DEFINING THE ENEMY

Adult education in social action

by MICHAEL NEWMAN

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Foreword

Lalita Panicker, writing in the journal *UNESCO Sources* in December, 1993, describes the 'tiny malnourished' six-year-old Doraiswami stitching buttons on T-shirts in 'a filthy dark factory' in the south Indian district of Tripur for Rs 20 ($0.62) a day. Officially there are seventeen million children in India in bonded or other forms of illegal labour, but unofficial estimates put the figure at forty-five million.

This book, *Defining the Enemy*, is based on the assertion that life can be grim, confused, ambiguous and dangerous. While our own neighbourhood, town, city and even country (if we are lucky) may be untroubled, a quick scan of the papers will tell us that this is not the case in a number of other locations, where wars rage, human rights are denied, people are poor, and oppression of the kind experienced by Doraiswami is commonplace. And even if we do live in an apparently fair society, a little reflection will often lead us to conclude that all is not well at home either. Exploitation, potential violence, and the willingness of some to intrude on the space and liberty of others are there.

I am writing this in Sydney, Australia, where we pride ourselves on being an equitable and peaceable society. About a kilometre away is an area full of pubs, clubs and restaurants. A few months ago a young woman and three friends went to a Thai restaurant there. They were allocated a table in an upstairs room. There were several other tables occupied by couples or groups of four, and a large table occupied by a group of ten men. As their jokes and raucous laughter made clear, the ten men were already well into a stag night.

Just after the young woman had been served, she noticed that several waiters had come into the room from other parts of the restaurant and were lining the walls. Unobtrusive music had been playing quietly over the restaurant speaker system, but this was abruptly replaced by very loud, very raunchy strip music. A woman ran up the stairs into the room, led the groom away from the stag party to a chair placed in the middle of the dining area, and began stripping in front of him. One of the other diners remonstrated, but the men in the stag party noisily egged the stripper on. Gyrating in front of the groom, the stripper stripped to a G-string, the removal of her last piece of clothing coinciding with the end of the record.

For a moment the event appeared to be over, but the music started up again and, with the men in the stag party egging her on again, the stripper began stripping the groom. She unbuttoned and pulled off his shirt and then, dancing over his outstretched legs, began leaning backwards. Someone from the other tables shouted: 'That's enough!' but the

stripper continued. The men in the stag party clapped in rhythm, barracked, and someone began shouting: ‘Fuck , fuck , fuck!’

In this perfectly normal restaurant, there was now an ugly intensity, din, potential violence, incitement to rape. Telling the story afterwards, the young woman said she looked around her and that every other woman in the room except the stripper was staring down at the table in front of her.

A little as if in a dream, but in control, the young woman stood, picked up her plate of food (with lots of sauce), walked over to the groom and poured it over his head. Food spilled over him, the sauce running through his hair, down the front of his naked torso and soaking into his pants.

The music stopped and the men in the stag party shouted in outrage. The stripper was lying on the floor and the young woman bent down, touched her on the arm and said quietly: ‘It’s not you. It’s them’. The stripper’s eyes, she said later, were sad.

By now, others were on their feet, speaking loudly, arguing. People at the other tables applauded the young woman’s actions. The men justified their behaviour as ‘harmless fun’ and accused others in the room of being wowsers. The young woman stood her ground, had her say, and then walked out. People at one table left without finishing their meal, and without paying. The management barred the door to prevent others doing the same. There was more arguing, some of it between customers and the members of the stag party, some between customers and the restaurant management. Gradually the uproar subsided.

There are issues galore in the incident: sexism, the demeaning of women, the grotesque and incipiently violent behaviour of the men in the stag party, the gratuitous imposition of their standards and behaviour on others, the connivance of the restaurant. There are questions to be asked. Why did only one person take direct action? How could the men feel free to behave in the way they did? Why did the restaurant’s management go along with the event? Had they as a minority culture acceded to what they saw as a norm in the majority culture? And where are the stripper’s rights in all this? What is legitimate sex work and what is sexploitation, oppression and insult?

Adult educators can make extravagant claims for their craft, or set themselves extravagant agendas. Various practitioners and theorists have argued that adult education has a role to play in helping transform individuals, in helping bring about social change, and even in combatting hegemonies and ‘conscientizing’ whole populations. But despite such claims I am hard pressed to find much in the literature that helps me understand how I as an adult educator might address the incident in that restaurant. Where are the tools to help people deal with inimical forces like those that were released in this normally orderly

context? Where are practical proposals for helping people learn how to curb real or potential violence, and resist unsolicited impositions on people's space and freedom by others?

And if I find little to help me deal with the challenges thrown up by an oppressive incident in a restaurant in an affluent city in an affluent country, I find even less to indicate how I might help people learn to combat the kinds of monstrous exploitation of child labour depicted by Panicker.

In this book I want to understand a little better how to help people learn to address these kinds of challenge. To do this I go trawling for ideas through the writing of a number of adult educators who have tried in various ways to confront violence, exploitation, imposition, and injustice. I look at some currently fashionable adult education theories, concluding that a number mislead or are simply too nice, too unfocussed, too inward-looking or too mechanical to help us help others learn in contexts of opposition and hostility. And I look for some principles and processes that might help us help others learn how to identify, define, and then deal with their enemies.

The text is discursive and at times disjointed, but this form is intentional, and owes something to the style and ideas of some of the writers on post modernity.

These writers suggest that we are emerging from a period of several hundred years in which people in those many parts of the world under the influence of European thought have struggled to find rational explanations for both substantial and insubstantial phenomena; in which the ideal of the enlightened, autonomous person has been central to our concepts of society, morality and intellectual endeavour; and in which the project of humankind has been to establish order and bring the world under control. These heralders of a new post modern age suggest that old forms of social organisation, old institutions, old ways of thinking are breaking down. New kinds of interrelationship with the world are being forged. Power may be seen more correctly as decentred rather than hierarchical and centralised. History may be seen as fragmented or stratified rather than chronological. Identity may be seen as multi-faceted and variable, rather than singular and whole. Images may exist in their own right without reference to any substance. Rational argument and logical exposition may be replaced by flight of fancy. And disconnections may be as important as connections.

In keeping with their arguments, some of these writers on post modernity engage in a playfulness of form, using association rather than 'logical' argument to give direction, allowing images to make the connections, letting breaks in the flow of thought remain,

using a variety of styles, and leaving room for the readers to position themselves in several ways to the text.

I doubt if this book would qualify as a postmodern text (whatever form that might take), but I admit to feeling liberated by some of the ideas and practices of writers about post modernity. This release from an obligation to be ordered and logical in everything I say allows me to pursue the negative construct of the enemy as a focus for effective learning, rather than look, as a more conventional approach might dictate, for a positive construct. It allows me to follow trains of thought without necessarily explaining the links, to make transitions using songs and poetry and a quotation from a play, and to leave some questions unanswered and some arguments unclosed. And it allows me to offer the text to the reader, hoping that you will position yourself in relation to the text in several ways - as serious student of adult education, as critic in constant and challenging dialogue, as political comrade, as someone ready to be amused and entertained, as co-writer improving on the text, as the enemy of my enemies and therefore, as the saying goes and if ever we meet, my friend.

I have shown this text to a number of people, asking for comment. I would like to thank them. Peter Willis rang me from Adelaide, South Australia, offering me encouragement and valuable ideas. Griff Foley pencilled carefully considered comments into the margins. Steven and Beth Deutsch commented in detail on a draft. Liz Hill, who as a participant in a course received comments from me on her work, now wrote pages of thoughtful comment on mine. David Boud spent a good part of a Sunday morning in a coffee shop discussing his reactions with me. Yolande Munn offered advice on style. Clive Chappell gave me advice on a particular section of the book. And Michael McDaniel, expert on Aboriginal studies, read the text to check those sections dealing with his people.

I want to thank Roger Rotmann, friend, and Secretary of the arts industry workers section *(Syndicat General des Affaires Culturelles)* of the French trade union body CFDT, who offered me encouragement (and access to computer and printer) over a period of four months when I was on study leave in France and writing the first draft. And my thanks to the University of Technology, Sydney, and the School of Adult and Language Education within the university, for providing both the organisational culture and the practical support (not least in the form of that study leave) that enabled me to write. The views expressed in the book are mine, however, and do not necessarily represent those of UTS or the School.

Of course, having said my thanks, I need to put on record that any confusions, errors or inconsistencies also remain mine.

M. N. (Sydney, October, 1994)

Section One: Learning and opposition

One

People under pressure

The nineteen nineties and I find myself working at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, where for three years I coordinated a course leading to a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education (Community). In the brochure advertising the course the concept of community was addressed in this way:

> People attending ... are likely to be working as facilitators and educators with adult education centres, evening or community colleges, Aboriginal organisations, welfare agencies, community health organisations, or groups engaged in social and community action.

To help people decide whether to enrol or not, the brochure went on to list the 'likely concerns' of participants accepted into the course. These included providing educational activities that will help people enrich their lives; providing educational support for community development; and

> responding to social and political needs of people without a 'voice' and working alongside these people to develop educational activities that will help them gain more control over their lives.

The people attending this part-time course were already practitioners in a variety of fields, people who in the course of their work had come to realise that they were engaged in helping adults learn. Of those who enrolled during the three years, only a small minority had job descriptions that actually acknowledged their involvement in adult education. These included an occupational health and safety trainer, an AIDS educator, a trainer in a government department, two outreach workers from TAFE colleges, a trainer with the Family Planning Association, and tutor who wrote material for distance-mode discussion groups.

Amongst the rest were refuge workers, workers from government and voluntary agencies concerned with health, welfare or community service, environmental activists, two solicitors from legal advice centres, an art worker based in a hospital, a pharmacist, a wheelchair-bound political activist, and a caravan park community worker.

On the fringes of Sydney are a number of caravan parks. Many are privately owned and occupied by tenants with 'mobile homes' - that is, large caravans often fixed semi-permanently in place, some sitting on small brick pylons with flower beds next to them. In effect, these mobile homes constitute amongst the cheapest form of housing available to Sydneysiders, and they are occupied by working people struggling to establish themselves on the edges of a city that in the past few years has had unemployment rates in the region of ten to eleven per cent. Until recently, these tenants had no security of tenure and very little protection against sudden changes in rent and charges, or the arbitrary imposition of rules and regulations by their private landlords.

In addition, caravan park dwellers have to put up with the prejudice of people living in 'real' houses nearby. Some of these people regard caravan park dwellers as no-hopers, failures, and the caravan parks as breeding grounds for social problems. Some caravan park dwellers claim these prejudices are reflected in the attitudes of the police and the providers of social services.

The result on some parks is a lack of community. People can be dispirited, insecure, isolated by distance from shopping centres, entertainment and other public facilities and, succumbing to the influence of other peoples' perceptions, distrustful of each other.

It was in this context that the caravan park worker attending the Graduate Diploma in Adult Education (Community) course worked. She was an old hand and, from the accounts she gave to my tutorial group, always intervened carefully. On another park another worker had moved too quickly, bringing people together, generating enthusiasm, and helping a group of residents produce a poster calling on everyone in the park to take part in community activities. The poster had been couched in activist language and included a photo of the group, all of whom were quickly evicted by the landlord. The worker in my course made contact with tenants, provided information on community and social services available, and took up particular cases with certain agencies. When she organised meetings and information sessions, she did so openly, consulting everyone - tenants, landlords and the providers of services. Much of the time she worked informally, listening, talking, feeding back what she had learnt.

She came to one tutorial angry and unsettled. On one park the landlord had hired an armed 'security' guard to patrol the park. The guard had menaced the tenants and, when the worker had entered the park, confronted her. The worker needed to talk and my group - some six or seven people - listened, asked questions, discussed the issues and canvassed possible lines of action the worker could take.

That the group did this was not unusual. Indeed, in a number of ways the tutorial had become a professional support group. Quite often, members arrived with challenges from their work uppermost in their mind, and sought advice. Sometimes members arrived upset, and needed support. Sometimes they arrived angry, and needed to talk. And sometimes they arrived enthused by some event or achievement.

At first glance one might have been surprised that the members of such a group could help each other. The age range was wide, and their backgrounds and jobs very different. The wheelchair activist, the caravan park worker and the public sector trainer were there, as well as a probation officer, a social worker, and two people employed by voluntary organisations - one administering programs for people with intellectual disabilities, the other providing services for the blind and partially sighted.

All of them had an interest in adult education, but as the course progressed it also became clear that each was involved in a struggle or conflict of some sort. The public sector trainer had expected to engage in good human resource development but found herself being required to prepare people for redundancy. The wheelchair activist and the two workers for voluntary organisations found themselves continually struggling against the insensitivity of bureaucracies and the indifference of the able-bodied majority of the population. The probation officer worked in a reception centre to which offenders were sent by the courts, and her attempt to provide education rather than training had brought her into conflict with one of her superiors. The social worker helped people petition authorities to regain the right to care for their own children and came up against prejudice and bureaucratic stalling she saw as class-based. And the caravan park worker had to deal with a thug packing a sidearm.

What united this diverse group of people was the fact that they and the people they were working with had enemies.

Two

Two quotes

Paulo Freire and Jane Thompson both have enemies.

Thompson established the Second Chance for Women courses in Southampton, England, and played a leading role in conducting these courses during most of the nineteen eighties. She encouraged the participants to examine their condition as working class women through a combination of rigorous study, discussion and the writing of personal accounts. The process, in particular the writing of accounts of violence experienced and injustices suffered, often gave rise to both individual and collective anger, which Thompson was ready to use:

> Growth through anger, focused with precision, can be a powerful source of energy, serving progress and change. Anger expressed and translated into actions in the service of women's visions and women's futures can be a liberating and strengthening act of clarification, for it is in the painful process of this translation, that we identify who are our genuine allies and who are our enemies (Thompson 1983a, p.54).

The enemies identified in the writing from the Second Chance for Women courses (Thompson, 1983a, Taking Liberties Collective, 1989) are the lads, the louts, the hoorays and the calculating men in suits. They are the perpetrators of violence against women, the men who put women down and the men who make women afraid to go out alone in public places. They are the people who ignore or deny women's aspirations, who create and maintain structures, institutions, bureaucracies and practices that exclude women, and who discount women's achievements. They are all those whose malign or thoughtless actions come together to create a patriarchy in which women find themselves ranked second, exploited and oppressed.

Freire's most overtly political writing is to be found in *Cultural Action and Conscientization* (1972a, pp.49-83). In a passionate passage, made forceful through an incantatory juxtaposing of opposites, he describes the 'revolutionary utopia' he believes we should all struggle to establish, and then powerfully, crushingly condemns the opponents of this utopia, whom he simply calls 'the Right':

> The Right in its rigidity prefers the dead to the living; the static to the dynamic; the future as a repetition of the past rather than as a creative venture; pathological forms of love rather than real love; frigid schematization rather than the emotion of living; gregariousness rather than authentic living together; organization men rather than men who organize; imposed myths

rather than incarnated values; directives rather than creative and communicative language; and slogans rather than challenges (pp.72-73).

Three

Courses for unionists

For four years during the nineteen eighties I worked as a trainer within the Australian trade union movement. The participants in the courses I worked on had an opposition which could be located in individuals and groups - in actual bosses, corporate figures, and those politicians who were openly opposed to organised labour - and which could be found in the 'isms' and ideologies of the Right.

During a period of industrial conflict at a large paper mill in Australia in 1992, precipitated by a sudden reversal of industrial relations policy by senior management, one of the industrial relations managers was quoted as saying, not just in reference to industrial disputes but in reference to employment in general, that all workers should turn up to work each day expecting to be sacked. In publicly making this declaration, he was denying working people any recognition for their contribution to an enterprise beyond the most basic form of remuneration. He was denying them and their dependants any right to security. And he was denying that he or the enterprise had any responsibility towards the wellbeing of the communities that the plant and the workers were a part of. He was, in short, denying the humanity of the enterprise. Freire would describe him as preferring the dead to the living, and this was grotesquely - ludicrously - symbolised when the management imported a group of 'security guards', all apparently martial arts experts, who paraded behind the barred gates of the plant dressed in black and wearing shroud-like capes!

There were men, women and children in the picket lines, and opposite them this pantomimic posturing of the lads and the louts.

Having an opposition helped me as a union trainer. It helped facilitate discussion. 'What do the bosses want here?' I could ask when working on a case study. 'What do *we* want?' It provided criteria to use when analysing issues. 'What are our common interests? What are the conflicting ones?' It helped us plan strategies. 'The bosses won't even look at that demand until they think they've won something. Let's start the negotiations with another demand altogether.' And it helped us evaluate the kinds of skills we were learning or the strategies and policies we were discussing. 'Will there be a gain in this for our members? Will they be safer? Will their jobs be more secure? Will they be better off?'

In residential courses I would always try to put aside an evening to show two particular films. The first, *Controlling Interest* (California Newsreel, 1978), was about multinational companies. It examined how they were structured and how they operated both at home and abroad. It showed how they exploited people and resources in the Third World. It gave

examples of multinationals buying up land and replacing staple food crops with crops for export, evicting the peasant farmers and creating food shortages in the process; of multinationals establishing factories in 'free trade zones' where labour was cheap, unions banned, and people required to work long hours in conditions producing high rates of industrial accident and injury; and of multinationals stripping countries of their natural resources, exporting the profit and reinvesting nothing. It captured on camera executives of multinationals cynically applauding the establishment of military dictatorships that would supply their companies with workforces made compliant through the use of repression and terror. And the film described the violence committed against people who resisted, and the subversion of governments that showed a reluctance to cooperate.

The film showed that some of these multinationals treated workers in their own countries with the same disdain; and it provided a catalogue of companies that has closed down factories in the United States and gone in search of cheaper, less organised and more exploitable labour overseas, leaving desolate industrial landscapes and impoverished communities in their wake.

The film traced the story of a company threatening to close a long established plant in a small United States town and move its operations overseas unless the the town paid for the construction of a new plant. The workers resisted, and the film showed a union official addressing a mass meeting, describing the company's final offer. He talked of the options that the company had - the whole world to move to - and the option the workers had - to occupy the factory 'for about twelve hours' until the National Guard came and forced them out. 'There has to be a way,' he says, 'that we can have the National Guard on *our* side!'

The second film was called *The Real Thing* (Schnall, 1984) and interwove two stories related to a Coca Cola bottling plant in Guatemala. In 1977 eight union activists from the plant were murdered. The International Union of Foodworkers (IUF) took the matter to Coca Cola International. The plant in Guatemala was owned by franchise holders, but after industrial action against Coca Cola by IUF affiliate unions in a number of countries, the franchise holders changed, the murders stopped, and the union's right to represent the workers was recognised. The struggle appeared to have been won but in 1984 the plant was suddenly closed. The workers occupied the plant and again the IUF coordinated a campaign of industrial action against Coca Cola, this time in some thirty countries.

A film crew managed to get into the plant and the film they made, intercut with footage of the events in 1977, gave an account of the occupation. The film ended with the plant still occupied and a post script stating that the future was uncertain. In fact the action was successful and the plant was reopened in the middle of 1985.

The two films worked well together, and an evening devoted to them could alter the nature of a course. The first film presented the problems - the greed, the irresponsibility, the ruthlessness, the violence and the lawlessness of some forms of transnational and multinational business, while the second offered an answer - in effective national and international organisation *against* this greed, this irresponsibility, this ruthlessness, this violence and this lawlessness.

Together these two films could raise the level of debate in a group, and intensify participants' motivation to learn in order to deal with identifiable enemies.

Four

Joe Hill

Joe Hill is a union hero. In 1901, as Joel Hagglund, he migrated from Sweden to the United States of America where, after working in different jobs across the States and in Hawaii, he joined the Industrial Workers of the World (the radical 'One Big Union' whose members were called Wobblies). Known in America as Joseph Hillstrom and then Joe Hill, he worked as an organiser, campaigner, educator, singer and songwriter for the IWW, until he was arrested in Utah in 1914, tried and convicted for murder on evidence that his supporters believed was false. The case attracted a great deal of publicity but the authorities went ahead with the sentence and on 19 November, 1915 Joe Hill was executed by firing squad.

On the eve of his execution Hill had written to a Wobbly leader: 'Don't waste any time mourning - organize!'. People did mourn, however. Thirty thousand attended his funeral, marching and singing his songs; and over the next twenty five years Joe Hill's name was invoked by striking workers, stories about him were shared by people committed to the union movement, and new songs were written commemorating his life and deploring his death (Taylor, 1990).

In November, 1960, forty five years after Hill's execution, the black American singer, actor, unionist and campaigner against racism, Paul Robeson, came on a concert tour of Australia. While in Sydney he visited Bennelong Point where the Sydney Opera House was under construction. Work on the site halted and with construction workers - unionists - gathered around him, Robeson sang this eerie, magical evocation of Joe Hill, his death, and the message he left behind:

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
Alive as you or me.
Says I, 'But, Joe, you're ten years dead.'
'I never died,' says he.

'In Salt Lake, Joe, by God,' says I,
Him standing by my bed.
'They framed you on a murder charge.'
Says Joe, 'But I ain't dead.'

'The copper bosses shot you, Joe,

They killed you, Joe,' says I.
'Takes more than guns to kill a man,'
Says Joe, 'I didn't die.'

And standing there as big as life,
And smiling with his eyes,
Joe says, 'What they could never kill
Went on to organize.'

'Joe Hill ain't dead' he says to me.
'Joe Hill ain't never died.'
Where workingmen are out on strike,
Joe Hill is at their side.

From San Diego up to Maine,
In every mine and mill,
Where workers strike and organize,
Says he, 'You'll find Joe Hill.' (Hayes and Robinson, 1938)

While in Australia, Robeson met with Aboriginal people and the more he learned about the inequities and injustices endured by Aboriginal people the more shocked and angry he became. His biographer records that Faith Bandler, an Aboriginal activist, arranged a private showing for Robeson of a film made in the late nineteen fifties depicting the plight of Aboriginal people in the Warburton Ranges. Bandler recalled that as Robeson watched the film tears streamed down his face (Duberman, 1988, p.490).

Five

Courses for Aboriginal adult educators

The University of Technology, Sydney offers a course leading to an Associate Diploma in Adult Education (Aboriginal). All the participants are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and the fact that they hold posts as community workers, adult educators, health workers, and members of land councils does not protect them from the prejudice and obstruction encountered by Aboriginal people in their daily lives. For them the enemy can be found in the people who close doors on them, refuse them jobs, or deliver second-rate services to them; and it can be found in the 'ideologies' of the white majority, in the thinking of a nation that is only now beginning to acknowledge the crimes committed against the original inhabitants of the Australian continent.

The white invasion of Australia destroyed unique Aboriginal cultures and ways of life. Aboriginal people were driven off their traditional lands, many killed, and their remaining numbers depleted by imported illnesses. Language and cultural groups were broken up and dispersed, families were split up, and children removed from parents. Until 1967 Aboriginal people were denied full citizenship in their own country and treated as wards of the state.

In the past thirty years there have been gains. Aboriginal people have increasingly engaged in action through their own organisations and in alliance with progressive white organisations to gain or regain rights, and governments have responded. There are now many Aboriginal-run organisations and agencies, and the Federal and most state governments have commissions, departments and other organisations concerned with Aboriginal affairs and staffed in part at least by Aboriginal people. Efforts are being made, in some cases reinforced by legislation, to preserve what is left of Aboriginal languages and cultures. Universities are creating access programs for Aboriginal students and there are an increasing number of specialist Aboriginal programs in fields like social work, education, medicine, management and agriculture. And on the last working day of Federal parliament in 1993, a bill was passed that recognises native title to land - that will enable Aboriginal people (within a range of conditions and limitations) to claim ownership to land that they and their forebears have traditionally occupied or been associated with.

But Flowers and Foley (1992) describe the gains as 'fragile and ambiguous' and the continuing indices of underdevelopment for Aboriginal people as 'horrific':

> The life expectancy of Aboriginal men and women is 48-49 and 55-57 years respectively. The incarceration rate for Aboriginal men in New South Wales is many times higher than that for

> non-Aboriginal males. The national employment rate for Aboriginals is around 25 percent ... Despite the efforts of Aboriginal housing corporations, the majority of Aboriginal people still live in substandard housing. Most Aboriginal children leave school by the age of fourteen ... (p. 10).

