models for education that more accurately reflect students' desire for learning can be achieved if we learn from the work of critical and feminist educators. However, to realize this potential fully, the assumptions and dichotomies imbedded within these theories must also be addressed. Education that claims to be liberatory but which is limited by unaddressed assumptions can be extremely detrimental to the process of creating a truly liberatory education. Challenging traditional roles of teachers and students shifts the balance of power in often unpredictable ways. Goals of student empowerment and collective learning can be severely undermined if complex social relations are glossed over. Assurances of student participation and non-hierarchical settings when more apparent than real, can be very frustrating for students. Dichotomized thinking about radical and mainstream education can limit opportunities for self-reflection. I question the practices of critical and feminist educators, not to discredit their work, but to add a student perspective to their work, to encourage them to be more effective in the future.

Researchers and educators like Cruikshank (1996), Jevons (1987) and Welton (1987) are identifying injustices within the system that discriminates against their field. I agree with Welton that adult and continuing education require greater credibility in the university and that educators must work harder to ensure this. Nonmainstream students will continue to be discredited as long as the programmes

within which they study are deemed to be inferior. Thus, it is vital that this complex process of participatory design and evaluation with students both individually and collectively continue to ensure the development of effective and emancipatory models.

FUTURE VISION AND HOW WE GET THERE

In the process of finding answers to questions, we invariably find more questions. Throughout this document I have raised questions that, due to the limits of this project, I was unable to pursue. I want to raise them here to provide suggestions for future research.

I wish I had more time to explore and reflect upon the theoretical tug of war between essentialism and constructionism particularly as it relates to identity and the legitimacy of the researcher's voice. How do people who do not share the identity of an oppressed group conduct research with the oppressed in an ethical way that does not trample their interests and rights? I am still not satisfied with the explanations I have read, as they tend to remain at the abstract level without considering the hard work and power dynamics involved. In addition, I would like to reflect further on the role of praxis in mediating dichotomies that define our society in so many ways.

I would like to see a deeper analysis of the conditions that have given rise to the process of defining people who work as "human resources" and how education participates. Does this echo the industrial revolution attitudes towards the exploitation of labour that prompted the rise of labour movements to institute rights in the workplace? Is there a link between the increasing use of such terminology (and its underlying ideology) and the apparently decreasing influence of the labour movement in this decade? There is more research to be done that examines theories of corporatism, human capital and the interests of workers within the context of education.

Recognizing that a significant number of nonmainstream students acknowledge they did not fit into the mainstream model as youths (P. Campbell 1994, Knights 1995), how many nonmainstream students have learning disabilities that hinder their advancement in the traditional university setting? What role can alternative pedagogies play in broadening the range of learning practices that accommodate people's different ways of learning? I believe the creativity and flexibility promised by alternative pedagogies can do a great deal to enable the widest possible range of nonmainstream students to fulfil their academic potential. I would like to see such potential more explicitly examined.

When considering issues of participation and power in critical and feminist classrooms, I would like to see more work being done that takes into consideration

the diversity of ages represented by nonmainstream students. While there is a body of literature available that debates how adults learn and to what degree this is different from the learning processes of younger people, there is not a great deal of analysis of the social interaction between students of various ages, and the effects this has on classroom dynamics and power relations. Further, there continues to be a desperate need for a more explicitly feminist analysis in adult and continuing education.

While I encourage the development of creative programming for nonmainstream students in the university, it is of little benefit if the students cannot afford to attend. There is now considerable debate regarding the effects dramatically increased tuition costs will have on full-time undergraduate students. There needs to be a similar analysis and debate to assess the effects the restructuring of government funding will have on nonmainstream students and continuing education programmes.

In order to ensure that students have a voice in programme design that is relevant to them, there needs to be a greater commitment on the part of universities to ensure meaningful student representation within the administrative framework. A comparative analysis of student participation in programme design and administration at universities and other learning institutes could provide the basis for designing better management models. Do student unions ensure equitable

representation and participation by nonmainstream students? How can university departments elicit input from nonmainstream students as they design courses and devise programme options? To what extent are students invited to evaluate courses, and are their recommendations seriously acted upon?

Above all, I want to see more action and research being conducted to assist in developing the potential of extension and continuing education programmes to work with nonmainstream students for social change. Much more work needs to be done in providing the social context and effects of educational programmes. What strategies are being developed to design academic programmes in the arts and sciences in ways that increase their relevance for people in the community? Critically evaluated case studies of both the success stories and failures of university-community cooperation can provide a wealth of knowledge for future programme design. I cannot recommend too strongly to researchers and educators to take a closer look at some of the dynamic "grassroots", community-based learning programmes now being developed by the most marginalized groups on our planet. People in Latin America, Africa, Asia and aboriginal groups in the industrialized nations, are creating models of participatory education that respects individuals and their communities.

I applaud the work now being done by Cruikshank (1996, 1994a, 1994b), Welton (1987), Hart (1992), and others. Welton (1987) argues that adult education

literature presents teachers' opinions of what students want. He calls for work that lets students speak and define their own needs and goals. We are the ones who are on the receiving end of each new pedagogical framework, ideology, or passing fad. Yet it continues to be the teachers and administrators who analyse and critique these models. As I mentioned the similarities between critical social theories and critical pedagogies, I would like to see more research that explores this connection more closely, with a view to sharing what each field can learn from the other. It all comes down to developing an understanding of how knowledge is socially constructed, organised and disseminated.

By combining the potential of creating participatory design and evaluation models, as well as reflexive analyses of education from the standpoints of students themselves, it is my hope that strategies can be developed that are more genuinely "student-centred". I remain hopeful that the voices of protest can continue to operate together to seek alternatives. Critical and feminist educators, by their own definition, seek fundamental social change. I share Cruikshank's future vision of university continuing education that participates with people, to enable them to make their visions a reality.

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