In late 1987 a member of the Human Rights Commission could publicly weep when confronted by the abject living conditions of people in an Aboriginal community he was visiting in the north west of New South Wales. Justice Marcus Einfeld's tears were shed twenty seven years after those of Robeson's, leading one to suspect that while Aboriginal people have made gains in some areas over the past thirty years, in some areas they have made no gains at all. And in 1994 the then Federal Minister for Health returned from visits to Aboriginal communities in northern Australia stating that he had seen conditions that would barely be tolerated in a war-ravaged state.

The participants on the Associate Diploma in Adult Education (Aboriginal) course had this kind of history in common, either actually lived or known about and deeply felt, and when leading a number of seminars on program development I proposed that we examine models that might be particularly 'Anglo-centric' and/or potentially anti-Aboriginal, and then look for other modes of facilitating adult learning that might be more in tune with Aboriginal cultures and more easily put to the service of Aboriginal interests. We looked at curriculum design models drawn from Tyler (1949), Houle (1972), Knowles (1980) and others (Boone, 1985). Participants shared stories of 'development' programs they had experienced or been witness to. And through group work and exercises they identified features in the models we had discussed and in the programs they had experienced which they perceived as paternalistic, intrusive or exploitative.

We then went in search of other writers and practitioners that might be more on side or more easily appropriated to the Aboriginal cause. They suggested educators and activists they had worked with or knew. I proposed Freire and talked about a black South African health worker I had met whose work had been influenced by Freiran ideas. We looked at some of the work of Horton at Highlander, using a video interview (Horton, 1981). And we looked at the feminist adult education of Thompson (1983a).

On the union courses I was a unionist amongst unionists. As a white lecturer on the Aboriginal course I was associated with the invaders and the enemy. On the Aboriginal course, therefore, when I put questions I did not always expect to hear the answers. But in both cases I was able to ask: Who is holding you back? And I was able to say: Let's look at who the enemies are and how you (or we) might deal with them.

Section Two: Ideals that disempower

Six

Decency

When describing my encounter with Aboriginal students it is easy to present myself as an adult educator untroubled by doubts, operating with a clarity of purpose, and dealing with the central issues of the participants' lives head on. This, however, is not the case. When I am working with Aboriginal colleagues I am often overtaken by doubts. Some are related to my being white and to the rights and possible wrongs of my being there in the first place; but others, I believe, derive from some commonly held ideals in our profession. These ideals can hold adult educators back. They can divert and disempower the adult educator who is seeking to play some kind of role in social action and social change. They can lead us to duck and weave at the vital moment, and to avoid and even ignore conflict.

One of these is the ideal of decency.

Adult educators are nice people. There is a niceness about a lot of adult education that can become cloying. People are too understanding, too ready to hear the other point of view, too caring, too nurturing. This comes in large part from adult education's association with therapy, counselling and the humanist psychologists. For example, Carl Rogers, who has had an enormous influence on adult education, suggests that the qualities and attitudes that facilitate learning are realness, prizing, trust, acceptance, a 'puzzlement', and empathetic understanding (1983, p.121-127).

Along with the niceness of the adult educator comes a naive faith in the essential decency of people in general, be they boss or worker, black or white, a tiller of the soil or the person who seeds that soil with land mines. If we encourage personal growth, many adult educators appear to believe, then that growth will inevitably be towards a person who is admirable. Rogers suggests that a person who 'emerges from therapy or the best of education' will be

> a person functioning freely in all the fullness of his organismic potentialities; a person who is dependable in being realistic, self-enhancing, socialized and appropriate in his behaviour; a creative person, whose specific formings of behaviour are not easily predictable; a person who is ever changing, ever developing, always discovering himself and the newness in himself in each succeeding moment in time. (1969, p.295).

In this kind of discourse, the language is vague (sometimes to the point of meaningless as in Rogers' use of the word 'appropriate') and the recurring images ill-defined ones of openness, fullness and expansion. Helen Connole (1992) makes the claim that 'in a sense all adult learning involves personal growth' and then goes on:

> Growth expands our consciousness of both self and others and opens us to more choices in beliefs, emotional reactions and behaviour than were previously available to us. Old boundaries and limitations begin to dissolve. We experience ourselves as more powerful and also more responsible than before (pp.273-274).

Because people are potentially nice, the adult educator can restrict his or her role to that of facilitator, the person who fires the starting pistol, the trainer that slips the leash:

> To free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of enquiry; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognise that everything is in the process of change - here is an experience I can never forget. (Rogers, 1983. p.120)

And the end result will be wholesome, bathed in sunshine, smelling of hay, cider with Rosie, entirely free from redback or funnel-web spiders.

> The fruit is harvested and stored, the harvesters give thanks and go their way (Heron, 1989, p.27).

It is all too *good* to be true. As history and events daily chronicled in our newspapers demonstrate, there are people who are simply not nice, people who think only of themselves and are prepared to hurt and damage others. Some of these will turn up in our courses causing problems and sometimes havoc. There are also people who carry around with them emotional baggage of no relevance to us or the rest of a learning group and who will nonetheless noisily unpack that baggage to the distraction and distress of everyone present, including themselves. And because of the linking of education and therapy promoted by Rogers and others operating in his image, sometimes troubled people who should be in treatment find themselves disruptively and inappropriately in education.

And if individuals can disrupt, whole groups can occasionally go off the rails. When we unleash their energies, we can unwittingly let slip the dogs of war. As Griff Foley (1992) points out in a thoughtful examination of group processes in adult education, there are

theorists in the fields of psychoanalysis and social psychology who maintain that there are negative as well as positive, unconscious as well as conscious forces at work in groups of human beings.

Seven

Detachment

A second ideal that can lead us to avoid or ignore conflict is that of detachment. This ideal is central to the liberal tradition of adult education.

The liberal tradition in adult education has affinities with the nineteenth century British ideas of learning for learning's sake, knowledge as something valuable in itself, the pursuit of absolute truths. These ideas were expounded and put into practice by a redoubtable line of rumblingly powerful Victorian and early twentieth century adult educators.

In mid-nineteenth century England, Frederick Denison Maurice articulated the distinction between vocational and non-vocational education when he argued that members of the artisan and working classes should be given access to 'the best and highest knowledge' (Maurice, 1854: ed. Styler, 1968, p.161) rather than simply learn the mechanical arts. To do this he and his group of Christian Socialists established the Working Men's College in London in 1854, where working class men could experience something of the liberal idea of a collegial community devoted to learning. The university don James Stuart was acting upon the same belief that academic learning was of value in itself when he helped establish the university extension classes system in the eighteen seventies (and made university-style learning accessible to women for the first time). And these liberal adult education ideals were given a national profile when Albert Mansbridge established the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in England in 1904 and developed it into a flourishing and widespread organisation over the next ten years.

This tradition continues today in university extension or extra mural programs, in the programs of Workers Educational Associations, and in some of the programs of community and evening colleges where courses are organised in the form of recognisably academic subjects and taught by university academics or tutors with university qualifications.

There were alternatives to this tradition. In the nineteenth century radicals argued, not just for 'useful' technical knowledge or for 'the best and highest knowledge', but for '*really* useful' knowledge that would help working people understand and combat political injustice and social inequity; that would help them understand why, for example, as Britain built its empire overseas and developed its industrial might at home, there continued to be such poverty amidst the creation of such wealth (Johnson, 1988). And in the first part of this century, in opposition to the liberal, supposedly 'apolitical' and therefore mainstream stance of the WEA, a Labour College movement was established to promote knowledge for socialism (Jennings, 1977; Thomas, 1982; Frow and Frow, 1990). But it is the liberal

tradition that won out in the bulk of the literature on adult education and in the eyes of most funding bodies.

Following the First World War, in Britain and countries influenced by Britain, programs of courses in hobbies, languages, crafts and other leisure activities developed alongside the more conventional academic subjects. Sometimes these academic and leisure-learning programs were provided by the same agency, sometimes by different ones, but both are normally seen as belonging to the liberal or 'enrichment' field of adult education.

Both these strands of the liberal tradition normally make a virtue of offering people a chance to withdraw from the pressures of everyday life. Brochures advertise learning as 'fun' or entice people to take 'time off'. Both strands therefore make a virtue of detachment - academic detachment (meaning sometimes, I suspect, a suspension of one's political convictions), or the mental and physical detachment to be found in a pastime (meaning, I suspect, escape).

And claims are made for both these kinds of adult education that they keep people healthy and out of costly care. Willis records that two Australian reports found that adult education 'can make a major contribution to people's health' by aiding personal and social growth and that this in turn can 'contribute to the national economy by suppressing the cost of therapeutic health programs' (1992, p. 209). Willis himself recognises adult education's potential contribution in a whole range of other social, economic and cultural fields; but in the extreme form of the argument he quotes, adult education is presented as some kind of off-the-rack, or mass, diversional therapy.

Eight

Civic responsibility

A third ideal that can lead adult educators to avoid or ignore conflict, that can disempower the adult educator, is civic responsibility.

Adult education can be portrayed as helping people fulfil their roles as good citizens, as informed, responsible, thoughtful participants in a democratic society. For example, in its submission to the Senate inquiry into adult and community education, the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE) lists a number of reasons for government support of adult education, emphasising the 'good citizen' role. General interest and 'recreational' adult education, the report argues,

> is the first rung on the reskilling/re-entry ladder for many, it contributes to positive community mental health, it addresses a whole range of health and safety issues, and *it contributes towards an active, knowledgeable citizenry*. It has traditionally received some public support, although this has varied widely between States and between providing agencies. In the case of liberal adult education, *which so clearly contributes to the quality of public discussion of major issues*, the public dimension is quite clear, and we believe that there ought to be public support (AAACE, 1992, p.17, my italics).

Implicit in this concept of preparing people to be good citizens are the ideas of consensus, acceptance or conformity with majority or, rather, hegemonic ways of thinking and behaving. The citizen is to be educated to function as a mentally healthy, active and knowledgeable person *within* the existing system. Any change that the good citizen might seek to bring about will be through good quality public *discussion*.

There is no surprise in this. In Britain the influential *Final Report* made by the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction just after the First World War stated that adult education 'rests upon the twin principles of personal development and *social service'* (1919, p.168, my italics), principles which were effectively restated in another major report to Westminster Parliament fifty years later (Russell, 1973) and to which much adult education provision in Britain and elsewhere still adheres.

In America, Houle, a major figure in adult education over the middle years of this century, sees helping adults learn in some part at least as a process of helping them fit in:

> The learning activities of men and women must ordinarily be introduced with some care into a complex milieu which includes work, home, civic and other responsibilities (1972, p.53).

Knowles, another giant in the American field of adult education, considers that one of the greatest skills an adult educator can acquire is that of helping learners identify their real educational needs. He then goes on to define an educational need as:

> ...something people ought to learn for their own good, for the good of an organisation or *for the good of society* (1980, p.88, my italics again).

In debates about adult education at an international level in forums such as the OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, a number of concepts of adult education have emerged - continuing education, *education permanente*, recurrent education and lifelong education. These concepts differ in some ways and overlap in others but most, if not all, contain within them the ideas of training people in the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship.

Continuing education is very much in the social service mode, being normally presented as ‘a continuation of formal education which follows on from, accepts the premises of, and cannot criticise initial formal education’ (Rogers, 1992, p.35).

Education permanente envisages a range of providers beyond the formal education system but has for the most part resulted in paid educational leave to pursue further industrial or vocational training. This kind of education, therefore, becomes training not only for social service but also for economic service.

In recurrent education the idea is not of a continuing educational system, but a system that allows adults to enter, leave and re-enter full-time education as they need or want to throughout their lives, resuming their education, updating themselves professionally, or making up for previous educational opportunities they may have missed. Alan Rogers states that recurrent education ‘was seen as a new strategy, radically changing the schools and colleges to the new insights of lifelong education ...’ (1992, p.36). There is little evidence that any structural or philosophical changes that could be called radical have occurred. What *has* happened, however, is that colleges and universities in many countries have taken in increasing numbers of mature students in response to their governments’ and their industries’ calls for training and retraining to deal with changing technologies and economies.

Lifelong education is sometimes promoted as a separate concept and sometimes, as the Rogers’ comment in the paragraph above indicates, as one that subsumes those mentioned above. Supporters of lifelong education argue that learning goes on throughout our lives, and that our way of life, our social systems and all our institutions, be they ostensibly concerned with education or not, should be organised to facilitate this

continuous learning. Lifelong education requires radical societal change and so, as Timothy Ireland demonstrates in his commentary on Ettore Gelpi's work at UNESCO, can be defined in terms of political ideals:

> Lifelong education is part of a process whose ultimate objective is the achievement of a democratic egalitarian socialist society in which each individual participates on an equal footing (Ireland, 1978, p.41).

But that was then. Such statements in our present era of economic rationalism do not curry favour with the fund givers and the power brokers, and perhaps this is the reason why the phrase 'lifelong education' and the educational discourse that goes with it have been less current recently.

One arena, however, where the concept is still invoked is the workplace but here, rather than embody a visionary political ideal, it has been used to justify the expenditure of government money, or the diversion of educational resources. Funds for adult literacy programs are reassigned and earmarked for 'literacy in the workplace'. Funds for the teaching of English to speakers of other languages are reassigned and earmarked for courses related to 'communication in the workplace'. The process of turning working places into learning places may seem to fit nicely with the concept of lifelong education; but too often funds are being diverted from a context where it may still be possible to work with people *as people* to a context in which people are being trained, whatever the visiting educators may believe, *as industrial and economic functions*. Lifelong education becomes, in this case, education to maintain the division of labour.

Nine

Turning a blind eye

Adult educators adhering to the ideals of decency, detachment and civic responsibility do not have enemies close at hand since they tend to accept the current order. Indeed, as Phyllis Cunningham suggests in this baleful commentary on American adult educators, some become part and parcel of that current order.

> Adult education as practiced in North America by those persons who identify themselves as adult education professionals is, for the most part, simply technology that can be bought in the marketplace by the highest bidder. Any ethical concerns expressed by those professionals as a group are tightly framed within 'standards of practice' and 'codes of ethics' whereby the starting points of the argument assume that the way the world is organised is natural and the appropriate role of educators is to use their knowledge and skills in behalf of that order (1988, p.134).

We could argue that these kinds of adult educator, in their concern with process, in their detachment, in their commitment to the status quo, have developed the pathological blindness Noam Chomsky perceives in the United States media and in many Western intellectuals.

In *Deterring Democracy* (1992) Chomsky compares the reporting of the massacres conducted by the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia in 1975 and the slaughter 'comparable in scale and character' in the same year following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, concluding that Western commentators choose to see atrocities committed by states which they oppose as 'terror', and atrocities committed by allies or client states as 'statecraft or understandable error' (p.380).

He gives examples of academics and commentators praising the United States for 'its generosity, and its goodwill' and for the role it has played as the 'defender of freedom' on the international stage, apparently or wilfully ignorant of the United States' intervention in countries like Chile and the Dominican Republic or its approval of the murderous regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala. He cites 'a century of literal human slavery and effective disenfranchisement of Blacks for another century, genocidal assaults on the native population, the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Filippinos at the turn of the century, of millions of Indochinese, of some 200,000 Central Americans in the past decade, and a host of other examples'; and remarks sardonically that 'mere fact is an irrelevance in the domain of pure thought (p.16).

And he gives the example of the United States supporting the Central American peace moves in 1988 to demobilise and repatriate the Nicaraguan Contras while simultaneously supporting the Contras as they continued their guerilla campaign against the Nicaraguan government and their attacks on Nicaraguan health centres, schools and other social services (pp.79-80). Throughout, he notes,

> ... the media, and the Western intellectual community generally, successfully concealed what was happening before their eyes, operating much in the style of a totalitarian state, though without the excuse of fear. As regularly in the past, the cost is paid in blood and misery by the unimportant people. The basic principle, rarely violated, is that what conflicts with the requirements of power and privilege does not exist (p.79).

Ten

Recognising the enemy

The problem for adult educators constrained by the ideals of decency, detachment and civic responsibility is that we do live in a world where we have harsh and unpalatable conflicts of interest, and where we have real and tangible enemies:

We have the thug with a gun and the landlord that employs him.

We have the Right, as Freire describes them, no matter what ideological banner they march under.

We have the lads, the louts and the patriarchal structures that encourage them to flourish.

We have the bosses and politicians who deny, or try to deny, workers their right to organise.

We have irresponsible and lawless multinationals that put profit before anything else, and whose executives ignore or deny the humanity of people they employ.

We have racists.

We have despoilers and polluters.

We have people who regard others as unimportant and literally expendable.

We have dictators and juntas who use terror to maintain their control over the populations they oppress.

We have corporate oligarchies, groupings of 'the elite', people with access to power and privilege who try to restrict the extent to which ordinary people exercise democracy.

And, as Chomsky points out, we have wilfully ignorant commentators and intellectuals who are ready to help them.

There are people lined up against these enemies: - unionists, socialists, and liberation theologians drawn from the ranks of the 'old' social movements, and feminists, environmentalists, peace workers and human rights campaigners drawn from the 'new' social movements. In their campaigns they make use of learning and teaching activities, so are engaged in adult education. But amongst adult educators, the 'professionals' who work within educational structures and teach or provide adult education programs, there are those of us who have had trouble taking sides and joining in the struggle against the kinds of enemy listed above. And this reluctance comes about because of our historical commitment to decency, detachment and civic responsibility or, as some of us might admit, because of our willing submission to the will of the 'respectable' capitalist right who make use of slogans such as decency, detachment and civic responsibility to domesticate potential challenge.

Section 3: Ideas and unsatisfactory answers

Eleven

Utopian compromise

There are adult educators who have recognised enemies but not always found satisfactory ways of responding.

Freire recognises the enemy as 'the Right', and acknowledges the violence with which the Right exercises oppression over others. He also acknowledges the likelihood of violence in the process of removing that oppression; that is, he acknowledges that there may be clashes between opposing forces. Yet somehow he still manages to put the emphasis for change on the oppressed - the victims - coming to know *themselves*.

His pedagogy involves helping the oppressed come to understand how they have connived in their oppression, how they have internalised the opinion the oppressors hold of them, how they have let others 'name their world' for them, and how they have denied their own humanity through their naive or 'magical' consciousness (1972a, pp.38-39). In the process of abandoning this naive consciousness and developing a deepening awareness of the social and cultural factors which have shaped their lives, they also become aware of their capacity to act on their world and change their lives. From being objects of social history - beings to whom things are done - they can become subjects of their own destiny - people who act and take control of their own lives. This shift in consciousness Freire calls *conscientization* (1972a, pp.60-61; 1972b, pp.51-57).

Freire formulated his ideas during the fifties and sixties in Latin America, a part of the world where oppression is still commonplace, injustice stark, and the oppressor often identifiable. His 'Right' must refer, in part at least, to people who maintain their positions, property and privileges through terror. Yet somehow Freire appears to believe that these oppressors, too, are trapped, and that *it is up to the oppressed* to release them.

> Yet it is - paradoxical though it may seem - precisely in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors that a gesture of love may be found ... As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression ... It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradiction in which they are caught. That contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man who is neither oppressor nor oppressed - man in the process of liberation (1972a, pp.32-33).

Freire, then, appears to maintain a faith in the potential goodness of all people; and he envisages a utopia in which revolutionary leaders, the people and, presumably, some at least of the former oppressors are liberated and, through a process of cultural synthesis, create a conscientized, post-revolutionary culture.

> In this synthesis, leaders and people are somehow reborn in new knowledge and new action. Knowledge of the alienating culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture that is freed from alienation (1972a, p.148).

There is in this concept of cultural synthesis a romanticism, an almost mystical yearning for a utopic reconciliation which sits oddly alongside Freire's scathing condemnation of the Right. Freire admits to the utopian element in his thinking (1985, pp.64, 57, 82), but it worries me nonetheless. 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.

Twelve

Learning societies

If Freire's is a voice from the Third World, then Ettore Gelpi's is a voice from 'the North and South, East and West' (Gelpi, 1992, p.329). Gelpi was head of the lifelong education unit at UNESCO for some twenty years. In that post he travelled extensively, conducted and attended conferences, delivered papers, wrote articles, offered advice and acted as consultant; and throughout that period he had access to information about the educational systems, policies and initiatives in countries across the world.

Gelpi is a passionate advocate of lifelong education, and he presents us with a grand vision. He sees lifelong education as 'education for all and by all' (1985, p.181). He sees it as involving new and dynamic relationships between political systems, work and production, and social and cultural movements. He sees it as bringing together traditional and modern, formal and non-formal, and institutional and self-directed forms of education and learning. He sees it as a potential means of redressing individual inequities, doing away with unfair divisions of labour, transforming whole nations, and putting to rights the unequal relations between rich and poor countries.

When reading Gelpi, one has the impression of being hit by ideas from all directions. In the seventies he was already enthusiastically promoting concepts such as the recognition of prior learning, interactive forms of distance learning, student and community participation in the management of educational institutions, access programs, individual and collective forms of self-directed learning, and workplace reorganisation (1979). Often he was the first to place these ideas firmly on agendas at international gatherings and we must assume that he can claim a significant responsibility for their adoption in many educational systems today.

Gelpi's writing is a blend of idealism and realism:

> Lifelong education means making full use of a society's human resources. It is an education which meets individual and collective aspirations and needs and whose end is action. It is in the search for this full use of human resources that education stands revealed as the sensitive nerve point in the relations between social classes, between 'central' and 'peripheral' countries and between individuals fighting for individual and collective human rights against the forces of repression (1985, p.16).

Gelpi acknowledges the existence of hostile and regressive forces, and in the course of his writing he identifies racism, colonialism, the restriction of intellectual freedom,

physical violence, and the inertia of bureaucratic apparatuses. Central to his writing is a continual attack on the unequal division of labour, both between rich and poor countries and between social classes within individual countries and communities; and on the accompanying duality of education, in which some receive education that contributes to their own individual advancement and their class's advancement, while others receive second rate education which reinforces their powerlessness and their domestication. Gelpi sees lifelong education confronting contradictions and being located in struggle, and he asks the question of lifelong education and those who claim to implement it: 'Is it an instrument of liberation or of domination?' (1985, p.5)

Lifelong education, as Gelpi promotes it, is education for democratisation, not for social reproduction or initiation (1985, p.183). A number of implications flow from this. Distinctions between vocational and non-vocational education, and between education and work and leisure need to be blurred. Distinctions between subjects need to be blurred and the streaming of learners abandoned. Work and the means of production need to be restructured, so as to involve self-management by workers and the integration of learning and working. 'The transformation of work,' he says at one stage, 'appears as the key to the transformation of education' (quoted in Ireland, 1978, p.43). Culture, education and mass-communications need to be related in ways that create consultation between consumers and producers. And education should take place 'inside and outside the apparatuses of the state, the church, the parties, to involve everyone actively in these institutions and in civil society' (1985, p.183).

Gelpi, then, does not propose that educational or other institutions be discarded or overturned, but rather that people reclaim and use the existing institutions and social structures, making them responsive, participatory, and reflective of their cultures. He sees lifelong education involving consultation with whole populations, and this leads him to place emphasis on working people and the community organisations and trade unions that represent them.

The global nature of Gelpi's vision makes his ideas exciting but also robs them of precision. He is writing to the world and he adopts a scatter-gun approach. In the one article, indeed one sentence, he can envisage lifelong education as 'an absolute value, a concept, a political idea, an activity, a process' (1985, p.185). He makes sweeping generalisations: '... there can be no scientific and technological revolution without an aesthetic revolution' (1992, p.330). And despite the protestations of his protagonists (Ireland, 1978, Ruddock, 1979), there are long periods in his writing when he engages in a kind of heady rhetoric that seems to have little practical application.

Gelpi knows that there are enemies there, but because of his audience, his proposals for dealing with them tend to be in the form of policy proposals or a series of exhortations.

Thirteen

Collaborative enterprise

In his discussions of the international division of labour, Gelpi examines the inequities in trade between 'marginal' countries and industrialised ones, and the influences of multinationals on that trade. He describes the way rich countries use economic policies to restrict and exclude poorer ones. He describes how a technological dependence can be created. And he discusses the associated phenomena of unemployment, urbanisation and the national and international migration of labour (1985, pp.24-44; 1992)

Alan Rogers is an English adult educator who has worked in India and seen at first hand some of what Gelpi describes. He compares the conditions of living, working and learning in England and India and expresses anger at the inequities and injustices. He wants to use the structures and processes of adult education to advance causes he believes in; and he asks of liberal adult education in Britain and other countries of the West:

> Why do we have to be content to offer courses just to those who come forward of their own volition? And why do we have to offer to those few self-selecting adults just the subjects they want to learn about rather than the things I think are important for the betterment of life - things like health and income generation or the plight of three quarters of the world's population or the selfish waste of the world's natural resources (1992, p.240)?

His solution is to draw lessons from the theory and practice of *adult education* in richer countries and from the theory and practice of *development work* in poorer countries; and to propose processes of learning-development that will bring people, voluntary agencies and state agencies together in collaborative enterprises to promote both community and national interests.

Somehow in the process he loses sight of the question of inequalities between nations and concentrates on problems within a single state. He argues that adult educators in the 'West' must overcome the still prevalent belief that adult education is essentially concerned with individual achievement, and that they should be ready to work towards community-set or state-set goals. He acknowledges the fear on the part of some that this might result in adult education being used as a tool of administration, or to 'colonize people', or for social engineering. However, he argues in reference to the UK,

> ... in the last ten years or so, the national agenda has become both wider and more concerned with issues which also concern adult educators - improved health, increased prosperity, the enhancement of work skills, urban renewal, conservation of the heritage and environmental resources among them. Why are these sometimes seen as inappropriate goals for adult educators simply because they are state-set goals? (p.188)

Rogers recognises that some of development models are mechanistic and directive ('technocratic' and 'bureaucratic'), and he argues that his proposed synthesis of adult education and development, precisely because of the adult education element, will be a more genuinely human process. But it is interesting to note that the education and training of adults is only one of a number of elements in the model he develops. Others include the enhancement of awareness, decision-making, and the action taken. And to these various elements the 'development change-agent' adds her or his 'input'. Rogers' model, then, remains a development one, meaning that the decision to begin and, at various stages during the process, decisions to proceed, will be taken somewhere within the state bureaucracy; and the emphasis, however disguised in other kinds of rhetoric, is likely to be on pursuing a state-set goal of economic development.

Rogers acknowledges that economic growth forms the basis of most development programs but argues that by using a development approach adult educators will be able to move in from the margins and make relevant contributions to the affairs of whole communities and the state. And he argues that by working towards state-set goals and therefore with state support, adult educators can escape the tyranny of learner-centred adult education and pursue causes they believe in, even perhaps in the face of some initial apathy or opposition.

There is an attractive frankness in Rogers' discussion of the adult educator's role towards the individual and the state. He points out, for example, that adult educators in Britain have already worked towards conformist or state-set goals in some adult basic education programs, some kinds of provision of teaching of English for speakers of other languages, and in national keep fit campaigns. He is saying what others have said before: that in many cases adult educators, for all the talk of voluntarism, educational freedom and respect for the learner, have operated as agents of the state.

But there's the rub. Inherent in such a proposal for a collaborative learning enterprise between adult educators, communities and the state is a belief in the essential benevolence of the state. And no such faith is justified.

There are states that are clearly malign: Uganda under Idi Amin, South Africa in its apartheid days, some of the client-states of the former Soviet empire, and some of the client states of the current United States of America, for example.

There are states that are heartless. In the UK, for example, under the leadership of the 'conviction politician' Thatcher during the nineteen eighties, taxes were 'reformed' to the benefit of the already wealthy, and a sophisticated welfare system dismantled in parts and severely weakened in others.

There are one-party 'democracies' and 'corporate democracies'. This description of the United States might well apply to a number of other countries claiming to be free and open and thoroughly democratic:

> There is essentially one political party, the business party, with two factions. Shifting coalitions of investors account for a large part of political history. Unions, or other popular organisations that might offer a way for the general public to play some role in influencing programs and policy choices, scarcely function apart from the narrowest realm. The ideological system is bounded by the consensus of the privileged. Elections are largely a ritual form (Chomsky, 1992, p.373).

There are states that tolerate injustice against individuals or sections of their populations in the interests of security, or progress, or the maintenance of the status quo. People are imprisoned on evidence fabricated by police and only released after years of campaigning, leaving one to wonder how many will never be released. The populations of whole villages are transported from one region of a country to another against their will. And 'the incidence of homelessness' and 'unemployment rates' are coldly maintained at particular levels as part of fiscal, political and industrial relations policies.

And, when the media is inclined to report such events, there are reminders everywhere of corruption and mismanagement amongst bureaucrats and politicians. In Australia, when a prominent politician resigned from one of the two major political parties to set up a new one, he was asked what he hoped to achieve. His replied that his new party would 'keep the bastards honest'. Although originally spoken in the nineteen sixties, it remains a much quoted, and rarely contested, public acknowledgement that politicians of all hues need constant watching.

Fourteen

Critical thinking

Some states can corrupt, or rend 'schizophrenic', the thinking of whole populations. It is not surprising, then, that following the second world war a philosopher-novelist like Albert Camus should write powerful studies of the corruption of emotion and thought; and that the social theorist Jurgen Habermas, a leading figure of the 'Frankfurt School' of philosophy, should look at how knowledge is generated and at how social and cultural factors influence, and can distort, that generation of knowledge. From a concern with these kinds of issue has come a wide range of writing and thinking about the formulation of theory and the generation of knowledge that is sometimes collectively described as 'critical theory'.

'Critical theory' is concerned with far more than analysis or logical thinking. It recognises the influence of cultural values on people's reasoning and acting, and takes into account interaction, insight, feeling, intuition and other non-scientistic ways of knowing. Critical theory envisages forms of thinking in which people not only perceive the world more clearly but also *perceive their perceptions* of the world. This is awareness of another order. Achieving it enables people to change the way they receive and generate knowledge about themselves and the world; and to appreciate the interaction between themselves as individuals and the society and culture of which they are a part. At its most basic, critical theory is concerned with people thinking in a way that not only prevents them from being fooled by others, but also prevents them from fooling themselves. At its most optimistic, critical theory envisages people acting on and transforming those distortions in their culture that lead people to be fooled.

In the past decade adult educators have drawn increasingly on critical theory to inform their thinking and practice. Two writers in particular - Jack Mezirow and Stephen Brookfield - have contributed to this development. Both recognise that people can be constrained, forced into straightjackets by their cultures and backgrounds, oppressed, and duped. Both look for a kind of adult learning that will emancipate.

Mezirow develops a theory of 'learning for perspective transformation'. His journey of reflection on this kind of learning (1977, 1981, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1994) started with research into mature-age women re-entering college. In essence Mezirow sees these women going through a process of recognising, and then escaping from, their 'culturally induced dependency roles': as the less important member of a marriage, for example, or the second-class citizen, or a person with limited employment expectations. Through a heightened and transformed awareness of themselves and the factors that had made them

who they were, they were able to consider and try out different roles. Once secure in their new roles, they were able to reintegrate themselves into society as self-directing individuals in their own right (Mezirow, 1981).

Two points need to be made here. First, the focus appears to have been on the transformation of the individual woman, rather than on the people - the partner, the employers, and others within the structure of the patriarchal society - that may have oppressed her.

And second, one of the outcomes of perspective transformation is reintegration. My worry here is that if we accept reintegration as a satisfactory outcome then, although the individual may be transformed, the oppressors may go unchallenged and the society these oppressors continue to act in may go unchanged.

At first sight, Brookfield appears to locate his ideas in a more overtly political context. During a talk in Australia in 1989, for example, he spoke of his dismay at the way the majority of the English population apparently uncritically accepted the British government's decision in 1982 to go to war with Argentina over the Faulklands Islands. The results of that dismay and his subsequent reflections are to be found his book *Developing Critical Thinkers* (1987).

Brookfield describes critical thinking as 'a lived activity, not an academic pastime' and examines the promotion of critical thinking in the workplace, its use in analysing political issues and the media, and its application to personal relationships.

Critical thinking, Brookfield asserts, involves judging judgements:

> Thinking critically involves our recognising the assumptions underlying our beliefs and behaviours. It means we can give justifications for our ideas and actions. Most important, perhaps, it means we try to judge the rationality of these justifications (1987, p.13).

Brookfield sees the critical thinker developing a 'reflective scepticism' towards people with easy answers, towards untested generalisations, dogma and ideologies

Brookfield argues that this kind of critical thinking is essential to a healthy democracy, but his emphasis is nonetheless on critical thinking as a personal and inward looking activity, and this is reflected in the language he uses when describing certain phases of critical thinking (1987, pp.26-27). These phases include *a trigger event*, which 'prompts a sense of inner discomfort or complexity'; *appraisal*, which involves 'a period of self-scrutiny'; *exploration*, when 'we begin to search for new ways of explaining these discrepancies or of living with them - ways that reduce our sense of discomfort'; *developing alternative perspectives* 'that seem most satisfactory and congruent with our

relationships and ways of living'; and *integration*, when, 'having decided on the worth, accuracy, and validity of new ways of thinking or living, we begin to find ways to integrate these into the fabric of our lives'.

Brookfield argues that the process of critical thinking involves developing a 'contextual awareness' in addition to a heightened awareness of ourselves; but when he comes to look at ways of encouraging critical thinking in others, most of the processes he describes are methods of getting people to examine *their own* assumptions, the criteria they apply to *their own* behaviour, and the attitudes and values that influence the way they lead *their own* personal and professional lives.

Both Brookfield and Mezirow recognise the role adult education can play in social action: Mezirow can go on attack when he sees colleagues reducing adult education 'to a technology divorced from any responsibility for social change' (1984); and Brookfield discusses critical thinking in relationship to trade unions, the feminist movement, ecologists and peace activists. But for me neither satisfactorily describes how learning for perspective transformation or critical thinking might contribute in a political struggle when the battle lines are drawn and the parleying is over.

Mezirow, himself, makes no claims to do this. His stance is unambiguous. He asserts that perspective transformation is a personal activity that constitutes the starting point to political action.

> Transformation theory - and adult educators - can promise only to help the first step of political change, emancipatory education that leads to personal transformation, and to share the belief that viable strategies for public change will evolve out of this (1991, p.210).

Brookfield's position is much less clear. In a chapter entitled 'How critical thinking sustains a healthy democracy' (1987, pp. 51-68), Brookfield recognises the stranglehold that elites can have on apparent democracies, how decisions that affect us all are made by tiny minorities, and how many people become passive viewers of events. He describes how the result can be a loss of interest in the political processes, and a turning inwards to personal interests and personal gratification.

Brookfield offers critical thinking as a counter to this 'absorption in a privatized lifestyle'. He argues that critical thinking can 'make explicit the connections between the personal and political' in people's lives. And he goes on the examine how the 'skilled helper' can assist in this process of helping people relate individual concerns and crises to wider social change.

But it is when he comes to consider ‘helping people mobilize for collective social change’ that he becomes concerned with problems the educator might face. In particular he identifies the difficult ethical choices the educator will have to make when working with people who may take up causes; and the possibility that the educator may be responsible for people being hurt if the critical thinking he or she encourages impels those people into action, particularly against powerful and repressive enemies. Having raised these problems he then appears to retreat from the arena of collective action to a discussion of critical thinking as an essentially reactive and individual activity, and in the final pages of the chapter, critical thinking is described as the skill of asking awkward questions of our political leaders:

> A readiness to ask why things are the way they are, a capacity to speculate imaginatively on alternative possibilities, an inbuilt skepticism of the pronouncements and actions of those who are judged to be in positions of political and economic power - these are fundamental ways in which the processes of critical thinking, analysis, and reflection in adults can be recognised (p.68).

As I read them, both Brookfield and Mezirow are trapped by the personal nature of the kinds of learning they examine and by the assumption (or hope) that critical thinking or transformative learning will lead to a generous open-mindedness, a nice kind of scepticism and a beneficial form of self-directedness. In this regard, one begins to suspect that their true antecedent is Carl Rogers and not Habermas or critical theory at all. The goals remain vague, more to do with ‘transformation’ or ‘exploring and imagining alternatives’, than with developing the kind of sharply focussed thinking - an acumen - that will generate undistorted knowledge.

Ironically, Brookfield’s discourse on critical thinking leads him into a suspension of his own critical judgment. He argues that he should apply the principles of critical thinking to himself, and so towards the end of the book engages in self-criticism, identifying foibles in his writing style and acknowledging some of the assumptions and values that have influenced the way he has presented his arguments.

> My selection of examples undoubtedly reveals my own biases - especially my selection of events from the political world, where my opposition to conservative ideas and policies comes through clearly. I tend to emphasise the mistakes of the right and minimise or ignore those of the left (witness my discussions of Republican and Democratic politics or the British

> Conservative and Labour Parties). At times these biases are even concealed in 'objective', empirical fact (1987, p.248).

Brookfield seems to be apologising for not giving everyone a 'fair go', but he is actually criticising himself for displaying a bias against the kinds of political parties and people who, during the course of the eighties and into the nineties, went needlessly to war, attacked a small Caribbean island, mined harbours, advised and supported the murderers of ordinary people including committed adult educators, wound back welfare systems, busted unions, and supported the ravages of the environment and the exploitation of unrepresented labour by transnational corporations (Horton and Freire, 1990; Kamel, 1990; Chomsky, 1992).

Brookfield has fallen foul of the liberal's desire to be fair and ended up by disempowering some of his own arguments. But if I criticise him for this I must also recognise that liberals and those seeking more radical solutions can be allies, that they can have the same goals, and that liberals can provide a timely word of caution to the hothead and the activist. In his discussion of the politics of critical thinking Brookfield has drawn attention to the potentially violent outcomes of some kinds of learning and reminded adult educators that there may be times when our interventions can have drastic results. The challenge is to take heed of the timely reminders but not fall into the trap of being fair to people who will not be fair to us.

Section Four: *Really* critical thinking

Fifteen

Redefining 'critical'

Brookfield and some of the other adult educators writing about critical thinking (or critical reflection, critical analysis, critical enquiry, and so on) point out that they are talking of a form of enquiry that may be difficult and challenging but that is nonetheless positive in spirit and aimed at producing positive change in the learners. Brookfield focuses on critical thinking as an intellectual skill. Other adult educators examine critical theory as a framework for the practice of adult education for social change, and they too tend to speak in positive terms. David Little, for example, having opened an article with an uncompromising description of pervading social and environmental disorders, ends with this affirmation of the potentially healing influence of critical theory:

> As a major player among society's institutions, an educational system informed by critical theory can enact a leading role toward the attainment of significant advances in the direction of a more just, equitable and humane society (1991, p.19).

These positive meanings accorded to 'critical' in the cases above may well be justified but we should stop sanitising the word, and restore to it two of its other meanings.

We should restore to the word 'critical' the concept of finding fault. Michael Welton, in a brief history of the word 'critical', notes that in the mid-eighteenth century the process of critique involved discovering '*via negativa* the truth or falsity of text or institution' (1991, p.25). And in modern colloquial speech some of that meaning remains when we use 'critical' to mean 'disapproving'. But I am suggesting that we should be sharper than that and restore to the word 'critical' the idea of laying blame; so that critical thinking should include identifying and exposing those who are duplicitous or dangerous or exploitative or monstrous or weak and who by being so cause harm to us and/or to others. I can see nothing wrong with this kind of critical thinking, and I can see nothing wrong with adult educators helping others develop this kind of critical thinking.

And we should restore to the word 'critical' the meaning of being at the edge, at the moment of truth, face to face with the enemy. Donald Schon has written about the reflective practitioner, the professional who can think on his or her feet, respond intuitively to new and unexpected problems, act creatively under pressure, and reflect on and learn from these experiences (1983, 1987). In his more recent books Schon examines

mainstream organisations and the practice of professionals such as architects, engineers, psychotherapists, executives and consultants; but in an earlier book (1971) he also drew on radical movements in his search for models of ‘learning organisations’. I believe we should take the kinds of ideas Schon canvasses in his later work and reapply them to the contexts of social and political action he drew upon in the earlier work. I believe we should examine the kinds of learning and thinking in action that we need to develop - the kinds of reflective practitioner we need to be - in the face of evil people and inimical forces, in front of the earth movers about to knock down a forest, in front of the lines of people with guns, in conflict with union busters, in confrontation with the snobs and belittlers, the despoilers and the polluters - that is, in the presence of enemies.

Sixteen

Enemies within

To help people learn and take action in the presence of enemies, we need to find writers and thinkers who will help us mark out the opposition, and who will take us to the edge.

Some adult educators have identified and attacked enemies within.

Phyllis Cunningham and Robert Carlson are two of the thirteen contributors to *Ethical Issues in Adult Education* (Brockett, 1988), and both swim gloriously against the ideological current of the book. Most of the other writers concern themselves with the mechanics of delivering adult education. Their ethical questions, therefore, are to do with practice within the existing systems of adult and continuing education in North America - to do with planning, marketing, teaching, evaluating and research. Some present case studies that pose 'ethical problems' in relation to advertising, choice of teaching style, use of students' experiences in teaching, confidentiality, and conflicts with organisational policy. One writer argues that 'the adult education field has matured to a point where we must understand personal philosophy and ethical behaviour' (Hiemstra, 1988, p.191), and presents a 'Personal Philosophy Worksheet' to help us do this.

Cunningham and Carlson, on the other hand, look at the ideological frameworks within which adult educators in North America operate; and they do not like what they see.

Cunningham attacks the way many adult educators in North America appear to organise themselves around the technology. She accuses them of turning institutionalised adult education into 'a disabling profession': securing their own positions by mystifying the various processes (such as needs analysis or evaluation) and making their 'clients' dependent on them. She attacks adult educators who claim to be apolitical or neutral or objective.

> Those who 'have' in society rarely see the need for change as clearly as those who 'have not'. Accordingly, one could argue that we professionals invent such ideas as scientific objectivity and professionalism to sanitize our basic desires and tendencies to maintain inequality, racism, sexism, and classism since we are satisfied, on balance, with our 'share of the pie' (1988, p.136).

She argues that adult educators need to apply the blowtorch of critical enquiry to themselves; that they need to examine who holds the power in adult education and who really benefits from the work they do. Adult educators must move beyond so-called ethical

questions regarding, say, models of evaluation, and grapple with basic issues such as 'the emergence of a permanent underclass in our democracy'.

Cunningham argues that adult education in North America is elitist, biassed on behalf of the majority culture, and developing elements of coercion. To back up this last point she points to mandatory continuing education, and to the more subtle influence of phrases such as 'the learning society' and 'lifelong education' which she argues sound innocuous but gradually establish the idea that everyone *ought* to be involved in institutionalised adult education. (As we saw earlier, Gelpi argues that lifelong education can be used as an instrument of liberation or domination. Cunningham clearly sees the term being used in North America to restrict and control.)

Carlson, in a chapter that reads like a companion piece to Cunningham's, picks up and runs with this theme of coercion. He describes the processes of 'self-serving professionalization' through which groups of professional elites establish exclusive codes of conduct and by doing so 'seize the initiative' from people, prevent them from helping each other, and require them 'to report for help to the legally constituted helpers'. He cites examples from the legal and medical professions of codes being used, not to ensure high standards of practice or protect clients and patients, but to secure a monopolistic authority for the professional group, to exclude dissenters and critics, and to maintain artificially high fees.

Carlson then goes on an excoriating attack of the bizarrely named Council on the Continuing Education Unit which, in 1984 at a meeting in Wisconsin of professionals, academics, business representatives and government officials, launched its 'Principles of good practice in continuing education'. He is particularly incensed at their offer to act as the police force for adult and continuing education in North America, ensuring that everybody toes the line:

> Like any propagators of any faiths utilizing modern promotional processes, the Council was prepared to monitor 'endorsement' - philosophical agreement with the 'principles'; 'adoption' - official promises by adult education organizations to use the 'principles' within their institutions and 'implementation' - actual use of the 'principles' by those organizations (1988, p.170)

Carlson notes that the advocates of these principles differed from the cynical advocates of codes of practice in some other professions in that they appeared to be 'true believers' rather than self-servers, but he argues that in many respects the principles would have the same effects of closing off the professional practice of adult education from

outsiders and locating power in an elite. He goes through some of the principles (noting, for example, the insistence that measurable and observable learning outcomes be written for all educational activities) and concludes that the ‘principles’ are ideological statements ‘clearly based on positivist philosophy and behaviourist psychology, the rock of the mechanistic dogma of schooling’ (p.171). He decries the desire on the part of the advocates of these principles to impose their own particular views on a traditionally pluralistic adult education, and maintains that if they were to succeed both the freedom and the joy in learning to be found in many kinds of adult education would suffer.

Seventeen

Research at the edge

Carlson's chapter is a *tour de force,* and he concludes that prescribed sets of principles and codes of ethics will serve adult education no good. But the models he examines are restrictive ones, either self-serving or sectarian. Deshler and Selener, too, want to combat the influences of mechanistic dogma in adult education, but in their case they offer a set of guidelines - some might describe them as a set of principles or a code of ethics - to help achieve this.

In a jointly written article these two adult educators describe how, immediately following the Transatlantic Dialogue Conference held at Leeds in England in 1988, some sixty adult educators from both the 'North' and the 'South' debated adult education research and how, during that debate, the concept of 'transformative research' began to emerge. It would seem that not all who were present wholeheartedly espoused the concept, but the debate nonetheless clearly represented an attempt to move beyond narrowly defined research methods focussed on the technologies of adult education, and to relate research to the kinds of issues affecting the majority of people in the world.

Deshler and Selener (1991, pp.10-11) describe 'transformative research' as having these four tenets:

> *ethical* - the research process should be conducted in the public interest with attention to human rights, social justice, reconciliation and the preservation of environmental sustainability;
> *emancipatory* - the research activity should contribute to the reduction and elimination of economic, social, political and technical oppressive structures and situations;
> *empowering* - the research activity should serve the emergence of marginalised and disadvantaged groups and promote the conservation and proliferation of different forms of life; and
> *holistic* - the research activity should emphasise, identify and reveal relationships and interconnectedness between: the part and the whole, the subjective and the objective, the micro and the macro contexts, and the local and the global.

Deshler and Selener are not trying to promote a new research methodology or dictate new areas of research. They are presenting a framework in which they hope any research of any kind relating to any issue, subject or group of people can be located.

Carlson argues against codes, seeing them as likely to be used to standardise and dehumanise adult education. Deshler and Selener welcome a set of guidelines as a way of

promoting pluralism and a humanitarianism in research in adult education. Cunningham wants a ‘voluntary, life-related’ adult education facilitated by adult educators in ‘constructive critical dialogue with their publics’ (Cunningham, 1988, p.144). All four reject the technocratic view of adult education and all four argue that adult education can contribute to positive social change.

Eighteen

Violence and learning on the line

Deshler and Selener provide a case study to demonstrate their concept of transformative research (1991, pp.17-19). The case study deals with the gradual realisation by an impoverished community in the United States that toxic waste was being dumped in disused mines in their area and that dangerous waste was leaking into the environment. During the course of the research that uncovered the illegal action by the company and the connivance of certain authorities, members of the community attended a workshop at Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee, where they met with members of other communities experiencing similar problems, shared information, discussed what further research they could do and examined the kinds of political and social action they could take. Deshler and Selener demonstrate how the research by the community, with the help of Highlander and its resources, conformed to all four tenets of transformative research, being ethical, emancipatory, empowering and holistic.

In a way it is no surprise that a group of people, presented with this alliance of unscrupulous private enterprise and derelict public officialdom, should come to Highlander. They were people with enemies, and Highlander's founder, Myles Horton, was an adult educator who had come face to face with enemies on many occasions.

Horton established Highlander in the Appalachian mountains in 1932 and from there for more than five decades he and his colleagues helped 'common people' learn from and prepare for social action. During that time he was attacked, beaten up by racists, arrested, and investigated by state and federal authorities for his alleged politically subversive activities. In 1933 he was present at a strike in Wilder, Tennessee when his friend Barney Graham, president of the United Mineworkers local (union branch), was murdered by professional killers. And in 1937 when he was involved in a long drawn out strike by textile workers in Lumberton, North Carolina, Horton himself faced four gunmen who had come to kill him. Horton talked them out of killing him through a combination of gall, counter-threat and clever argument. In discussing his work, Horton said:

> If you don't know fear in this kind of business, if you're playing on the cutting edge of social change, in conflict situations when the sides are lined up and there's violence all the time, then you'd better learn to know it (Horton, 1981).

Horton recognised the existence of violence in the lives of the people he was helping learn:

> I know that in a class-structured society violence exists and the victims are the poor. And I'm not going to stand back when they try to devise ways of doing things and not try to help them work out their own ways of doing it. And I'm also sure in my own mind that there are times come when you've exhausted every avenue of change in a revolutionary situation, if the people won't get off your back and won't give you leeway to grow, you've got to push them off. And that's violence (Horton, 1981).

Horton knew that he had enemies, and was perversely proud of the fact that some of them singled him out for attention. His enemies were the bigots, the racists, those who would use their economic or industrial or bureaucratic power to hold people back. In the nineteen thirties he and his colleagues at Highlander linked their workshops and other educational activities with the struggles in the south of the United States to establish unions and to combat the exploitation of workers in poverty stricken areas and company-controlled towns. In the forties and fifties, Highlander's focus shifted to helping black people establish their rights to vote, and this led to the preparation of people to engage in the struggle for civil rights in the sixties. In the seventies and eighties, Highlander's focus shifted to environmental issues and to helping people in the Appalachian region combat the injustices and inequities brought about by the phenomenon of absentee landlords and the forms of 'economic colonialism' imposed by some large national and transnational companies.

Horton and his colleagues would invite people who were part of a struggle - informal or community leaders who could 'multiply their learning' - to come together at Highlander. At these gatherings, often residential workshops of only two or three days' length, Horton and his colleagues would encourage the participants to talk about their past actions, giving those past actions a significance, a personal meaning. Then, through story telling, peer teaching, discussion and 'sharing visions', they would help the participants compare their actions, see connections, make generalisations, draw conclusions and so give those different personal meanings a social meaning. In the course of this analysis, Horton and his colleagues would encourage the participants to consider future action, and therefore future learning.

People's experiences formed the curriculum. The analysis of these experiences formed the learning. And the goals of this learning were future action and future learning. John

Peters and Brenda Bell (1987) sum Horton’s educational process up in these words: ‘Theory flows from action towards action’.

Horton recognised that this kind of learning involved risk for both educators and learners. Enemies can react savagely, but the learning and the action and the exhilaration that goes with being ‘on the line’ might just be worth it:

> It’s dangerous to do this kind of education, to push the boundaries to the place where people might be fired, or get in some kind of trouble. But you’ve got to get on that line, as close as you possibly can, and sometimes you’ll analyse it wrong and get clipped. If people don’t take chances, they’ll never keep pushing. They must explore and push as far as they can. People get the exhilaration of liberating themselves, pushing the boundary line until they push it to the place where they’re challenged, and they either have to back off or go further ... (Horton, Kohl and Kohl, 1990, p.183).

Nineteen

Silver dagger

In 1961 I heard a recording of Joan Baez singing this song from the Southern Appalachians:

Don't sing love songs, you'll wake my mother.
She's lying here right by my side,
And in her hand a silver dagger.
She says that I can't be your bride.

All men are false, says my mother,
They'll tell you wicked, loving lies.
The very next day they'll court another,
Leave you alone to pine and sigh.

My daddy is a handsome devil.
He's got a chain five miles long,
And on each link a heart does dangle
Of a maid he's loved and wronged.

Go court another tender maiden
And hope that she will be your wife,
For I've been warned and I've decided
To sleep alone all of my life.

The song contains such depth. Each person's story is interwoven with the others. There is the daughter's wistful rejection, the lover's desperate loss, the father's destructive progress, the mother's white hot anger. There is decision and determination, tragedy and regret.

The song is couched in the language and the conventions of another century and, as it is sung, wonderfully gentle. Yet it is a passionate, feminist protest.

Twenty

Women on the line

Jane Thompson is another adult educator who talks of a 'line', and who uses the language of struggle and resistance in her writing about learning.

> It is only when women cross the line drawn by patriarchy and choose to do things on our own and when our collusion with racism, homophobia and class oppression can no longer be guaranteed, that real resistance and real possibilities begin to emerge (Thompson, 1988, p.200).

The participants in the Second Chance for Women courses were working-class women living in or near Southampton, England who, because of their class and gender, had often been socially and physically isolated in inimical housing estates, excluded from any but ancillary or menial occupations, and denied any real capacity to act on the world around them. Thompson has no compunction about sheeting home the blame for this exclusion, isolation and powerlessness:

> So long as men have been powerful, they have used their power to describe the world in their own terms; to create, confirm and reinforce the knowledge which has concerned them historically ...
>
> Denied access to male deliberations and the distribution of power, we women have become the victims of decisions made *for* us and of definitions *about* us (1983a, pp.109-110).

Second Chance for Women courses normally met for one day a week for a year. In the mornings participants were introduced to the study of law, literature, sociology, politics and history, but this was done, not by addressing the subjects as discrete bodies of knowledge, but by examining themes, such as: family life, employment, women's struggle for the vote, the politics of welfare, and inequalities arising out of class, race and gender. The approach was interdisciplinary, and team-teaching was used so that members of the staff related to the participants and each other in dialogue and discussion, rather than lecturing as individual specialists. A resource pack of reading material was provided for each session but the examination of a theme or discipline 'relied profoundly' on the experience of the members of each group so that, when dealing with the health service, for example, the group could start from personal accounts of their own encounters with the system as patients, nurses, cleaners and ancillary workers.

The afternoons were conducted as workshops. All participants took part in a writer's workshop, and could choose from other options such as a film group, a radio workshop and 'an oral herstory group'. The aim of the writer's workshop was 'to explore the condition of being a woman in our society through discussion and personal writing about first hand experience' (Thompson, 1983a, p.167); and from it came a forceful and moving body of material: personal accounts - sometimes in poetry as well as prose - of childhood, schooldays, encounters with prejudiced bureaucracies, experiences of victimisation at the hands of the legal system, sexual harassment and violence against women at work and in public places, domestic violence, personal struggles, oppressive and successful relationships, and individual and shared achievements.

The mornings, then, were planned by the tutors and dealt with analysis. The afternoons were in the hands of the participants and provided original material to further inform that analysis. The result was a powerful combination of rigorous conceptual study, and the release of intensely individual expression.

We need to look a little more at this fusion of the personal and the 'public' in the courses. Central to Thompson's educational practice was the discovery and affirmation of identity. She aimed to help individual participants 'define their own needs, express their own personalities and discover their own identities' (1983a, p.158). And judging by some of the writing from the workshops quoted in *Learning Liberation* (Thompson, 1983a) and *Learning the Hard Way* (Taking Liberties Collective, 1989) this could be a profoundly personal experience. But Thompson took this process far beyond the kind of a personal development that so excited Carl Rogers. She helped the participants locate these affirmations of identity within a feminist analysis of relationships and a feminist critique of society. Individual women affirmed their identities in solidarity with other women, and conceptually with *all* women.

The element of self-examination in the courses, then, was neither a retreat, nor an example of the more sophisticated 'ideology of liberal individualism' that feminist writers such as Zillah Eisenstein (1981) and bell hooks (1984) see in certain kinds of feminist discourse. The self-examination was quickly shared, and so became a challenge.

> The combination of exploring and creating knowledge about women, with women, for women, and in a way that values women, and makes bridges between us is, I think, dangerous and revolutionary business so far as patriarchy is concerned, but liberationary so far as women are concerned (Thompson, 1983a, p.159).

This quote illuminates both the private and the public aspects of the courses. In the more ‘academic’ parts of the courses participants were encouraged to create knowledge, and in so doing review and reclaim areas of academic study for themselves. Thompson and her colleagues helped participants critically examine existing disciplines in order to establish how they had excluded women and women’s experience; to attack the concept of specialism in the system of academic discipline; and to create their own kind of personal *and* public interdisciplinary knowledge. In this way Thompson sought to work alongside other women to create a new kind of curriculum that was academically rigorous but freed from conventional, patriarchal forms of control and bias.

Thompson’s educational and political position is difficult to categorise. Her work with the Second Chance for Women courses was creative and original, and she writes with an individual voice. Sue Blundell, in an article entitled ‘Gender and curriculum in adult education’ (1992), reviews ‘the four major discourses’ in feminist thinking - liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist - and relates them to adult education. Thompson’s writing would suggest that she has strong affinities with the Marxist and socialist discourses. For example, she refers to writers like Gramsci, Bowles and Gintis, and Keith Jackson in a discussion of adult education, class and disadvantage (Thompson, 1980); but elsewhere she has no hesitation in criticising the practice of Jackson and others whom in many respects she also admires (Thompson, 1983a, pp.105-106). She is her own counsel, and it is a counsel informed by extensive reference to feminist historical, sociological and political writing, and her practice of constantly keeping her enemies in sight.

The enemies are patriarchy and the people who support, benefit from, uphold, and promote patriarchy. Thompson helped the women in the Second Chance for Women courses define these enemies. I never attended the courses, and as a man would not have been admitted, but from conversations with Thompson and from hers and others’ accounts, I have formed the impression that it was in this process of frankly and unambiguously identifying ‘who are our genuine allies and who are our enemies’ that the learning took place, that it was this process that bound the public and personal together in the courses, and that it was this process that gave the courses a capacity to change people’s individual and collective lives.

Thompson left adult education in 1989 but returned in 1993, taking up a post at Ruskin College, Oxford, at the beginning of the year and publishing an open letter addressed to ‘Whoever’s Left’ (Thompson, 1993) five months later. She recalls that amongst adult educators in Britain in the past ‘it was at least possible to to discuss politics’ but that now

> ... I return to the front line much like a dinosaur. To find the literature of journals and the rationale of conferences preoccupied with the management of education of the marketplace. In which the talk is about strategic plans and targeting techniques, about franchising and credit transfers, about twilight shifts and accelerated degrees - delivered with a kind of tenacity devoid of passion that characterises automatons released from business training schemes.

She notes that it has become ‘usual to mistake imperialism for democracy and the free market for freedom’, and that it is now ‘socially and intellectually unsound to speak in essentialist and universal terms about the common experience of oppression’; and she paints a grim picture of lost community, of no visible reduction in violence against women, and of widespread bankruptcy, unemployment and poverty.

Thompson may be dismayed but she is not daunted. She ends her polemic with a challenge to professional colleagues who are disenchanted with ‘the tawdry and gratuitous greed of enterprise economics’ to reclaim the radical initiative and ‘to find some ways together of putting the politics of resistance and transformation back on to the agenda of adult and continuing education’.

Twenty one

Discriminating discontentment

Frank Milligan, in a quiet but persistent way, provided education for resistance and transformation. In the UK in the nineteen thirties he set up a residential adult education centre in a large semi-derelict house called Wincham Hall where unemployed men, 'many of them demoralised, all of them poorly educated, a third of them functionally illiterate' (Groombridge, 76, p.125), could retreat for a time and, through a combination of practical work, arts, crafts, recreational activities and discussion, look anew at themselves and at the social and political situation of which their unemployment was a part.

Milligan saw the distinction between work, recreation and education as artificial, and through his sensitive intervention provided an educational depth to all the activities at Wincham, trying 'to encourage the sometimes difficult belief that life can be enjoyed'. Repairing the house, maintaining the vegetable garden, practising and learning crafts, engaging in various recreational pastimes, and conversing together in the evening hardly seem revolutionary activities, yet some senior figures in government disapproved of what Milligan and the residents were doing at Wincham.

One senior public servant associated with work schemes for the unemployed described Milligan as an agitator. Recalling the incident, Milligan happily accepts the description:

> The problem of an expert official in a democracy is like that of the teacher and his temptation is the same - to welcome too rapidly the passivity of others. But passivity makes the end of democracy as it must of education. The greatest tragedy of unemployment lay not wholly in its immediate evils but in that so many of those affected by them were content to accept them ... Their patience was not of the discriminating kind and if our education made them discontented so much the better provided the ways for reconstruction were kept open. If this is what the distinguished civil servant meant when he described me as an agitator then he was right, for all educators should be agitators in this sense, they must forever be stirring up ideas (quoted in Groombridge, 1976, p.123).

I like the quote because of the elegance of the language, because of the measured thought, and because I hear the voice of a strongly committed person coming through.

In the Second Chance for Women courses Thompson used anger, helping her learners express it, focus it, and translate it into action. At Wincham Milligan fostered a discriminating kind of discontentment.

Section Five: Political contexts

Twenty two

Learning through struggle

Griff Foley, like Thompson, presents us in his writing with a grim and disquieting vision. When I read him I am put in mind of Auden's poem 'September 1, 1939', which begins:

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of this low dishonest decade...

More than fifty years later Foley, an Australian, writes:

> For the past twenty years the world has been experiencing economic crisis and restructuring ... Economic and social policy has shifted from emphasis on full employment, social security, social equity and government intervention, to international competitiveness, deregulation, privatisation and lower government spending. These economic and political changes and policies have intensified inequalities and injustices ... (Foley, 1992c, p.47).

Foley goes on to comment that it is 'hard for adult educators not to be immobilised and embittered' by these changes.

Foley himself has not been immobilised. For the past ten years he has influenced Australian adult education through his work as an educator of adult educators, through his writing for participants on courses he has taught and/or coordinated, and through his research. In the early and mid-nineteen eighties, for example, he played a major part in establishing a diploma in adult education for Aboriginal adult educators and contributed to the development of other courses for community adult educators; during the latter part of the eighties he and Rick Flowers conducted a major piece of research into Aboriginal adult education in the state of New South Wales; and in 1990 he coordinated the establishment of a new Master in Adult Education degree course at the University of Technology, Sydney.

In the past three or four years Foley has published a number chapters in books and articles for Australian and international journals, and has other articles awaiting

publication. In this increasing body of writing he throws his net wide, developing his ideas in relation to contexts as varied as the Chinese and Zimbabwean liberation struggles, a campaign to protect a rain forest in northern New South Wales, women's learning centres, the Australian labour market, and Aboriginal communities. Two themes dominate, however: the control of learning; and learning in contexts of social and political struggle.

Foley sees the struggle for the control of learning as part of a complex interplay of two sets of conflicts. The first set of conflicts comprises those that can take place within a group. The second set is made up of those conflicts that can occur between that group and external forces. To get to grips with his ideas, it is best to start with his analysis of various conflicts and powerplays that can occur in an adult classroom. From there we can see how he applies similar thinking to other, sometimes very different contexts.

In a discussion of teaching and group work in adult education (1992a) Foley cites certain instances of resistance, anger and persistently negative behaviour that do not appear to conform with the optimistic views of group work promoted by some humanist psychologists. This behaviour seems irrational and, given the adult status of the learners, oddly immature. In search of an explanation, Foley turns to certain psychoanalytic theorists who argue that in groups there are both conscious forces that produce rational, coordinated behaviour in order to get on with the job, and unconscious forces that produce negative, disruptive behaviour in order to counter basic anxieties. These forces produce varying emotional and behavioural conflicts within individual members of a group, and between individuals and subgroupings of people in a group.

Foley perceives these conflicts between conscious and unconscious forces occurring in adult learning groups. He also notes that individuals or subgroupings in an adult learning group will sometimes blame the adult educator for the conflict and will sometimes do this irrationally, flying in the face of evidence or misinterpreting the adult educator's actions. This produces another set of conflicts with the adult educator and, perhaps, the institution, as outsiders to the group.

Foley argues that the adult educator who draws on optimistic humanist theory is likely to respond simplistically to these conflicts by being 'endlessly supportive', basing this response on the assumption that the group process will ultimately achieve a satisfactory and healthy outcome. However, by being endlessly supportive, the adult educator is adopting a 'false self' and will be less able to confront learners, more likely to adopt strategies to please rather than teach, and more open to emotional exploitation by the learners. This false self makes the adult educator less able to help people really learn.

To understand these conflicts further, and the dilemma facing the adult educator having to deal with them, Foley looks beyond psychoanalytic theory. He suggests that the adult educator is engaged in a kind of ‘emotional labour’ and ‘emotional management’ similar to the emotional labour and emotional management required of workers in some service industries, such as flight attendants who are forced to adopt false emotional selves in the presence of unpleasant passengers or in moments of stress and fear. Engaging in this kind of emotional management can lead to an alienation as soul-destroying as the alienation experienced by workers in other kinds of industry.

These reflections lead Foley to review the role of the adult educator as facilitator in the accepted Rogers or Heron mould; and to question the current reverence for learner-directed learning as both the preferred process and most desirable goal in adult education. He does not reject self-direction in learning, but argues that adult educators are more likely to perform their roles effectively by adopting a more proactive role: by making explicit what is expected of the learners, by setting clear boundaries between themselves and the learners, by being more prepared to challenge the learners intellectually, and by resisting being emotionally ‘dumped upon’.

This is an important piece of writing. Foley has examined facilitation in adult education, and has identified some of the problems for adult educators who concentrate on the process of facilitation alone. In essence he is arguing that adult learning can be a tough and demanding business, and that the adult educator has a right, perhaps a duty, to adopt a position and point harsh realities out.

Foley examines the struggle for the control of learning in other contexts. He examines the stresses that occur in two community-based women’s learning centres where the people involved manage their own programs of learning, have to deal with the differences within their own groups, and have to face conflicts with exterior forces, often in the form of institutionalised patriarchy (1993a). Some of the most significant learning, he argues, takes place as the women engage in and deal with those conflicts.

He analyses the Australian labour market, depicts the conflicts of ideology and interest that prevail in that arena and concludes that the adult educator has a significant role to play in converting technical training into a form of worker-oriented education that can help develop ‘productive, participative and popular’ workplace cultures (1992c). Here, in line with his analysis of the role of the adult educator in relation to learning groups, he proposes for the adult educator a far more proactive and challenging role than the human resource and training literature would normally envisage.

And together with Rick Flowers, Foley examines - critically but empathetically - Aboriginal adult education (Foley and Flowers, 1992).

Foley's and Flowers' analysis of Aboriginal adult education was arrived at after extensive participatory research with Aboriginal people, agencies and communities. It addresses the complex and, for many people from both groups, emotionally troubling relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. Although the analysis can stand on its own without reference to Foley's other writing, there are echoes in it of Foley's examination of group behaviour in an adult classroom. Indeed, which are echoes of which, it is difficult to say.

Foley and Flowers pay tribute to the Aboriginal people's survival against the odds, and to their struggles to regain control over their lives. They note that a number of adult education and community development programs have failed in the past, but reject any form of explanation that suggests Aboriginal people are trapped in 'a cycle of poverty'. To explain the results of an encounter between small subsistence societies and 'a rapacious capitalism and harsh colonialism' in this way is patently ridiculous. Rather, they see the problem located in the way many programs in Aboriginal communities have been implemented. These programs have been in the form of interventions by outsiders; and these outsiders have all too often been ill-informed, under pressure to produce results, or constrained by their bureaucracies and so unable or unwilling to listen and learn in the process of devising their programs. In effect these interventions have been expressions of the colonial relationship that can still exist between the Australian State and the Aboriginal people; and their repeated failure has resulted in a disillusion, division and distrust in the recipient community. It is this cycle of ineffective provision, Foley and Flowers say, and not some cycle within the Aboriginal communities themselves, that needs to be broken.

Foley and Flowers, therefore, identify problems deriving from the exercise of power and control by outsiders. But they also recognise conflicts *within* Aboriginal communities, identifying and discussing 'tendencies ... that inhibit the emergence of democratic structures and styles of work' and therefore inhibit the emergence of a more genuinely community-controlled Aboriginal adult education. These tendencies include both structural and cultural (conscious and unconscious) ones such as lack of coordination, alienation and resistance, factionalism, and lack of appropriate - that is suitably Aboriginal - management and political skills amongst community workers.

Foley and Flowers propose three strategies aimed at breaking the cycle of ineffective provision: that the design and delivery of adult education be 'directly related to a program of self-determination', that is, related to the central political realities of Aboriginal people

and not in the form of a collection of quick-fix, ad hoc courses tinkering at the edges; that there be ‘a community-controlled style’ of program development; and that to help this community-controlled education happen, an adult educator be appointed to the community who is a member of an Aboriginal community and who is selected by the community. Help from outside will not be in the form of intervention in the affairs of the community but in the form of support and the training of the adult educator.

Open conflict between white people and Aboriginal people on a widespread scale is a thing of the past. The conflict for Aboriginal people is now with the ineptitudes of a white majority culture, with uncomprehending bureaucracies, and with institutionalised racism, and it is within this ‘colonial’ context that Flowers and Foley arrive at their proposals. That said, however, clashes still occur in country towns between whites and blacks. White thugs still harass Aboriginal people with racist abuse and threats of violence. And on 8 February, 1990, which is not a reassuringly long time ago, a senior police officer ordered an armed raid at dawn on eight houses occupied by Aboriginal people in the Sydney suburb of Redfern. In an operation code-named *Operation Sue* and involving one hundred and thirty five police, at least seventy police officers moved in on people sleeping in their homes. Doors were smashed in, adults were menaced with guns in the presence of their young children, people were woken by police officers entering their bedrooms, one person was literally pulled from his bed, some were forced to lie on the floor and handcuffed. One house forcibly entered was occupied by a single 67 year old woman who awoke to find six or seven men in her bedroom. The police searched the house, pulling food out of the cupboards and going through the fridge, then simply left.

> They didn’t say anything. They had broken the lock on my door. Since then I haven’t had a proper night’s sleep (quoted in Cunneen, 1990, p.19).

Four arrests were made in relation to two ‘bongs’ found and a number of items for which residents could not provide receipts proving purchase. And another four were detained for warrants relating to former alleged offences, in one case for an offence allegedly committed more than seven years earlier. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the following day a senior police officer was reported as saying:

> [O]ur normal surveillance activities can’t operate in a place like the black community. You stand out like you know what. Where do you survey the activity of people when they are all one breed? So you have then got to look at alternative methods and that was what today was all about (quoted in Cunneen, 1990, p.22)

As Cunneen points out, this seems to suggest that police activities are justified on the basis of racial category and that this operation was not so much about arresting particular offenders as about policing Redfern's black community.

If a force of one hundred and thirty five trained officers can be mobilised to conduct a dawn raid on a sleeping, civilian, Aboriginal community, then, sadly, Foley's other major theme, his examination of learning at the point of open and sometimes violent conflict, may also be of value for Aboriginal people.

Foley develops this second theme against the massive backdrop of the Chinese liberation struggle from the 1920's to the 1940's. Here were played out conflicts of ideology, conflicts between classes, conflicts within small communities and clashes between massive armies. By quoting and then analysing a number of eyewitness accounts, Foley examines formal, informal, intended and incidental kinds of learning. He speculates on how whole populations were shifted from a fatalism to an activism, and how people overcame deeply ingrained class-defined roles and adopted independent and creative kinds of behaviour. He examines the encounter between cadres of party educators and people engaged at differing times in political organisation, military action, social action and land reform, and he speculates about the lines between education and propaganda. He has no illusions about the Chinese communists' goal of getting and keeping power, nor of the 'absolutism' of governments from the fifties onwards, and he maintains that the 'the period of liberation struggle in China is best seen as a "democratic moment", in which for a brief time ordinary people did have a great deal of control over their lives'. It was a brief time, he argues, that saw the development and practice of a form of learning in social action that can still provide inspiration for adult educators today (Foley, 1993b).

On a smaller scale Foley examines the ultimately successful struggle from 1974 to 1982 by a group of people, sometimes as few as five or six, sometimes as many as two or three hundred, to save an area of rainforest from logging in the Terania Creek basin in northern New South Wales. Over that period these people faced police and bulldozers, occupied the forest at both ground level and in the trees, campaigned to win over antagonistic people and organisations in their own locality, lobbied government bodies, met with politicians and technocrats, and gathered and put evidence before an enquiry. Drawing on detailed interviews with five of those closely involved in the campaign, Foley examines the learning they experienced: skills and knowledge to do with organisation, campaigning, rain forest ecology, the workings of the State, etc.; and their 'perspective

transformation' as the campaign altered their understanding of themselves and the world. It is learning that he sees as 'incidental to or embedded in' the campaigners' action, which he concludes was significant and empowering, and which he describes as '*learning in the struggle*' (Foley, 1991).

Foley's political ideals come clearly through in the writing I have discussed, but he does not impose them. Rather they form the framework within which he conducts his analyses. They inform the alliances he makes, the contexts in which he chooses to conduct his research, and the language he uses when writing about his educational ideas. They also inform his unsparing views of those who engage in or benefit from rapacious capitalism and harsh colonialism, who exercise power without permission, who intervene uninvited, who destroy.

Foley does, however, engage in open political discourse in a paper he presented to the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education entitled *Adult Education and Capitalist Reorganisation* (Foley, 1992c). Here he examines the current mechanistic and rationalist strategies to restructure economies which, he argues, are part of a reorganisation of capitalism. He describes capitalism as a system of economic, political and cultural domination and, echoing Phyllis Cunningham, argues that adult educators who employ instrumentalist and decontextualised practices are implicated in reinforcing that domination.

Once again, Foley's vision is unsettling. But there is no hint of despair. Once again I find a similarity in Foley's mood with that expressed in the Auden poem I quoted above. The last stanza begins:

> Defenceless under the night
> Our world in stupor lies;
> Yet, dotted everywhere
> Ironic points of light
> Flash out wherever the Just
> Exchange their messages ...

Towards the end of his essay on China Foley has this to say:

> ... the problem for most of us is how to build islands of democratic practice within a sea of capitalist domination, and how to build links between those islands (1993b, p.341).

And in his paper to the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education conference, he points to people like Thompson, Horton and others, and to frameworks and theories such as ‘liberation theology, the Frankfurt School of sociology, popular education, critical pedagogy, media studies, cultural theory, [and] political economy (1992c)’ as sources of inspiration - points of light, Auden would say - for those wanting to resist collusion with a capitalist reorganisation and wanting to establish an alternative, emancipatory form of adult education.

Twenty three

Knowledge, ideology and hegemony

Foley's image of the sea and the islands is interesting in that it hints at the eclectic nature of his thinking. He is ready to define an enemy in a generalised, unitary way as 'a sea of capitalist domination' yet can conceive of the building of scattered 'islands of democracy' as a response. In his social and economic commentary he draws on Marx and in his educational analysis he tends to draw on those aspects of critical theory influenced by Marx. Yet he is ready to look for sites for his research in the new as well as the old social movements; and this interest in examining learning in differing cultural, ethnic, and socio-political contexts suggests that he sees educational and political action in a dispersed and decentralised way, an approach that has affinities with a postmodern analysis of power as decentred and plural and with Foucault's concept of 'a plurality of resistances' (1980, p.96).

Paula Allman examines adult educational responses to political and social domination and in many respects shares similar views on both theory and practice with Foley. Unlike Foley, however, Allman relates her discussion to a single adult educational context and develops more generalised or more universal concepts. As we shall see this approach has advantages in helping us develop a kind of critical thinking that can mark out the opposition and take learners to the edge, but it also has its problems.

Allman has been involved in designing and conducting a diploma course for adult and community educators at the Department of Adult Education at Nottingham University, England, for some years. In the early eighties she helped redesign a major part of the course and in 1987 and 1988 she published chapters in two different books which are superb reflections on the kinds of framework of theory and practice that were being developed on the course. She draws in the main on Marx, Freire and Gramsci in these reflections but the concepts she arrives at are shaped and coloured by her own experience in contemporary educational practice.

In a discussion of Freire, Allman develops a challenging view of the meaning and use of dialogue. She compares dialogue with discussion, depicting discussion, a widely used and admired mode of encounter in adult education, as an essentially uncreative form of group communication

> ...in which participants engage in a sharing of monologues. These monologues are composed of pre-existing ideas, knowledge or questions arising which participants offer to the group.

Dialogue, on the other hand, is a process in which

> ... participants undertake a critical analysis of their reality and formulate explanations capable of challenging the conventional ones (1987, p.222).

Allman speaks disparagingly of the forms of group communication in which the role of a discussion leader is to give each individual time to express her or his views, thus ensuring that discussion remains a number of monologues. She describes how a group, engaging in dialogue rather than discussion, might focus on helping one member examine her or his understanding of a particular theme or issue. This would involve all members of the group posing questions and engaging in a high degree of critical reflection both on their own interpretations and on how these relate to and illuminate the interpretations of the person in focus. She states that

> ... dialogue is intended to be a way of relating, one to another, the effect of which is radical because it produces the development of trust, care, collaboration and commitment amongst the participants rather than competition and individualism (1987, p.223).

If Allman stopped there we might still be tempted to think that she had adopted the humanist's exclusive reverence for the individual as the focus, context and source for learning, but it is clear from her writing that she uses dialogue to help learners as individuals and as members of a group create 'more complex and comprehensive understandings' of the world, of issues, themes and problems, and of their relationships to these issues, themes and problems. She uses dialogue to help participants challenge and transform conventional ways of relating in learning and so engage in a critical enquiry. This critical enquiry must certainly bring about growth, but since the enquiry is political in nature, that growth will be political as well as personal.

Important for Allman in this critical inquiry, this challenge, this move towards the edge, is an examination of the concepts of knowledge, ideology and hegemony.

Knowledge shared in a conventional discussion (and conventional, mainstream education) is reified, fixed, abstracted from human relationships and action, and perceived as a commodity that can be exchanged, handed down or consumed. Knowledge in critical or dialogic learning has different characteristics. It is no longer pursued as an end in itself. Those involved will use knowledge to aid and illuminate their encounter with each other and with their world, so that knowledge becomes a tool. But as a tool, any knowledge will

only be used so long as it facilitates the enquiry, so will itself be continually subject to critical review.

But in another respect knowledge is a process. In the encounter of people with their world, as people act on their world, knowledge is generated. Dialogue is a group communication that encourages people to collaborate in a critical encounter with themes and objects in their world. Learners and helpers of learners continually engage in the act of coming to know.

> Knowledge is no longer seen as fixed but as a critical process of understanding a material reality which is moving and changing (Allman, 1988, p.96.)

In dialogic learning, therefore, knowledge mediates the encounter amongst learners and between those learners and their world; knowledge is continually subject to critical examination; and knowledge is generated.

Allman's discussion of knowledge relates directly to her discussion of ideology. Drawing on Gramsci's writings, she distinguishes between two uses of the term 'ideology'. In its first use, ideology is the analysis of the origin of ideas. In its second, ideology means a system of ideas (1988, p.99). As I read Allman, she is saying that the first meaning of ideology implies continuous intellectual enquiry, the second meaning assumes the acceptance of a number of given, preset guidelines and ways of thinking. Through the process of dialogic learning we can come to distinguish different forms of ideology, and to examine how ideologies are expressed not only in the form of ideas but in our relationships, our behaviour, the way our society is constructed, the ways we work and the ways we divide that work.

This dialogic inquiry into ideology will in turn help us understand the workings of hegemony. Hegemony refers to the phenomenon of one group of people accepting as normal, natural, and in need of no explanation, conditions that are in the interests of another group altogether. It refers to the standards, ideas, and modes of behaviour that come to pervade the institutions of a society, are accepted and lived by the population, and so become the media through which the population is controlled. Hegemony, therefore, describes the exercise of power over people by eliciting their consent rather than by forcing them to conform.

Allman argues that hegemony 'is cemented together by ideology' and goes on:

> To rule by consent, i.e. to establish hegemony, a class must articulate the interests of other classes and groups to its own interests. Bourgeois hegemony takes advantage of people's

> commonsense conceptions of the world. These conceptions contain the uncritical and unsystematic, the disorganised fragments or substrata of various ideologies, i.e. of 'systems of ideas'. The hegemony of the capitalists is achieved by either the absorption or the neutralisation of both allied and antagonistic groups (1988, p.100).

Hegemony is not a pejorative word. Allman discusses Gramsci's concept of a working-class hegemony, and seems to envisage her own counter-hegemony when she talks of challenging the 'dominant ideological discourse' and 'rearticulating our own transformed socialist frame' (1988, p.88).

This attempt to counter one hegemony with another brings to light the problems in Allman's discourse. The concept of hegemony is a universal or all pervading one. Whether we talk of capitalist, or bourgeois, or working-class, or socialist hegemonies, we are talking of generalised forms of power and generalised challenges to that power. The conflict is made abstract. The enemies are generalised phenomena - such as unthinking collusion, commonsense, or consent - rather than identifiable, and localised, people, groups or institutions.

This is a fault common to the 'old' social movements. Enemies are often defined in generalised and abstract terms - injustice, poverty, class, or capitalism - and the responses are generalised or abstract as well - love, faith, struggle, praxis, education for socialism, and so on. The generalised ruling class is blamed for various crimes rather than the people with names and addresses and very personalised bank accounts that make up the ruling class. Foley escapes this criticism by examining diverse and pragmatic responses to his generalised 'sea of capitalism'. And Allman in part answers this criticism in an article jointly written with John Wallis.

Allman and Wallis open their article (1990) with a discussion of praxis, noting that the term has become a standard part of the radical adult educator's rhetoric and reviewing it by relating it to Marx's theory of consciousness. In this part of the article they talk in universalist, grandiose terms, arriving at the conclusion that 'the very survival of something we call humanity depends on a dialectical analysis and consciousness of our past, present and, as far as possible, our future' (p.20). However in the latter part of the article when they discuss implications for radical adult educators, they talk in more pragmatic terms. They identify the need for tactics related to 'short term or immediate struggles' as well as strategies related to 'the longer term plan for social transformation'. And they envisage individuality and diversity in these tactics:

> We are each located in and work in different contexts; so there is no precise recipe which each of us can follow. Every radical adult educator must undertake their own analysis of the relations that must be abolished or transformed in their own context (p.21).

Echoing Allman's earlier reflections, they propose that radical educators must transform the way they think about knowledge, and they propose the use of dialectical analysis to test the validity of knowledge. They give an example of dialectical analysis applied to the First and the Third Worlds. They argue that each is determined by its relation to the other, that the terms First World and Third World are meaningless outside the relation of one to the other, and that 'the very existence of the First World depends on the relative poverty of the Third mediated by international trade'. They argue that dialectical analysis reveals the 'surface' or ideological nature of ways the First World responds to the Third World, and that it permits the development of political strategies that are based upon a much more profound understanding of the causes of poverty and wealth and so will be more likely to bring about authentic change (p.22).

It is as if in the process of actually naming players in an unfair game, even though still in general terms such as the First World and international trade, that Allman and Wallis experience some kind of release. There follows a perceptive and critical analysis of certain kinds of so-called radical adult education. They propose a framework for localised action, arguing that 'it should be possible to not only foster the skills valued in our current society but also engender a critical understanding of the function and nature of such skills and knowledge'. And they cite the work of Jane Thompson at the Women's Education Centre in Southampton, describing it as 'one of the best examples of the achievement of this blend of traditionally defined academic achievement and criticality' (p.25).

Interesting that, since it was Thompson who had no compunction about helping the women she worked with define their enemies.

Section Six: Traps, tricks and hegemonic sidetracks

Twenty four

Industrial collusion

Adult educators can be sidetracked, tempted into thinking in generalisations, and seduced into collusion with various kinds of hegemony. Certain ways of working, certain kinds of program, certain kinds of learning and teaching become accepted as the norm, the right thing to do, commonsense really. This unwitting consent can be seen in the actions of numbers of committed adult educators whether they have thrown their lot in with the old or the new social movements.

Collaboration, cooperation and consensus, for example, seem sensible ideas, and in industrial relations they are current ideas. Unionists and managements are being exhorted to overturn the last hundred or more years of an industrial relations system based on conflicts of interest, and to restructure their workplaces and the way they work. In some of the training for restructuring, participants are being encouraged to examine the assumptions upon which they have based their past stances and practices, to examine alternative sets of values and modes of behaviour, and to adopt new ways of relating. In the late twentieth century, we are told, the common interests of management and workers outweigh the conflicting ones. Worker and management must cooperate, and to do this effectively they must consult in a climate of mutual trust.

The rhetoric is seductive, and some trainers in the industrial relations arena have been ensnared by it. Some union trainers in Australia have embraced joint union-management training, in the apparent belief that the nature of the beast has suddenly changed and that the people they have trained their members to watch carefully and never fully trust can now become equal partners in a some kind of utopic joint enterprise. But 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 other, less animate resources.

> ....[I]t should be noted that all organisations, the successful and the unsuccessful alike, began their operations with three major ingredients for success: financial resources (money and securities), physical resources (equipment, tools, facilities), and human resources (people to do the work). The management team has to develop and manage these three critical resources. If an organisation's success is equated to goal achievement, as it certainly should

> be, the enterprise achieves that mission through well-developed and well-managed resources (Nadler and Wiggs, 1986, p.2).

The language is unambiguous and the attitude towards fellow human beings chilling.

Of course these sentiments can be, and often are, couched in language that seems a little more humane but, when the crunch comes, the organisation's objectives still take precedence over the interests of the people making up the organisation. Robinson (1988), for example, argues that training should be concerned with job satisfaction and fairness as well as organisational success, but when he comes to talk of evaluation he says:

> Measuring the results of training is vital in order to ensure that what is being done is effective and is meeting the organisational needs (p. 236)

No ambiguity, no messing about, here either.

These kinds of attitude lead me to urge unionists to keep their identities and their interests clear in their minds, and to stay alert. If they cooperate with management it must be in order to keep (or make) the bastards honest. In training for consultation educators and workers must develop an understanding of the hegemony of business in order to more effectively counteract its effects on themselves and on the managers they will meet. We must stress the differences in interests, and study our enemies so as to be able to work with them, deal with them, change them - and, if it becomes necessary, oppose them.

A report (Oregon AFL-CIO, 1992) from a peak union committee on worker education and training in the state of Oregon, USA, calls for the labour movement to pursue a 'high-skill, high-wage' strategy. It recognises the need for 'collaboration among business, labor and government' and calls for 'a role for strong unions' and 'a culture at the workplace that empowers front-line workers and accepts unions as important partners'. The message is clear. Collaboration, cooperation and consultation may be the go, but unions with the savvy and the muscle to protect and advance the interests of working people are essential in any encounter with the other two parties.

Twenty five

Diverting consciousness

Consciousness-raising seems an appropriate activity for adult educators to facilitate. It would seem obvious, commonsense, that helping people develop a heightened awareness of themselves and how they relate to others and the world around them will make them better at relating, more sensitive, more understanding of others - better people, really. We could even argue that consciousness-raising is adult education at its purest.

Feminists have used consciousness-raising groups at the grass-roots level of the movement, gathering women together in exclusive groups to examine and share their common experiences and empower themselves. Often this process has involved an examination of how their lives have been controlled and constrained, and how they have had particular roles defined for them by a patriarchal hegemony.

Clearly many of these groups have enabled women to engage in an emancipatory kind of learning, and the results of this kind of activity both within the feminist movement and, through the movement, on society at large have been profound.

But I also suspect that some consciousness-raising groups can be profoundly inward-looking, and that through the repetition of a litany of wrongs and injustices, they may reinforce rather than destroy the impression that the participants themselves are somehow to blame. To start with one's own person and experience, a kind of holy writ in adult education, can be a trap from which the learner may never really escape.

Analogous problems may occur in more formal educational contexts. Brenda Parsons (1990) compares the implications of radical feminism and socialist feminism on curriculum design. She sees radical feminism as implying an entirely separate syllabus from those syllabuses in the conventional educational canon, based on different presuppositions and using 'a wholly different gendered bodily experience'. This kind of syllabus starts from and is defined by women's experience. Parsons expresses concern at this form of total separatism, arguing that it 'reinforces dual status and creates the illusion of power that is nowhere else confirmed'. While valuing much in this 'uniqueness', Parsons prefers the socialist feminist approach which is located in an examination of broader social and political experiences, involves challenging academic disciplines for gender and other biases, and is concerned with looking for ways of restructuring gender relations and bringing about social change.

Certain French writers, such as the academics Helen Cixous and Luce Irigaray, have engaged in a kind of consciousness-raising on behalf of all people interested in feminism through their application of feminist critiques to literature, psychoanalysis and philosophy.

But they have often indulged in a post-structuralist disorganisation of text, written in a language so metaphoric, or dealt with ideas so abstruse that they have turned their kind of feminism into a refined intellectual debate too far removed from the struggle in the streets. In an essentially sympathetic explication of Cixous' thinking, Toril Moi nonetheless makes these comments:

> Her style is often intensely metaphorical, poetic, and explicitly anti-theoretical, and her central images create a dense web of signifiers that offers no obvious edge to seize hold of for the analytically minded critic. It is not easy to operate cuts into, open vistas in or draw maps of Cixou's textual jungle; moreover, the texts themselves make it abundantly clear that this resistance to analysis is entirely intentional (1985, p.102)

I may well be the footslogging critic Moi refers to, but it seems to me that care must be taken not to imply through a retreat into rarefied or wilfully obscure discourse that the actual liberation of people in their personal relationships and working lives has been achieved. While patriarchy still guides and dictates the lives and opinions of whole populations, while the hoorays and the yobbos and the rest of them are still able to behave as they do, writers and thinkers must do more than enjoy feminism as a concept and raise the literary consciousnesses of an elite.

Anglo-American feminists, in another form of academic consciousness-raising, have made inroads into the universities with the establishment of women's studies as legitimate elements in university curriculums. In America, courses, units in courses, interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary forms of provision have proliferated and gained sound institutional and financial support. Hester Eisenstein (1991, p.15) states that it would 'be hard to overestimate the importance of the Women Studies phenomenon in shaping feminist theory in the United States'. Yet she also remarks on the capacity of contemporary hegemonic culture to co-opt feminism (p.28) and worries that 'the danger to Women's Studies in the United States is that it is losing its subversive quality and has become respectable' (p.25). The process of cooption may be under way.

Elsewhere there have been many instances of the introduction of women's studies into tertiary institutions' programs, but in the UK and Australia, for example, the phenomenon has not been as widespread as in the United States. And, as Thompson (1988) fears, some of these courses or curriculum elements have been tacked on in a way that does not disturb or change the patriarchal policies and behaviours of people in the rest of the institution. Feminism is sidelined, and only those who enrol in the actual courses have their consciousnesses raised. Parsons (1990) ruefully concurs:

It would seem that many educational institutions are happy to let the steam out of the pressure cooker for a while by allowing groups of women to ‘do their own thing’ in fairly innocuous activities. The minor irritation caused by their irruptions of enthusiasm can be easily contained, and, once exhausted, are believed to be of no further concern.

Twenty six

Assertion, and the danger of domestication

Assertiveness training, too, seems an appropriate activity for adult educators to provide. Indeed, it has a pleasing, activist feel to it. It is about helping people have confidence in themselves, helping them develop their skills in speaking up, in dealing with others, in confronting people whose behaviour impinges unpleasantly on them, in telling people frankly and clearly how they feel and how they would like those people whose behaviour restricts or disempowers them to change that behaviour.

Assertion, as we shall see, can be more sophisticated than this description implies. Advocates can draw on a variety of psychological, social and political theory; and propose different forms of assertion for different contexts. Nonetheless, assertion training commonly occurs as a sub-section within a course, or that optional session at a conference, or as the ubiquitous one-day workshop, and in these forms my description above will often fit.

For the adult educator, conducting assertiveness training can seem a perfectly appropriate activity since its aim is to empower people. But again, in many of the processes advocated in assertiveness training, the starting point is the participant in the course, not the person who has ignored or bullied or offended the participant, or usurped her or his space. Often the techniques taught focus on the way the participant feels, and on communicating his or her feelings to the offender. Some techniques are actually designed to avoid conflict. The voice is kept calm, a little quieter than normal perhaps. The offended party focuses attention on his or her own reactions rather than the actions of the offender, thus avoiding directly confronting the offender and forcing him or her into a defensive corner. In some cases the offender then has the possibility of explaining, pretending, even believing that he or she had not intended the offence.

Central to this form of assertion is the ‘I’ statement - a formula response in which the offended person describes the offending action, then his or her reaction to that action, and then his or her preferred outcome. In effect the offended person is advised to fill the gaps in the following sentence: When ... , I feel ... . And what I’d like is ... . Thus: When your papers are lying on my desk, I feel irritated. I would like to find my desk as I left it (Cornelius and Faire, 1989). Another version describes the offending action and the recipient's feelings, and then explains why the recipient feels that way. Thus: When you bring uninvited guests to my parties I feel disappointed *because you didn't bother to ask me if it would be okay* (Kaye, 1994).

I have three worries about this kind of assertiveness training.

The first is that it is not just simplistic but actually inappropriate. Human beings engage with other human beings and the world around them in a number of ways. Some educators employing critical theory have postulated three distinct domains in which we act, learn and generate knowledge: the instrumental or technical domain, in which we act, learn and generate knowledge in order to manage and control our environment; the interpretive or communicative domain, in which we act, learn and generate knowledge in order to understand our human condition and to interact with other human beings; and the critical or emancipatory domain, in which we act, learn and generate knowledge in order to better understand ourselves and the psycho-cultural assumptions that constrain the way we think and behave. Mezirow (1991), for example, argues that we solve problems differently in the different domains. In the instrumental domain we solve problems by commonsense logic, by comparing and choosing the most appropriate options. In the interpretive domain, we solve problems through symbolic interaction, by rational discourse, by sharing ideas in discussion and seeking consensus. And in the critical domain we solve problems through a process of self-reflection in which we examine - and where necessary, alter - the structures of values and assumptions which constrain the way we perceive, think and act.

As I read them, Cornelius and Faire, and Kaye, miss the point. They offer instrumental solutions to problems located in the interpretive and critical domains. Conflict is likely to involve clashes of discourse, different modes of perception, and different sets of psycho-cultural assumptions. Managing and trying to resolve conflict in a really human way cannot be done according to an instrumental formula. Dealing with human conflict is not like putting together one of those neat, ascetically designed chairs you can buy in their component parts from a Scandinavian furniture manufacturer.

My second worry about assertiveness training is that in my experience some people are offensive intentionally, and I am unhappy with a technique that permits them to be offensive, to have the fact that they have scored a hit actually confirmed by the target, and then be offered an opportunity to pretend they did not intend to cause the hurt or the harm in the first place.

And my third worry is that avoiding conflict may result in lost opportunities. Conflicts occur. Conflicts of interest exist. Why must we necessarily resolve them? At the point of conflict the mind races and the heart pumps. We have to gather our intellectual and physical energies to resist or go on the attack. Often it is at that moment that we have insights, that we think clearly. Often it is when we actually see the enemy for who he or she is, that we are genuinely creative. It is this kind of creativity that Myles Horton celebrates in *The Long Haul* (1990) in story after story of encounters with union busters,

hired killers, the Klu Klux Klan, opponents of the civil rights movement, and redneck police, bureaucrats and politicians.

Assertiveness training, like consciousness raising, has been used by sectors of the women's movement, but it has also been criticised. The Taking Liberties Collective argues:

> It's much less contentious of course, to keep looking for problems within yourself than start making the connections between male power and women's oppression. And some varieties of women's education are in danger of preserving such delusions. Assertiveness training, for example (1989, p.156).

Of course the feminist movement has engaged in other, more political kinds of assertion. In Australia, women committed to the feminist movement have entered the public service and political arena as part of a conscious strategy to assert and establish women's rights within government structures and win or implement legislative underpinning for those rights. Women have established highly organised political lobby groups, have worked within political parties to progress legislation for women's rights, and have taken up employment in government departments, often at very senior levels, to put into place equal employment and affirmative action policies. So successful were these strategies that a widely accepted word - femocrat - was coined in Australia in the eighties to describe these kinds of feminist activist operating within government bureaucracies (Cockburn, 1991; Eisenstein, 1991), and a formally accepted criterion for appointment to these kinds of high-flyer public sector jobs was 'a demonstrated commitment to the women's movement'.

Australian politics, however, is still dominated by men and remains in many respects patriarchal. Within the Liberal and National Parties, there is a call for a return to old fashioned conservatism in the form of economies subject to market forces, the reduction of social services, and the draconian control of unions, much of this expressed in coded phrases such as 'freedom of choice', 'the individual before the collective', 'entrepreneurial initiative' and 'family values'. The last of these phrases, perhaps the most often invoked by the conservative parties in the 1993 Australian federal election, implies a home-based, second-class citizen role for women. The Australian Labor Party has a better record. While in government in South Australia, NSW and at Federal level during the nineteen eighties, it engaged and encouraged femocrats, and in the nineties it has adopted an affirmative action policy for the selection of its parliamentary candidates. But when we see the photograph that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 30 September, 1994 of the

Prime Minister surrounded by six minders and advisers, all of them men, it is clear that the Labor Party still has a way to go.

With this as the context, pragmatic political assertion brings with it the danger of domestication. To survive, to have influence, one may be tempted to accept, even adopt some of those patriarchal values. I have been present at gatherings where femocrats have dropped the names of male ministers and senior public service power brokers in a way that sometimes made me suspect that they had been assimilated into the male tribal behaviours and that they might actually be enjoying the access to and exercise of power as an end itself.

Some feminists themselves have been critical of femocrats, arguing that the whole strategy involves too many compromises. However Hester Eisenstein, in her comparison of the practice of feminism in America and Australia (1991), examines these criticisms and presents a strong defence for the femocrat, citing the informed and committed nature of the Australian feminists who took on these roles, the kinds of self-criticism they subjected themselves to, their record of success, and the high regard feminist activists in the United States and the UK have for the Australian achievements. Evidence of their work is to be seen in the push during 1994 by a group of women politicians and party members in the Australian Labour Party to increase the number of women in parliament. As alluded to above, their efforts have resulted in the Labor Party adopting as policy that at least 35 per cent of winnable Labor seats be allocated to women by the year 2002.

Cynthia Cockburn (1991) looks at feminist intervention in professional and organisational contexts in the UK. She analyses four large organisations - a private enterprise, a government department, a local government council, and a union - in which, often despite goodwill and considerable progress in equal opportunity policies, patriarchy continues to rule. She describes this hegemony as ‘masculine sway exerted over women and men alike, not by legal coercion or economic compulsion but by cultural means, by force of ideas’ (p.168); and she shows how women in high posts can still be held back, can be forced into compromise, or are domesticated into performing roles that offer no threat to the patriarchal status quo. Yet Cockburn’s book offers hope since it is a detailed analysis, using case study, anecdote and argument, of the enemy in both its generalised manifestation as a patriarchal hegemony and in its particular manifestation in the behaviour of actual people. We can see them, and recognise their behaviours in people we know ourselves. Further, Cockburn finds in one of the organisations she studies - the union - one division in which patriarchal modes of practice have been replaced by other ways of relating, organising, and working.

> The officers talked explicitly about *feminist* ways of doing things. By this they meant 'inclusion, empowering, enabling and sharing' (p.134).

Cockburn describes how this division, because rather than in spite of its different modes of practice and values, led the union in taking 'a step from defence to attack' and forcing an equal-value case for five women hospital ancillary workers through the courts. For this male writer it is also a relief to note that the division was 'women-led, profoundly influenced by women's thinking but not exclusively female' (p.133). Women and men were able to work together in non-patriarchal ways.

For adult educators helping people learn, and I imagine for women adult educators helping women equip themselves to enter the social and political arena with the intention of bringing about change, Cockburn offers excellent source material and an example of the kind of study to be done. Her examination of the enemy is an antidote to the inwardness of some kinds of consciousness-raising, and a warning against the dangers of domestication that, ironically, may accompany some kinds of assertion.

Twenty seven

Introspective activism

Starting with oneself seems a commendable idea. Indeed there is a commonsense rhetoric associated with the idea that adult educators and others, particularly those sympathetic to the new social movements, often use:

> The revolution starts with us.
> We can begin by cleaning up our own back yard.
> We need to achieve an inner peace if we are to strive for world peace.
> We must educate ourselves before we can educate others.

These are seductive and comforting phrases, but they can deflect us from laying blame where it is due, and from taking effective, coordinated action to oppose those who would do us and others harm. We may look outward for a while, we may see problems and be tempted to criticise those responsible for them, but at some crucial moment we retreat, we begin saying the solution is in ourselves. We rattle sabres but then wander off disconsolately into some kind of personalised reverie or reflective mumbling, disempowered by a liberal-humanist hegemony.

Community adult education can be enfeebled by this kind of rhetoric and the thinking that goes with it. Paul Fordham, Geoff Poulton and Lawrence Randle (1977), in a celebrated account of their community education project in Leigh Park, Southampton, England, describe a housing estate for which local government, planners, architects, and the providers of local services had a lot to answer. In a section discussing the assumptions behind their research, they make reference to writers whose focus was on working-class adult education, and in doing so they appear to concede that the residents on the estate were victims of an unjust system based on class. And they state baldly that there was 'no justification whatever' for the inequalities in the provision of services that they found. Yet as they come to the end of this section they begin pulling back from a class analysis:

> Whatever our private views, we all have to work within the existing social structure even if we also seek to change it. If groups of working-class students seek radical or revolutionary alternatives they do not have to remain quietist or be led to accept that the good society is already here. And if the whole of our cultural heritage should at least be available to the working class, then education for individual self-discovery and self-development may be an equally important base (1977, p.29).

And in the last few sentences of this section they appear to pull right back, stating that they 'began with promoting the self-discovery of individuals as and where they are ...' (p.30). They invoke Freire to justify this point of departure, but Freire does not define his work in relation to individuals. Freire develops his theory and practice in relation to groupings of people defined by class or culture or a common history of oppression.

Fordham, Poulton and Lawrence were operating out of a university. Environmental activists, on the other hand, often work away from institutional restraints, and they can be (or can become) hard-nosed realists, learning about and then confronting very clearly defined enemies. Brian Martin's analysis of the opposition to the mining of uranium in Australia is evidence of this (Martin, 1988).

Yet despite the focus of the activists, adult education in support of the environmental movement (and some activists, too) can still be sidetracked by the liberal-humanist emphasis on the individual. We may start a conference with harsh words about multinationals, ships' captains who flush the oil out of their tankers on the high seas, and chemical companies that let industrial effluent enter the eco-system, but at some stage there is someone who says we are all to blame and that the effluent and refuse from our own houses is an equal disgrace; and the conference can end with a call for each and every one of us to start the revolution at home, in our own kitchens, and in ourselves. People may nod in ritual agreement but the tanker captain and the corporation which owns the tanker are forgotten. The arguments against the myth of endless growth and development are dropped. And proposals to do something about the political manipulation, the corruption, the silencing of dissent, the withholding of information, and the erosion of civil rights that often accompany industrial exploitation of the environment go into the too hard basket.

Kamla Bhasin (1992) addresses these kinds of issue in a paper on 'Alternative and Sustainable Development' she delivered at a workshop in Bangalore, India. She criticises the main development models in use for their obsession with material aspects at the cost of all others, their emphasis on profit, their centralisation of resources and decision-making, and their marginalisation of women. Here is a passage that while focussing on the victims and generalising the enemy as 'modern science', requires very little further imagination of the reader to identify who the exploiters, oppressors and plunderers actually are:

> Modern science considers humans to be supreme, over and above nature, not part of nature. This same attitude has been the basis of our development models. This has not only led to marginalisation of nature, but also to marginalisation of the principles of nature leading to

> ecological disasters, environmental destruction. Nature is considered a thing, a non-living thing, a resource, a constant supplier of raw materials and an absorber of wastes not a living system. This is why nature is plundered; forests are disappearing; land, water, air are poisoned by too much use of pesticides and fertilizers. Rivers and seas are poisoned by factory effluents, oil tankers and all sorts of poisonous gases. Unnatural lifestyles develop very dangerous chemically-intensive systems of agriculture. This killing of nature affects women much more, especially rural women. If forests disappear, the woman is the one who has to walk longer to get water, fodder and fuel. The men in her family are forced to leave the villages to go to the cities in search of jobs. She becomes the head of the family, the sole caretaker. These very processes sometimes push her into prostitution. When there is nothing else to sell, the poor sell their bodies. Violation of nature and its principles is proving disastrous. It is becoming obvious that this kind of development based on greed and injustice is unsustainable ... (p.29).

Bhasin outlines an alternative development model, at once both strongly practical and strongly idealistic, then lists different kinds of individual and group action that development activists can take, arguing that 'this new kind of development can only be ushered in by millions of small people who do not have a stake in the present system'. This statement could be interpreted as a call for coordinated community and political action but to my dismay she then closes the paper by quoting the following poem:

> 'Your task is to build a better world,' God said,
> And I answered, 'how?'
> 'The world is such a large,
> Vast place, so complicated now.'
> 'And I so small and useless am,
> Whatever can I do?'
> 'Just build a better you.'

Calls to start with ourselves can make sense, but they do not make complete sense. Some adult educators concerned with peace education come up against this kind of problem. Budd Hall (1988) in his discussion of adult education and the peace movement argues that peace should be the central goal of humanity. He calls on peace educators to work to create a culture of peace, construct visions of a world without armed struggle and engender a universal reverence for life. Kekkonen (cited in Hall, 1988) argues that peace education goes hand in hand with cultural education, environmental education, human

rights education, education for equality and development education, and that it should permeate all education.

In no way could I dispute any of the above, yet these calls go only half way. Peace educators can be constrained by the very peace they seek. Their proposals are often for education and action to mobilise people *for* peace, not *against* the warmongers.

This half-way position creates problems. Peace is not an easy concept to grasp, except in the sense that it is an absence of war. What exactly are the positive objectives we are mobilising for? The good life? The free life? The socialist life? The equal life? The ordered life? The free market life? The democratic life? The technological life? The natural life? Some kind of post-modernist life? Once we look for positive goals to fill the absence of war, we cease to have a single banner to mobilise under.

Hall advocates that we inform ourselves, establish peace committees, set up courses on peace, make links with the media and establish contact with groups 'involved in solidarity work and Third World work'. Others, drawing upon the experience and thinking of such groups as the Quakers, advocate actively addressing the structural sources of conflict. These activists see pacifism as 'peace-making' and not 'passive-ism', and devote their energies to working through governments, bureaucracies, unions and the corporate world in an endeavour to remove the occasion for war.

However, for the most obvious reasons many peace activists and the educators who work with them will advocate peaceful action and non-violent protest. The hope is that if the mobilisation of people for peace can gather pace, then ultimately all will be convinced and there will never be any need for confrontation. The problem here is that in all likelihood the vast majority of the world's population is already in favour of peace, yet the wars go on.

This conviction that the best place to start is ourselves, that we can make a better world by making a better us, comes from a humanist reverence for the individual. This kind of thinking maintains that there is an essence, a kind of god within each of us, which predates our own development as a social being. This human essence permits us to develop as autonomous, thinking subjects capable of acting on the world rather than being defined by the world. Moreover, since this essence is of a universal kind, it is a source of our sense of moral responsibility, our sense of commonality with other human beings. By starting with ourselves, then, we can both understand and develop our own autonomy, and gain a deeper understanding of a shared humanity. In naive form, this kind of humanism permits us to believe that, if we can get in touch with ourselves, we will also necessarily be united with others, and that social and political outcomes that are morally satisfactory will somehow come about.

This liberal-humanist hegemony can bring with it the voluntary suppression of organised action.

Twenty eight

Reflection disempowered

Reflecting on experience would seem to make sense. In the last twenty years reflection has been accorded an increasingly important place in adult learning, and many adult educators now see their major role as that of helping learners reflect on and learn from events, behaviours and emotions experienced. These events, behaviours and emotions may be from the learners' own lives, or they may be created or triggered through visits, encounters, exercises, games, simulations, or role-plays organised especially for the learning event. Educators may employ a range of methods and techniques to aid this reflection, including structured discussions, small group work, pair work, listening exercises, and report and journal writing. One of the skills this modern adult educator must have is that of helping people debrief their experiences - that is, of helping people talk out, think about, come to understand, and draw insight and conclusions from an experience.

However the meaning adult educators give to reflection has undergone a number of changes. It started as a concept very much within the liberal tradition of education, was injected with a charge of high emotion from the field of psychotherapy, was politicised, was gradually wrested back by the humanists, and is currently being taken over by latter-day behaviourists. In the process an intellectual activity concerned with imagination, intuition and insight has been diminished.

In the liberal adult education tradition the learner read, or listened to the teacher, and then found time to think over what she or he had read or heard. In this sense reflection really meant much the same as pondering. It was understood that through careful thought we would arrive at rational conclusions, deeper understandings of universal truths, or finer appreciations of the aesthetic aspects of our culture. Reflection was seen as both a natural activity and as evidence of the existence of the enlightened mind. It was also seen as a discrete activity, preceding and separate from any action one might take as a result of conclusions reached or decisions taken in the course of that reflection.

In the nineteen sixties adult education adopted a whole range of experiential techniques from the field of psychotherapy that encourage self-disclosure. These techniques rendered reflection a much more emotionally charged and much less orderly activity. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Carl Rogers attests to the joy it gave him to 'free curiosity' in his learner-patients, to 'unleash a sense of enquiry' and to 'permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests' (Rogers, 1983, pp.120-121).

In developing his concept of praxis, Paulo Freire politicised reflection. Radical adult educators, drawing on Marxist and socialist discourse to inform their practice, had employed the word praxis but it was Freire in the nineteen sixties and seventies who made it current in the adult education profession as a whole. In Freire's concept, reflection and action are both contained in praxis and cannot be isolated one from the other. The two activities fuse into one dynamic process in which the learners act on themselves and on their world, bringing about a change in their own consciousness and in the way they engage with other people, organisations, institutions and objects around them. Freire was working with people whose consciousness he perceived as 'naive' or constructed by others and who lived in conditions of oppression. Praxis was a process of action-reflection by which they began liberating themselves from their false consciousness and from their oppression.

In the nineteen seventies and eighties Donald Schon, working with practitioners in corporate and professional fields, began separating reflection out from action again. He was interested in practitioners who could think on their feet, and adjust their practice accordingly, and he called this process reflection-in-action. Action and reflection coincide, but are clearly separate concepts in that reflection becomes a mode of monitoring and adjusting action. Schon (1983, 1987) envisages the practitioner reflecting 'in and on' her or his practice to identify tacit norms that underlie judgements, implicit theories that inform behaviour, feelings that have impelled particular actions, modes of thought that have been used, and roles that have been constructed.

Freire's concept of praxis and Schon's reflection-in-action are very different. The actors in praxis are groups of people defined by their common oppression, their culture, their class and their history. The actors in Schon's reflection-in-action are individual practitioners, normally operating in professional contexts. In praxis, reflection, acting, the generation of new knowledge and the development of new understandings are indivisibly part of a process that changes both the people involved and the society of which they are a part. Reflection-in-action is a process in which practitioners use reflection to adjust and adapt their performances so as to make both themselves and the systems or organisations in which they operate function more effectively. Freire envisages praxis as a process with the potential of bringing about social, even revolutionary, change. Schon's reflection-in-action is also seen as capable of bringing about change in both the practitioner and the organisation, but it is not presented as a process that might challenge the society of which the practitioner and the organisation are parts.

David Boud, Rosemary Keogh and David Walker (1985) separate reflection even further from action. The model they develop very clearly implies a chronological sequence. Experience comes first, then the reflective process, then the outcomes. There may be interplay and some to-ing and fro-ing between the first two stages leading to more experiences and more reflection, but all three stages are depicted as encircled, separate and happening one after the other.

Boud and Walker revisit and develop this model in a later paper (1992). They accept that in the earlier model they concentrated on reflection after the event and did not give enough consideration to the roles reflection could play in the lead up to a learning experience, and during the experience itself. In a revision of the model they envisage both learners and facilitators using reflective processes to prepare for the learning in a number of ways. They also refer to Schon's concept of reflection-in-action and propose a role for reflection during the experience. Here, however, they do not appear to accept Schon's idea of a continuous reflection both in and on practice. They come to the conclusion that the learner at the moment of reflection is by definition detached from the experience:

> There is a fundamental tension between becoming fully immersed in an event and standing back to witness our own actions. The former is required if we are to be a full player in the event. The latter is implicit in the concept of reflection (1992, p.271).

This leads them to maintain the sequential relationship between reflection and experience even during the learning event. The learner is offered prearranged and discrete periods of time in which to withdraw from the experience and reflect. Reflection during experience is actually reflection during breaks in the experience.

> In practice, there are many opportunities for reflection within planned learning activities. Natural breaks in the flow of events, time-out activities and exercises of a reflective nature can all be scheduled as part of the overall structure (1992, p.271).

When considering reflection after the event, Boud and Walker retain the description of the reflective process they and Keogh included in their 1985 model. The process comprises three clusters of reflective activity: returning to the experience; attending to feelings; and re-evaluating the experience. Under 're-evaluating the experience', Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) propose:

- relating what has become known to what is already known

- integrating new knowledge with old
- mentally testing our understandings in new contexts and
- making the knowledge gained our own.

Gone is the gentle magic of reflection as pondering, or the political promise of reflection as conscientization, or simply the idea that letting the mind play over what happened might produce some kind of insight. In their place is a list of mental actions to perform.

In Freire, reflection is part of a political process, part of learning for liberation. In Schon, reflection has a political colour too, in that it is presented as a mode of monitoring practice that will help the practitioner work more effectively within the corporate, professional and political structures of a capitalist culture. In Boud, Keogh and Walker reflection is an aid to experiential learning, with the political context of the learning and the social condition of the learners unspecified. They envisage the outcomes of their kind of reflective learning as being 'new perspectives on experience', 'change in behaviour', 'readiness for application' and 'commitment to action'. The language is vague and I am tempted to ask: Perspectives that are new in what way? What kind of change in behaviour? Readiness for application to what? Commitment to what kind of action? Socialist action? Selfish action? Charitable action? Racist action? Once again, I suspect, we have encountered the humanists' faith that the outcomes from this kind of experiential learning will be expressive of some human and moral essence that resides in us all, and so, although unspecified, will necessarily be good ones.

Peter Jarvis argues that reflection is 'to a great extent socially constrained' (1987a, p.112) and in his description of reflection he links it with reasoning.

> Reflection ... means a process of deep thought, both a looking backwards to the situation being pondered upon and a projecting forward to the future, being both a process of recall and reasoning (p.87).

He emphasises this link in a diagrammatic 'model of the learning processes' by placing 'Reasoning and reflecting' in the same box (p.25).

Jarvis' model has a number of factors and processes that he argues can be related in different ways and that can occur in different sequences, and his intention is clearly to present a model that can help us understand the fluid and variable nature of learning. However, a result of arguing that reflection is socially constrained is to imply that it is in itself an activity that can be learned. This is reinforced by linking it closely to reasoning,

which in some respects can be regarded as a skill. And then by listing reflection along with a number of other activities such as memorisation, evaluation, practice and experimentation Jarvis is moving perilously close to describing reflection as a competency.

In his explication of his model and his discussion of reflection it is clear that this is not Jarvis' intention. He devotes much more time to a discussion of reflection than to any of the other factors or processes in his model; and in that discussion he canvasses a wide range of definitions and interpretations of reflection. However I express my disquiet because his model may be open to exploitation by the mechanists in our trade.

Indeed, others have gone further than Jarvis. In *Developing a Competent Workforce* (1992) Andrew Gonczi identifies a number of 'higher order competencies':

> analytical and planning skills, logical and critical thinking, the ability to turn abstract ideas into concrete strategies, the ability to work in a team, communication capacities, a desire to produce high quality products (p.4).

Later in the same book Paul Hager cites a definition of critical thinking as 'reasonable reflective thinking that is focussed on deciding what to believe or do' (Hager, 1992, p.152). In the course of reading the book, then, it is possible to draw the inference that reflective thinking is simply part of a definition of critical thinking which is itself simply another competency listed along with the ability to work in a team and a desire to produce high quality products. Reflection, a potentially emancipatory activity of the intellect that can encompass reverie, flights of fancy, insight, and intuition as well as reasoning, becomes another tool of commerce and industry.

Mechthild Hart has given a name to this process of turning activities of the intellect into utilitarian competencies. She notes that, in the training of people for business careers in recent years in the United States, 'liberal learning skills' such as questioning, analysing problems and exercising judgment have been separated out and taught without reference to their traditional liberal arts content or context. It is a phenomenon she describes as 'the gutting of liberal education' (1992, pp.65-68).

Twenty nine

Competent forms of control

There are a lot of people who say that drawing up competency-based standards and developing competency-based training make sense, too, but Mechthild Hart has already blown the whistle. As the competency movement gathers pace, educators and trainers are being sidetracked from the business of educating and training people as people and are spending more and more time training people as clusters of functions. And in doing this they are submitting themselves to the economic rationalist hegemony of which the competency movement is a new and influential expression.

The current competency movement is an international phenomenon, but has manifested itself most forcefully, perhaps, in the UK and Australia. If we take the Australian case, the competency bandwagon began to roll in earnest in the late nineteen eighties, as part of a push to reorganise the manufacturing industry, introduce career paths for workers, link educational institutions more closely to industry, and establish a training culture in Australian workplaces. Competencies were seen as providing an effective framework for describing work, establishing standards, and assessing people. In a country with different educational and training systems in different states, competencies were seen as a sensible way of validating people's skills and abilities, irrespective of where they may have acquired them.

Jobs in the manufacturing industries were described and reclassified in terms of competencies. Moves were made to describe professions such as nursing, law, engineering, teaching and youth work in terms of competencies and establish competency-based standards. In the community sector of adult education, a project was established in 1993 to analyse the role of coordinators of adult education programs in terms of competencies.

Competency-based assessment and standards led to competency-based training. Once a job was described, once a set of core competencies with their accompanying elements and performance criteria for each element was established, it became natural to design curricula in relation to these competencies. By the early nineteen-nineties educators and trainers were designing courses, modules, open-learning packages, and self-instruction manuals aimed at helping learners achieve competencies related to a whole range of jobs and professions.

Clearly there are practical advantages in competency-based training. A number of problems associated with front-end, formally accredited training and education are solved. The emphasis is shifted from the time served in a course to the outcomes - that is, to the

competencies acquired. This means that training can be delivered in a variety of modes. Trainees may be be able to proceed at their own pace and choose their own paths of learning. And if people are assessed according to the competencies they can demonstrate, rather than the courses they have attended, then they can be given recognition for their prior learning, irrespective of whether that learning was done through an educational or training institution, on the job, or in some other, possibly informal and unstructured, way.

But there are problems as well as advantages associated with competency-based assessment, competency-based standards and competency-based training. And the problems are of another order.

The discourse of the competency movement is all pervading. It is on the lips of politicians and bureaucrats. It is in national reports. It is widely current in the language of industry and industrial relations. And it appears in the brochures and course descriptions of training agencies, technical colleges and universities.

It is a discourse of mediocrity, conformity and control.

The key words in the discourse are ‘competency’ itself, and ‘standard’. In everyday parlance we use the word ‘competent’ to imply the necessary ability and knowledge to function acceptably *and no more*. We use it when we are reluctant to use ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. Describing a worker or the output of her or his work as competent leaves a lot unsaid. It is half-hearted praise. If our aim is to make ourselves or someone else competent, we are setting our sights low.

Competence is a base line. To be anywhere below that line, even by the slightest margin, is to be *in*competent. So there are problems in the title of Andrew Gonczi’s influential book *Developing a Competent Workforce* (1992). At best, the title suggests that the book is about achieving the ordinary. At worst, if we assume the competent-incompetent dichotomy, then the implication is that the workforce is incompetent, and needs remedial training - that is, training constructed on a perception of the trainees’ deficiencies and not upon their proven capacities and strengths. Either way, the idea of developing an excellent workforce, or a happy one, or an imaginative one is not simply omitted from the title but, because of the drabness of the word ‘competent’, is excluded.

It is interesting to note that the competency movement is directed at workers. They are the ones who must change. They are the ones who must develop new sets of competencies, adopt new values and attitudes, and change the way they work. The onus is on them to put the world to rights. In this push to improve the workforce, less is said about improving the performance of lacklustre managers, or correcting the breathtaking

incompetence of the bankers who lent so profligately to entrepreneurs in the nineteen eighties, or dealing with the irresponsibilities of the traders in the financial markets or challenging some of the values, of greed for example, that inform our market economy.

'Standard', the other prominent word in the competency discourse, can also have implications of ordinariness, and in the concept of standardisation there are implications of control. But in this case we need to go further than the meaning of the single word. Discourse is more than a set of statements. It consists of the meanings and social relationships embodied in the statements, and of the values, assumptions and taken-for-grated knowledge that underlie the statements. Discourse is also defined by what is left unsaid and what is *not* challenged by people making or accepting the statements. In the way competency-based standards have been established and used, we can see examples of the exercise of centralised power, and the apparently willing acceptance by the training and education community of ideas that are counter to emancipatory, politically empowering education.

Ideally used, competency-based standards are directly and genuinely related to jobs, occupations and professions. What makes a competent *bus driver*? What makes a competent *nurse*? A job is described in terms of competencies and standards are established for these competencies. So a skilled autonomous worker might need to demonstrate a competency relating to self-organisation to a particular level or standard, while a paraprofessional might need to demonstrate that same competency at a higher level. Such a system of competency-based standards would free up the educational and training world. Particular institutions would cease to control a job or profession by being the only, or one of the only, institutions, that offered courses leading to approved certification. So long as learners could demonstrate the necessary competencies to the necessary standards, how they achieved them would be up to them.

Very quickly in Australia, however, a number of central bodies of various kinds, some newly formed, others already in existence, climbed on to the competency bandwagon, some of them, to the bewildered onlooker, appearing to be struggling amongst themselves to take hold of the reins. Amongst these bodies were the Australian Education Council, a raft of Competency Standards Bodies, the Australian National Training Authority, the Industry Training Advisory Board, the National Training Board, the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee and their state counterparts, and the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum. Some of these bodies were concerned with developing frameworks within which competencies would be developed and endorsed. Some oversaw the process of analysing jobs and professions in terms of competencies.

Some took responsibility for developing competency-based curricula. Others took control of credentialling and so could police courses by withholding their endorsement. Where competencies were meant to encourage common standards of outcome but any number of ways of achieving those outcomes, now there were pressures towards conformity and new systems of control. The rhetoric of individual choice becomes a discourse of centralised power.

A bus driver needs to be able to communicate firmly with a difficult passenger. A nurse needs to be able to communicate in a supportive way with ill and dying patients. Clearly these two kinds of communication have very little in common. Nonetheless, some of these centralised bodies latched on to the superficial similarities or the similarities of terminology and developed - or adopted from overseas - generic competencies, particularly in the areas of communication, problem-solving and teamwork; and then applied pressure to have these competencies addressed in all the courses they recommended or endorsed. Thus:

> Finn [The report of the Australian Education Council Review Commission of 1991] proposes a strategy in which all young people up to the age of nineteen years will take part in an integrated combination of schooling and/or TAFE and/or higher education and/or on-the-job training ... It is proposed that the integration of the combination of ingredients will be achieved *by a series of key generic competencies that will underlie all curricula* whether they be school, TAFE, higher education or on-the-job training (Gonczi and Hager, 1992, my italics)

In the process the idea of a competency has suffered a sea change. Competencies originally identified to describe specific jobs are subsumed in generalised sets of competencies that are meant to be acquired by *all* people for *all* jobs.

We can see how these kinds of development diminished the independence of a particular training institution. In 1993 the Australian Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) decided to examine how some of their courses might tie in with courses in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges. TUTA had been training union officials and workplace representatives for eighteen years, had a wealth of accumulated experience, and had developed a wide range of effective courses, many dealing with ‘communication skills’ such as negotiation, problem-solving in groups, and report writing. Now, so that they could be credentialled and participants could gain credit in TAFE, these courses needed to be rewritten in competency mode.

But a set of 'National Communication Modules', developed under the aegis the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) and written in competency-based format, already existed.

Two points need to be made about these national modules. First, they were designed to be used by communications teachers in TAFE and workplace trainers, and did not specifically address industrial relations issues. Negotiation might relate to an employee or manager negotiating for resources. Conflict resolution might relate a worker resolving a difference constructively with a colleague. Second, many of the students attending TAFE colleges, and other institutions where these modules might be used, were likely to be recent school leavers; and a number of the modules were in reality about helping people adapt to working life.

Despite these obvious inconsistencies, TUTA personnel began redesigning their own courses 'to piggy-back on the ACTRAC modules', as one of them described it. The irony is there. Rather than look to their own experience, rather than go to the union officials and workplace representatives who made up their clientele, rather than look to the context of collective union experience and struggle, TUTA began redesigning courses around sets of generic competencies that had been developed by a centralised governmental body without reference to the people, the organisations or the movement TUTA was meant to be serving.

Those TUTA personnel are not alone in embracing the competency format. There have been people in all sectors of the education and training world who have responded enthusiastically to the push for competency-based standards, competency-based assessment and competency-based training. After all, the competency movement has provided work for the education and training profession. Jobs need to be analysed. Curricula need to be written. New courses need to be implemented. Successes and failures need to be documented. There has been a lot of research and writing to be done.

Some of the response has been opportunistic, but Australia has a number of educators who have sought to bring humanist and critical educational thinking to bear on the competency movement and so prevent it becoming totally instrumental in character. I took a tilt at Gonczi and Hager in my description of the diminution of the concept of reflection, but in various publications they and others (Gonczi, Hager and Oliver, 1990; Masters and McCurry, 1990; Hager and Chappell, 1992; Gonczi, 1992) have promoted the idea of describing jobs in terms of a small number of 'core' competencies (rather than in hundreds of competencies, as happened in an earlier competency movement originating in the United States armed forces in the forties); they have sought ways of taking account of

attributes such as attitudes and values; and they have promoted higher order competencies such as those listed in the chapter above (Gonczi, 1992, p.4).

But this is the problem. The competency movement has resulted in educators, who in other contexts might be concerned with mystery, discovery, and emancipation, *making lists*.

Lists are pragmatic tools. No matter how sensitively and carefully the items are selected, lists can be manipulated. We can add to them and cross items off. Authorities presented with lists can adjust them at will. It would not be too difficult for a management wanting a quiescent workforce to leave ‘a desire to produce high quality products’ on a list but drop ‘critical thinking’ off when passing the list on to its human resource division.

Lists also tend to reduce all items to the same level. In some contexts critical thinking would imply a philosophy or theory and so would provide a framework in which to include all other skills, abilities, capacities and states of mind. But when included in a list it becomes just one among other *competencies*, apparently of the same order as, say, planning skills.

The fact that the competency movement is really about drawing up lists throws up another irony. As we have seen, the competency movement is part and parcel of the push to reorganise the way we work. Calls to do this are often couched in holistic terms. Enterprises are encouraged to reject Taylorism and the hierarchies and demarcations of work that go with it. They are urged to become learning organisations in which the workforce is made up of fully developed, adaptable, multi-skilled people capable of exercising initiative and working creatively in teams (Ford, 1988). Yet the response of educators and trainers to these calls has been to develop a form of analysis that involves the fragmentation of work into jobs, then into competencies, then into elements of competencies - that is, to draw up lists. Once this is done, then the temptation is to design training that is narrowly focussed on getting the trainees to develop each element of each competency in turn, ticking off the list as they go. Competency-based training can easily look like a return to Taylorism, not a rejection of it.

These ironies might bring a smile to the lips were it not for the fact that the competency movement is a symptom of social and political changes that are anything but funny. Earlier I quoted Foley’s grim and disquietening vision of the world in crisis. In conversation I have heard him talk of a move from a welfare state to a competitive state. This description rings true. In Australia the politics of ideals seems to have been replaced by the politics of pragmatism. Public firms and private utilities are to be made ‘lean and efficient’, focussed on outcome alone. People are retrenched and the idea that the utility might have a role in

providing employment, providing satisfying work and contributing to the wellbeing of its workforce seems lost. Private sector styles of management are seen as inherently more efficient than public sector styles. Public utilities are being corporatised or privatised, and private sector executives and executive practices - salary packages made up of huge sums and collections of perks - are being introduced into government and public service. These people are very well looked after while the pay of ordinary wage and salary earners is pegged back in various ways. The rich get richer while those who cannot or will not compete do not.

Doing others down is regarded as good. Bolwijn and Kumpe, writing about workplace reform and vocational education and training, present a table of four 'organisational phases', designating as the most developed the 'innovative firm', whose structure and culture are based on participation and democratisation. The language in the table is neutral or benign, but in elaborating on the innovative firm, Bolwijn and Kumpe go on to comment:

> Outwitting competitors by changing the game, is an important part of the company's success (1990, p.52).

There is no suggestion that the glaring contradiction between the internal and external moralities of the organisation might warrant discussion. But the external morality of the organisation gives the lie to the internal. The benign, humanistic attitudes displayed within such an organisation are only skin deep, are cynically promoted, and will only be retained so long as they result in profit and the continued discomfort of the organisation's competitors.

Sometimes the competitors to be outwitted are within the same organisation. An American labour educator recounted to me the practice of 'whipsawing'. Here a large corporation sets the workforce at one plant in competition with the workforce at another. One plant will close but which will it be? Workers are whipsawed into demonstrating their greater 'flexibility' and competitiveness. Workers at the plant that stays open lose conditions and rights. Those at the plant that closes lose their livelihood.

The competency movement is in the service of this economic rationalist, market-force driven, profit-motivated, competitive hegemony, helping shift our attention from people to products and outcomes. True, there are those educators who include critical thinking somewhere on the list, but their promotion of competencies is located in assumptions that we must become more competitive, that increased productivity is good, that we must continually improve our standards of living, that tariff barriers must go, that the 'free'

enterprise system is to continue unchallenged, and that we must treat the population - we are talking about our friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and compatriots here - as ‘human capital’.

Section Seven: Finding a focus

Thirty

Human beings

In 1976 an adult educator called David Head established contact with a number of single homeless people in the Covent Garden area of London, England. Over a period of months they formed a group that met on a regular basis. Some of them began writing a letter, directed to authorities who might help them break out of the homeless trap into which they had fallen.

In the letter (Newman, 1979, pp.176-8), these homeless people state: ‘There are not large armies of us in London.’

Sixteen years later, in October 1992, I was visiting London. The UK had been through the Thatcher years, and the Conservative Party was still in power. The discourse of government was redolent with terms such as: individual initiative, entrepreneurialism, free enterprise, competition, privatisation, individual ownership, freedom of choice and personal responsibility. Associated with this discourse had been the promotion of private medicine and the erosion of a formerly universally available national health service. Income taxes had been reduced, benefiting those in work and particularly those in higher paid work; and a poll tax had been introduced that hit hard at the poor and the young. Alternative forms of representation that could act as checks and balances to the national government, such as local government and community organisations, had seen their financial support pegged, reduced or withdrawn. Trade unions had been treated with open hostility.

As I walked along the Strand, some time shortly after nine o’clock in the evening, every doorway seemed to be occupied by one, two or three people already camped down for the night. There were people living in cardboard boxes under arches along the Embankment, and there were whole settlements in pedestrian underpasses at major intersections.

There were large armies of homeless people in London.

In 1989 in Sydney, here in Australia, a friend and I were contracted to run a series of one-day training days for a semi-autonomous section of a large state public utility. The section had its own manager and headquarters, a separate budget, and a workforce of some two hundred people in clerical, professional and skilled and semi-skilled technical posts. The section’s budget was regularly in surplus, and from our first encounter with the organisation I was struck by the amiable and relaxed relations that prevailed amongst people working there.

Our job was to conduct a workshop to brief people on changes in thinking about work organisation and work practices, to examine the implications of new industrial awards that were being introduced, and to lay the ground for the establishment of a system of formal consultation between workforce and management within the organisation. We were to run the workshop several times so that most personnel in the section could attend.

One of the administrative staff we dealt with during the planning stages was a cricketer who held a fairly permanent place in the local first grade team. It was typical of the culture that prevailed in this section of the utility that people accepted that this particular member of staff left early on some afternoons so that he could attend net practice at the club grounds. One member of the section suggested that since most people in the section lived locally, there was some degree of identification with the club and an appreciation of their colleague's contribution to the team.

Shortly after my friend and I completed running our workshops, a new manager for the entire utility was appointed. The central, much larger section was operating at a loss, and the section I knew (together with its surplus) was subsumed into the whole utility, the local manager retrenched, and the staff 'downsized'. The aims were to make the utility leaner, more efficient, and more like a private sector organisation.

I had to get in touch with the section some weeks later and I asked after the cricketer but he had left.

Thirty one

The person

If we are to develop teaching and learning that will counter the effects of this shift from the welfare state to the competitive one, if we are to help people oppose politicians and parties who can adopt policies that put increasing numbers of people on to the streets, if we are to help people resist a manager who can destroy a communal organisational culture in the interests of some narrowly focussed, technicist concept of efficiency, then we need to examine and promote other ways of thinking about the person. We need to think of the person, the learner, as more than a resource, or a unit of human capital, or a cluster of officially sanctioned competencies.

We have already seen the way both the humanists and those adult educators who draw on critical theory adopt a centred view of the person. While Mezirow, for example, very clearly argues for a kind of learning that derives from a realisation that our identities and behaviours have been culturally, socially, even politically induced, the learning for perspective transformation that he outlines is still centred on the individual learner. This learner is a potentially autonomous subject capable of looking at the ways she or he has seen or sees the world, that is, capable of reflecting on her or his reflection. And the purpose of this meta-reflection, it would seem, is to achieve the ideal of the self-directed, critically aware, continually learning person - a state of being that some might interpret as the manifestation of some central human essence similar to that core of energetic curiosity Rogers seeks to unleash, or that experienced self Boud, Keogh and Walker want the learner to understand through reflection.

But there are ways of looking at the person, that is, at ourselves and the participants we seek to help to learn, so as to decentre the subject. Allman and Wallis in their interpretation of Marx's theory of consciousness (1991) argue that consciousness may appear to have an independence but that it is 'through life activity that we produce the material of our minds as well as our material world'. This life activity takes place within social relations between people and in relations between people and the objects of their world. These relations are best understood through dialectical analysis, that is, through examining these relationships in terms of contradictions, in terms of the way opposites are related 'such that neither could exist as it presently does outside its relation to the other'. Earlier I mentioned their example of the dialectical relation between the First and the Third World.

If we heed Allman and Wallis, therefore, it becomes difficult to conceive of the person in humanist terms as a single and potentially autonomous agent, in whom resides some

unchanging essence which the educator may be able to help a learner fully comprehend and express. At the very least we must place that person within a context of relationships with other people and other objects in their world, and recognise that these other people and objects are significant in that they interact with and help define the person. Reality does not so much exist in the single person but in dialectical relation with significant, contradictory and sometimes challenging others.

Such a view takes us out of ourselves. Awareness, understanding, learning is achieved through examining our relations with others and the world, and understanding those contradictory relations which define the way we presently exist. Some of these relations will be unsatisfactory, some of the other parties in those relations will not be simply oppositional but inimical, and we may decide to take action to alter the relation. This might involve working on ourselves, but it might equally involve working on the relation, or on the others in the relation.

There are times, however, when dialectical relations are simply too neat and inclusive to explain the mysteries of consciousness, or to account for the scatter, variety, uncertainty, and rapidity of change in our lives. With these doubts in mind, we may be tempted to go in search of other still more decentred concepts of the person.

We can find a number of different ways of looking at the person within the uncoordinated, often contradictory writing and thinking on late modernity and post-modernity. By the very nature of post modernity discourse, we are unlikely to find definitions, but we will find loads of ideas. In a sense what these writers have done is to tear up the enlightenment, rationalist, hypothesis-testing script and throw it up in the air, so that ideas come floating down like so much multi-coloured confetti, leaving us to run around like children let out of school picking up what we can, and using what we want to.

This kind of writing and thinking encourages us to break free from the unitary (or binary) view of the person. In one sense we can contemplate the person as being made up of an indefinite number of different, matching, opposing, intersecting and separate concepts of self or consciousness or identity. The person becomes a collage in which, under different circumstances and in different contexts, different parts of the collage predominate.

In another sense we can see the person as engaging in a constant revision of his or her concept of self in the face of a continuous multiplicity of choices. This time the image might be of a busy actor having to choose and take on new roles in a succession of plays, television serials, and films, sometimes working in more than one medium and therefore assuming more than one role during the same period of time.

And in a third sense we might even suggest that the person ceases to exist as an identifiable self and becomes a number of selves, a collection or flock of decentred 'others'. In all three senses, focus and stability are gone, and we have a concept of the person that is variable, changing, and capable of being defined by widely varying factors.

We can argue, for example, that a person is defined by his or her history, that this history contributes to the sense of identity and self, and that it affects the kind of consciousness that the person experiences. We can view history as linear, and then recognise that a person can have a number of very different linear histories, resulting in different concepts of person according to which history informs the person's actions and relations at a particular time. A person may be defined by the history of one parent's family in one case, and by that of the other parent's family in another, by a history related to affective relations or by a history in terms of actions and events or, in the case of many people living in a multicultural country, by the history of one culture at one time or in one context and by another culture at another time or in another context.

However, we can also view history in terms of phases or periods or strata, and even postulate that some of these phases - a period of childhood, a phase in one's professional career, and the illness of a partner, for example - have little or no connection or relation one to the other. We can therefore see the person defined differently in terms of these different, sometimes unconnected phases. A person's consciousness and sense of self will vary according to which phase of history is being referred to, drawn upon or reacted against, or which is currently most relevant or influential.

We can argue that a person is defined by his or her institutional contexts. By providing a set of mores, rules, routines, a social structure, physical surroundings, values and purposes as well as roles, an institutional context can affect or prescribe a person's identity, consciousness, or concept of self. And since people are usually involved in or affected by a number of institutions - nation, state, employing institution, union, club, church, and family, for example - with different institutions predominating at different moments, their identity, consciousness and concept of self may vary accordingly.

We can argue that a person is defined by his or her body: by the body in its natural form and functions, and by the body as it is constrained by events, environments, social convention and commercial pressures.

We can argue that the person is defined by the kinds of time, space and place she or he occupies.

We can argue that the person is defined by values and assumptions. These may have been adopted unthinkingly, the result of a political or class hegemony. Or they may have

been consciously espoused as a set of guidelines, a moral code, an ideology or a philosophy.

And we can argue that the person is defined by such affective aspects of human existence as faith, trust, thrill, anxiety, joy, guilt and shame. A person's sense of self can be affected by the faith he or she has in religions, principles, leaders, members of family and acquaintances, and it can alter as that faith falters or changes. A person can construct her or his life on a trust in others, in experts, in family, in friends, and in institutions, policies and ideas. This trust can provide a cocoon that surrounds and defines the person. And the sense of self can also be defined or affected by the emotions of thrill and anxiety that uncertainties, dangers, challenges and choices may bring; by the joy of success in the face of these challenges; and by guilt or shame. This guilt or shame may come about as a result from some of the choices a person makes, or may be taken on - inherited - by a person as a result of his or her membership of a family, group, people or nation.

A black writer and activist *en route* to a conference was stopped by officials at a French airport and subjected to a search and questioning in a manner that she strongly felt was unjustified, and blatantly racist. When she tried to get some redress for the indignities she experienced, she and others acting on her behalf met with delay, denial, and alleged intimidation. Australian consular officials in France took up her complaint and pursued the matter with vigour. The matter was never satisfactorily resolved but when writing some time after the event, the activist commented on the straightforward and unqualified support she had received from the consular officials, saying that for the first time in her life she felt she had been treated like any other Australian.

Thinking of the person as decentred is important to the idea of learning by defining the enemy. For some learners the enemy may also be a person or people with whom they must continue to deal, work and perhaps even live. Decentring the person of the enemy may help explain how a feminist can continue to live with a person who by his gender and elements of his behaviour can be identified with patriarchal oppressors. Decentring the person of the enemy may help explain how unionists can engage in a bitter struggle with the bosses on one day and yet be able to meet and work with them on the next. And decentring the person of the enemy may help explain how a black Australian activist can warmly acknowledge support from white officials when she has been the victim of white racism, and in that moment feel a sense of common identity with the majority of white Australians.

This kind of sentiment need not erode an activist's commitment to struggle for change. That we can encounter an enemy and an ally literally or by association in the same person

need not diminish the force of our feeling towards that enemy, nor diminish the learning we can experience in the process of defining that aspect of the person which is our enemy.

Thirty two

The location of power

Power too can be perceived as decentred. Foucault (1980) suggests that power is dispersed and expressed in a myriad of locations, events, relations, and groupings of people, rather than being centrally located in large structures such as the state or the judiciary or a union or a large corporation. The large structures and organisations exist but they come afterwards as a means of describing and perhaps attempting to bring some order to these myriad expressions of power.

That power can be decentred is a liberating idea. In looking at the forces bent on logging a rain forest, we might be tempted to see most or all of the power resting with the logging company's chief executive several hundred kilometres away in a capital city, or in the headquarters of a parent company overseas, or with a government minister and her or his chief adviser. But power - that is, the power to alter events in the forest - may actually rest with a scatter of people in a scatter of locations: with the loggers, perhaps one particular logger's family, a school principal, a union organiser, the local police, the company's representative, the owner of one of the pubs in a nearby town, the regulars in that pub, a regional business, or a local doctor ... And if this is the case then countervailing power can exercised by the protesters as individuals confronting individuals and as members of disparate groups taking different kinds of action against, or with, different kinds of individual and organisation in the locality.

This decentred view of power is apparently borne out by the experience of the environmental movement. In the past fifteen or twenty years activists have had success in changing people's attitudes to the environment. The battle has not just been fought in international conferences, legislative chambers, corporate headquarters and the corridors of governments, but at countless sites throughout the world. We could argue that many of the successes have been a result of action outside a chemical factory, letters to a local government body asking for support for a paper recycling program, confrontations at dawn at the opening of a hunting season, small craft impeding a warship's entry into a civilian harbour ... of action taken by endlessly different groups in endlessly different contexts.

Brian Martin reflects on these two approaches in a discussion of the Australian anti-uranium movement's campaign in the nineteen seventies. He notes that while experts were used there was also an attempt in the movement to spread the expertise to as many people as possible. He argues:

> Partly this preference for broadening the knowledge base grew out of FOE (Friends of the Earth)-Australia's more radical grass-roots orientation: a belief in decentralised decision-making and sharing of skills within the movement. This contrasted with FOE-US and FOE-UK where national offices have played a major role in defining directions, providing materials and employing key figures, and where the issues have been tackled more by lobbying and providing a 'respectable' alternative than by popular mobilisation and direct action (1988, pp.205-6).

Attempts to bring local environmental groups into larger coordinated groupings can fail. The way the groups form, their centres of attention and the kinds of action they engage in militate against coordination of a centralised or hierarchical kind. Many groups take their identity from quite specific causes - protecting whales, resisting the building of a nuclear power station, controlling open-cut mining, reducing noise, protecting a wilderness area, recycling of glass products, protecting bird life in a wetlands, and so on - and combination or coordination of these disparate interests can prove difficult.

In the struggle to protect remaining forest areas from logging in southern New South Wales, Australia, an attempt to form a single body from the many groups engaged in action in the area failed. The coordinated body, while it lasted, was seen by many to have quickly lost contact with the activists on the ground, to have relied on information and advice supplied by a limited number of 'experts', and to have restricted its action to 'respectable' styles of protest such as lobbying, negotiation and representation with centralised forms of the opposition. An alternative, very loosely defined federation in which all the constituent bodies retained their autonomy to engage in action had more success.

The idea of decentred power may lead us to have more confidence in local struggle. The idea that the centralised expression of power comes after, rather than before, the expression of power in its decentred forms may help us understand that some centralised power structures can be brittle. And when we witness the collapse of a centralised power structure as a result of local action or triggered by a seemingly unimportant local event, we can entertain and act on the possibility that this may be an expression of a rule and not just a wildcard exception.

However, we cannot go on from there and conclude that centralised power is an illusion. Localised sites of power may proliferate, but considerable power continues to reside in state apparatuses that have extensive bureaucracies and sophisticated surveillance technologies designed to maintain control, huge enterprises that have the wealth and the expertise to buy and do what they want, and legal systems that have prisons and police to enforce their decisions. And environmentalists have also had their

successes in affecting corporations' policies, gaining the support of peak union bodies, shifting the thinking of governments, and challenging laws in the courts.

Nor do we have to conclude that cohesive mass political action is an illusion. Some of the new social movements may take the form of untidy patchworks of activist groups, but there are also times when faiths, ideas, fashions and anxieties can take grip of whole populations and, as events in 1989 in Eastern Europe demonstrated, people will take to the streets and bring about sweeping, organised change.

Power can manifest itself in centralised structures, in pervasive hegemonic ideologies, in organised movements, and in a vast, decentralised array of organisations, relationships, and events. When we help others learn, we need to help them analyse their enemies' uses of power in all these contexts and all these forms.

Thirty three

Self-concept in struggle

We could argue that Aboriginal people in Australia have a decentred concept of person in tune with that proposed by some of the post-modernity writers. In traditional Aboriginal cultures the person can be defined, differently, by their spiritual ties, the residential group to which they currently belong, and their linguistic group (McDaniel, 1992).

A person's spiritual identity is bound up in her or his relation to and descent from a particular Creator Being; in her or his relation to the country that radiates from the track travelled by that Creator Being as it passed through the land giving the land its features and bringing into existence plant, animal and human life; and in her or his relation to the story of that journey, which is the Dreaming. This spiritual grouping is now sometimes called a 'clan', but since membership is based on descent from a common spiritual being, a clan is not the same as a community or a family.

A person's identity is also defined by his or her membership of a residential group occupying a 'country'. This country may not be the person's own dreaming country, so he or she may be a member of a residential group in one 'country' and have spiritual ownership of and responsibility to another 'country'.

And a person will also be a member of a language group, which may include people from a number of residential groups, and a number of different clans or spiritual groupings. Marriage laws required people to marry outside their clans, and outside another kind of spiritual grouping to which their whole clan owes allegiance. Kinship systems are therefore complex and their deliniation important in that they define each person's membership in the different groupings and mark him or her out as an individual in a thoroughly unique relationship to every other individual she or he comes into contact with.

Modern Australia has dispersed, destroyed or severely weakened many of the traditional Aboriginal clans, communities and language groups but this 'decentring' of the concept of the person can still be detected within Aboriginal cultures in 'settled' Australia. Locality or 'country' - where a person comes from - is still used to mark out a person's identity, detailed accounts of an individual's extended family relationships are important (Keen, 1991), and allegiances according to language group are still defined even though the language itself may no longer be spoken (McDaniel, 1992). A person has a number of different starting points from which to define him or herself.

But modern Australia has also united Aboriginal people. If many of the spiritual groupings have disappeared, if many of the community groupings have been dispersed, and if many of the two hundred languages estimated to have been spoken on the

Australian continent at the time of white settlement no longer exist, an 'Aboriginality' has survived, and is now proudly and defiantly being developed and paraded. Aboriginal people from different parts of the country and from different groupings band together to march, to present their cultures in dance, painting and music to a wider world, and to exert political pressure in the interests of all Aboriginal people.

It is ironic that a people with a history deriving from so many diverse nations and with so many ways of defining the person has also had to suffer extreme stereotyping from the white population. In a sense Australian blacks have always been considered all the same. Because they were nomadic, did not construct permanent settlements, and wore little or no clothing, because their social organisations, their relationships with the land, their stories, their 'dreamings' and their ceremonies were not evident in terms the invaders could understand, early white settlers considered Aboriginal people primitive, childlike savages. With such stereotyping quickly established it was all too easy to consider that Aboriginal people had no rights over the land they occupied, to declare the land 'terra nullius', and to subject Aboriginal people to demeaning government policies based on the idea that they were unable to manage their own affairs.

Aboriginal people have had to endure a series of policies - both unofficial and official - decided for them by the white majority. The first policy was a combination of disregard and murder. Early settlement resulted in the introduction of disease, and from time to time when this did not thin the Aboriginal population sufficiently, some of the settlers helped the process along by systematic and at times officially sanctioned killing (Pilger, 1989, p.27). Some will allege that some of the ninety-nine deaths of Aboriginal people in the custody of police, prison and juvenile detention institutions between 1 January, 1980 and 31 May, 1989 that were subject of a Royal Commission of Enquiry are modern examples of this same practice.

The next phase was an official policy of protection. Aboriginal people were declared wards of the state, and decreed to be in need of protection. This usually involved moving them away from their tribal lands and putting them into reserves or mission stations. The conditions of some of these reserves were extremely poor, leading those in power to move easily into a policy of assimilation. This policy was implemented by removing children from their families and placing them in 'orphanages' or, often as domestic servants, with white families. This removal of children from their families was done forcibly and government agencies justified their actions by arguing that the children were being saved from the poor living conditions and primitive cultures of the reserves and being given an opportunity to join the mainstream, white way of life.

More recent policies have been integration - the inclusion of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities into the larger social structures - and now self-determination. This most recent policy seeks to establish structures and systems that enable Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities to control their own affairs, to establish and manage their own community organisations, and to effectively represent themselves as a separate, identifiable people and culture in negotiation and consultation with the federal and state governments. Such a form of representation was formalised in 1990 when the former federal departments concerned with Aboriginal affairs, development and housing were disbanded and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission was established, incorporating a structure of councils to represent Aboriginal people throughout the country.

Self-determination, some would argue however, is a chimera, the unconvincing overlay of a supposedly consultative structure on a massive and thoroughly established white political system. This kind of separate representative structure could be interpreted not as the necessary machinery to enable genuine self-determination but simply as another form of exclusion from majority political life. Some might argue that such a structure will necessarily be inward-looking, and that its very separateness, its very attempt to give self-determination to Aboriginal people, will permit the overt racists, the exploiters, the half-hearted helpers, and the paternalists to continue unchallenged in the mainstreams of white Australian society. Aboriginal people may have members on the Commission but they still cannot elect their own members of parliament.

That mainstream Australia continues to harbour racists within its formal structures appears to be borne out by evidence to an inquiry into the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. A news story in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 12 August, 1994 opens with a paragraph reporting a police officer's evidence that 'racism was condoned at the highest levels in the NSW Police and police who were not racists were often called "nigger lovers"', and goes on to catalogue allegations of violence and menace by police officers against Aboriginal people.

When people have been so beaten down, when their cultures have been so devastated, when they encounter the entrenched prejudice in authorities of the kind alleged in the inquiry, they may find it difficult to avoid becoming inward-looking and accepting inward-looking 'explanations'. When people lose, it is natural to engage in self-examination, and if they do that, they will probably find some faults and weaknesses and end up blaming themselves.

Thirty four

From oppressed to oppressor

In the struggle to begin redressing the inequities experienced by Aboriginal people, some educationalists have made use of the ideas of Freire. But there are two quite distinct problems in trying to do this.

The first is that Freire develops a framework in which the participants are defined by social grouping or class, or by a shared history of oppression. He rarely identifies participants by name or by individual characteristics. Rather, he uses generic terms such as peasant or villager or tenement resident, and talks of the educator's encounter with groups, not with individual people. When he quotes verbatim what a participant may have said, he often attributes the quote to the whole group, starting with words such as: 'The group participants commented that...' Such an approach to learners would seem to this white Australian writer to be at odds with the individualistic way in which many Aboriginal people appear to define themselves. Each Aboriginal learner has his or her own various connections and interrelations with others, each differently defined by community, family, history and locality; and from my experience of working with Aboriginal learners an adult educator can make no assumptions of the kinds of commonality Freire assumes in the 'peasants', or 'villagers' or 'tenement residents' he works with. Aboriginal people do share an Aboriginality, and this would seem to be a powerfully uniting force in their lives, but as I have suggested above I suspect that this commonality derives to some degree at least from the invading presence of the white majority - from the sense of having a common enemy.

The second problem in applying Freire's ideas to an Aboriginal context is that the educator may be tempted to choose the wrong starting point and encourage an unproductive or counter-productive kind of self-examination. We can see how this might happen from one of the rare, and therefore significant, examples of educational practice Freire gives in his best known book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972b). Freire describes a 'thematic investigation' carried out with a group of tenement residents in Santiago (pp.89-90). The investigator presented the group with a drawing showing a drunken man walking along a street and three men conversing on a corner. In the discussion that followed, the participants declared that the drunk was the productive and useful one, a worker who drank after working all day long for very low wages. The three men conversing, on the other hand, were contributing nothing.

Freire argues that the picture depicted for the participants 'an existential situation they could recognise and in which they could recognise themselves', and he goes on:

> On the one hand, they verbalise the connection between earning low wages, feeling exploited, and getting drunk - getting drunk as flight from reality, as an attempt to overcome the frustration of inaction, as an ultimately self-destructive solution. On the other hand they manifest the need to rate the drunkard highly. He is the 'only one useful to his country, because he works, while the others gab'. After praising the drunkard, the participants then identify themselves with him, as workers who drink - 'decent workers' (p.90).

In this example Freire gives an account of a method which encouraged a group of people to examine themselves frankly, and which enabled them to arrive at judgements which did not simply echo those of the moralisers but which validated themselves as worthy people. It is an example of a kind of practice that adult educators working within an Aboriginal context might be tempted to apply, particularly if it helps people sidestep the views of white majority moralisers and arrive at their own sense of self-worth based on their own beliefs, standards and traditions.

It is also an example related to alcohol. Alcoholism features prominently in the stereotyping imposed by the white population on Aboriginal people. And since alcohol abuse does occur in some Aboriginal communities (as it manifestly also does in white communities), this may make the example seem all the more relevant to the adult educator working in an Aboriginal context.

But we could equally say: for people who have been so maltreated by a whole population of white people, what point is there in this kind of intense self-examination? Why, in the face of such a gross injustice wrought on them by someone else, should they be encouraged to look at themselves? What point is there in an educator, Aboriginal or otherwise, going out to a group of people camped on the riverbank outside some town in the western reaches of New South Wales, gathering them into a group, and then helping them examine how they have supposedly connived in their own oppression? How will confirming their own worth help them when they are next stopped, questioned, arrested and gaoled? How does that stop the drunken yobs that come out of town late on a Saturday night to kick their shelters down?

Rather than helping learners look at themselves, we should help them look at the thugs and the bigots, the people who do not care, the people who intrude, the people who misuse their authority, and the large and unthinking majority who have brought many Aboriginal people to such a miserable state of affairs.

Rather than study the oppression, we should study the oppressors. We should look at

their values
their cultures
their ideologies
their addictions
their motives
and *their* delusions.

By doing this we can encourage people to be outward-looking, to be active and activist. We can help them focus their anger on the cause of their anger. And we can set up situations in which we and the people we are working with think, plan, learn, and decide on action.

Section Eight: Thinking, planning, learning and taking action

Thirty five

Theory and practice

A colleague talks of observing two youth workers operating in the same context. Both act according to the same professional rules and both demonstrate the same range of competencies. But despite all the outward similarities, the young people go to one of the workers and not to the other. The successful worker has thought about her or his work, has taken sides, and understood why. And, it would seem, without being told, the young people know. Reflection, commitment, belief, clarity of values - that is, the theory that informs the worker's practice - will show through.

In the mid eighties, I went to the screening of a film depicting Chile under its military regime. After the screening, the film-maker spoke. He pointed out that until the coup in 1973, Chile had experienced years of democratic government. Many Chileans had simply not been able to imagine that their government could be overthrown and that all the apparently stable institutions of a longstanding democracy could be so straightforwardly perverted, bypassed or simply shut down. Before the coup, few would have imagined it possible that thousands of people would be herded into sports stadiums converted to makeshift concentration camps, that political figures and trade union leaders would be arrested, tortured and sent into exile, that books would be confiscated and burnt, and that people last seen being taken into custody would simply 'disappear'.

The film-maker suggested that, presented with the idea of similar events occurring in Australia, many of us would say as those Chileans had: 'It could not happen here.'

There will be times when we and our learners can gather information, reflect, prepare and then engage in some form of social action in an ordered and orderly way. There will be other times, however, when we and our learners may have to act immediately, rapidly, spontaneously even, in response to events and a timetable over which we have little or no control. Metaphorically or literally, we may wake up to the sound of tanks rumbling in the street, and we will need to have done our thinking beforehand. We will need to have reflected, taken up sides, and to know why we have done so.

Whether we are helping people learn to take on activist roles, to prepare for a specific struggle, or to protect themselves against potential oppression, we and they will need a

theory to inform our actions. We will need ideas, a political framework, clarity of values and a clear idea of who our friends and enemies are.

Thirty six

Identifying the enemy

When we ask who the enemies are we should try to prevent our learners retreating into abstractions and sheeting problems home to depersonalised concepts such as society or hegemony or the unequal distribution of wealth. As far as possible we need to see these kinds of concept as tools for analysis to be used in the search, not the enemies themselves.

Foley (1992b) argues that much of what currently masquerades as economic and workplace reform is actually the reorganisation of capitalism, and he goes on to say that calling the reorganisation of capitalism what it is can be a starting point to resistance. Yes, but it is *only* a starting point. We and our learners need to find out more. Wherever possible we need to give substance to the abstraction. In this case, we need to ask: Who are the people, what are the organisations promoting the reorganisation of capitalism? Where do they operate? Can we name them and *do they have an address?*

Once we have helped people locate their possible enemies, then we need to help them study them:

Are they really the enemy? Are they main players or bit players in the exercise of oppression? Are they beneficiaries of a hegemonic control or merely the foot soldiers?

What concepts of self do they have and how has that self been constructed? What are their histories and psychologies?

What kind of power to they wield?

And in what domain are these enemies operating? Are they operating in the instrumental domain? Are they operating in the interpretive domain. Or are they seeking to promote their interests in the critical domain of ideologies, values and assumptions?

We can examine these different domains of political and social action by looking again at the encounter between majority Australia and the Aboriginal people.

In Australia there have been moves over the past years, increasing in intensity since the bicentennial year of 1988, to achieve reconciliation between the invading population, constituting some 98 or 99 per cent of the population, and the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Such was the mood that the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, in a speech on 10 December, 1992 in Redfern, New South Wales, could call on the population 'to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians' and then continue:

> We took the lands and smashed the traditional way of life.
> We brought the diseases. The alcohol.

We committed the murders.
We took the children from their mothers.
We practised discrimination and exclusion.
It was our ignorance and prejudice.
And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

Or to give an example from the arena of adult education, in 1993, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education jointly developed a study resources kit on reconciliation issues and organised study circles nationally to use those kits.

In 1993 also the Australian High Court handed down a decision which overruled the concept of *terra nullius* and recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's claim to traditional ownership of land. The 'native title' decision related only to Crown land with which the traditional owners had maintained a continuous relationship since the white invasion, and so limited the kind of property that might actually come into contention. Nonetheless it did offer an opportunity both symbolically and in certain cases literally to make compensation to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and so formally advance a national reconciliation. This opportunity was taken up by the Australian Labor Government, and at the end of 1993 legislation was passed through Federal Parliament recognising native title and setting in place principles and processes for settling land claims by Aboriginal people.

However, the passage of the bill through parliament was not an easy one. Despite reassurances that leasehold of Crown land would be honoured, opponents of the High Court decision and the proposed legislation came out in force, operating in all three domains.

On an instrumental level, some corporations feared that Aboriginal communities might impose conditions on the use of land the corporations were already exploiting and insist on massive compensation, so they examined counter measures through legal channels, literally reinforced their presence on some sites, and intervened in the economy of the country by predicting downturns in investment in present and future projects in Australia.

At an interpretive level, opponents of the legislation lobbied, wrote letters to the press, and gave interviews on radio and television. Often the strategy here was to argue the inevitability of history, that violent and unfair though the white invasion may have been at the time, the invaders had won and as in other cases throughout the history of the human race, that was that. A numerically, economically and militarily more powerful culture had overwhelmed a numerically, economically and militarily less powerful culture. Others

trivialised the issue by drawing incorrect analogies, and letters to the press appeared in which self-proclaimed Saxons or Celts or whatever laid claim to sections of Mayfair in London or similar tracts of valuable real estate elsewhere which they said their ancestors had occupied some two thousand years ago. Others through letters, interviews and newspaper articles discussed weighty matters such as the human condition, questions of guilt, and human beings' tendency to oppress and be oppressed, some arguing that the descendants need not bear the shame for actions of their forbears. At the bottom of the scale, some tried the scare method, implying that people's backyards might be up for grabs by Aboriginal people.

Most interesting, however, was the campaign to shift or reinforce people's values. Here a number of high profile people chose to give addresses that seemed aimed at promoting stereotypical (and unsustainable) images of Aboriginal people. Four stand out - a Federal politician, a politician at the states and territories level, a figure from the mining industry, and a figure from a government commission. Two examples of the kinds of comment made will do. One appeared to condemn Aboriginal culture on the basis that Aboriginal people had not made use of wheeled vehicles prior to the arrival of white people, whilst another seemed to imply that Aboriginal people maintained some unspecified but unusual relationship with dogs.

Four prominent figures from distinct areas of public and commercial life, then, gave addresses, widely reported in the mass media, which depicted the diverse cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in derogatory terms and which may well have provided material for racists wanting to enter the debate in other arenas - all in the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Thirty seven

Consultation, negotiation and conflict

As our learners identify and come to understand their enemies and how those enemies operate, they will begin devising strategies to deal with them. To find a framework for doing this, it is worth looking at the world of industrial relations where there are institutionalised opponents, and established ways in which these opponents deal with one another.

In industrial relations, managements can lock unions out and unions can go slow, work to rule, or strike. Both may agree to submit to some form of arbitration. One party may drag the other into court. But most commonly, the two parties will meet and negotiate. Here is a definition:

> Negotiation is the process whereby two or more parties with both common and conflicting interests come together to talk with a view to reaching an agreement.

Two particular features of this definition are interesting. The first is that the parties talk with a view to arriving at some kind of solution that will enable them to resume working together. One party may lose out badly in the negotiation and another may gain a considerable amount, but all involved intend reaching some kind of agreement, even if the agreement is a minimal and unstable one. Indeed, if one party to a 'negotiation' comes to the table without the intention of reaching some kind of agreement, then the process is not a negotiation but simply a moment of masquerade, a jab or a feint, in the course of a conflict.

The other significant feature of the definition is that the parties involved have both common *and* conflicting interests. It is the common interests that force them to the negotiation table, and it is the conflicting interests that require them to go through the difficult and stressful process of negotiation (rather than the more straightforward process of consultation) when they do get to the table.

In industrial relations both management and union have a common interest in production since production ensures the continued existence of both the organisation and the workers in the organisation. But within the very same activity lies the source of their conflict, since once production is ensured, then both sides want to increase their share of it. Management wants a bigger share of production in terms of profits, and the unions want a bigger share in terms of wages and conditions for their members. The need to continue

production brings both sides to the table, and a desire to gain a larger share of that production makes them negotiate.

From this definition of negotiation we can derive a definition of consultation:

> Consultation is the process whereby two or more parties *whose common interests outweigh any conflicting ones* come together to talk with a view to sharing information and solving problems to their mutual advantage.

All the parties involved are already essentially in agreement. They share the same philosophies and policies, and discussions will for the most part concentrate on how to work together to achieve those policies.

From the definition of negotiation we can also derive a definition of a dispute:

> A dispute is a process in which parties *whose conflicting interests outweigh any common ones* engage with one another, each with a view to winning - that is, furthering its own interests or gaining ascendancy for its own viewpoint.

Here the parties have different philosophies and policies. Each party regards the others and their policies as a hindrance. There is no desire to reach agreement.

Consultation, negotiation and disputes are worked through in different ways and according to different 'rules'. Consultation is carried out through formal and informal meetings, where rules of procedure or customs can be established which everyone will be ready to follow. Information is openly shared and decisions are arrived at either by consensus, or by a vote in conditions where everyone has agreed to be bound by the majority decision.

In a negotiation the parties talk but do not necessarily share all the information they have, nor follow any set procedures. There are no rules about the order in which people should speak, and no chair. There is no set time. There will be sudden adjournments, breakdowns in the talks, and resumptions. There is no hard and fast agenda. Each side will try to get the other talking, yet say little and give nothing away themselves. There will be claims and counter-claims, moments of silence, heated exchanges, and sudden shifts of focus. But because both sides need the other, because they do have common interests as well as the conflicting ones, they will keep at it until some kind of agreement is reached.

Although there are no rules, most negotiations follow a pattern. There is an *opening* stage in which the parties assemble at the negotiating table and clarify why they are there. There is a *demand* stage in which claims and demands are made by both sides. This is a

period of disputation in which the will of the other parties is tested by argument and counter-demand. If the negotiations do not break down at the demand stage, the negotiations will most likely move into a *speculative* stage in which possible outcomes are proposed without commitments being made. This is the phase when people make suggestions and put forward ideas using phrases such as: 'What if ...' or 'We might be able to ... if you could ...'. From here, when the parties feel they have examined possible outcomes and gained a feeling for what the other sides will be able to bear, the negotiations move into the *ultimatum* stage where final positions are spelt out. And if these final ultimatums are reasonably close, then the negotiation moves into a *closing* stage in which the final details of an agreement are worked out and, through apparently unrelated conversation, the two sides put the heat and unpleasantness of the negotiation behind them and re-establish everyday working relations.

Disputes are worked out through struggle, battle, pistols at dawn, or other forms of ugly and sometimes terminal confrontation. In the industrial relations arena, serious disputes can result in long drawn-out strikes in which one or other or sometimes both parties go to the wall. Or we can resolve disputes by appealing to a third party as arbiter. In civil disputes we can go to the courts or a mediator. In industrial relations in Australia at a federal level and in most states we can go before an industrial relations commission.

This way of distinguishing between consultation, negotiation and dispute gives the lie to the win-win lot. These are the writers on interpersonal communication, conflict resolution and and negotiation who develop strategies for resolving disputes which they claim will result in everyone coming out ahead. This literature is seductive. Few of us, after all, actually want to go around throwing punches and head-butting people, and even fewer of us, I imagine, want to be punched and head-butted in return. Everyone coming out of a conflict smiling is an agreeable picture to have in mind. But there *are* people who head-but and I do not see the essentially genteel processes suggested by the win-win advocates working with them. And there are times when I would get no pleasure out of seeing the other side smiling, since the only satisfactory outcome is that they should be rendered powerless and sent packing.

Johnson and Johnson, in their still influential text (1975), discuss negotiation, contrasting what they call 'problem solving strategies' with 'win-lose strategies'. The win-lose strategies appear to conform with the definition of negotiation given above, but the problem-solving strategies seem way off the mark. Among their problem solving strategies are:

Define the conflict as a mutual problem;
Find creative agreements that are satisfying to both parties or present a mutually acceptable compromise;
Make sure contacts are on the basis of equal power;
Work to have highest empathy and understanding of other's position, feelings and frame of reference;
Promote clarity, predictability, mutual understanding to help problem solving;
Accurately state one's needs, goals and position in the opening offer (pp.182-183).

When these 'problem solving strategies' are not simply tautologous (solve the problem by solving the problem, they appear to be saying in the second strategy quoted above), they are clearly based on the assumption that the parties have mutual interests that far outweigh their conflicting ones. This leads Johnson and Johnson to suggest that one strive for the highest empathy for one's adversary, and that at the outset of the negotiation one trustingly lay all one's cards on the table. These may be strategies one could contemplate when engaging in *consultation*, that is, as part of a group of like-minded people interested in achieving the same outcome; but Johnson and Johnson describe their strategies as *negotiation* strategies, and anyone who has experience of the hard world of industrial relations negotiations (or negotiations in life-and-death situations, or negotiations where the people represented have a great deal to lose) will see them as unrealistic. When negotiating with an employer who has already sacked hundreds from a workforce, whose cost-cutting has endangered workers' lives, who has announced that she or he is relocating the workplace to the other side of the city or to another town altogether with the consequent disruption to the lives of the entire workforce, who has suddenly reneged on agreements worked out over months of discussion, whose priorities are clearly maximum profits before the wellbeing of the workforce, there seems little point in striving for empathy and it would be approaching a condition of madness to state one's goals and position accurately in the opening offer.

We could say that Johnson and Johnson knew what they were doing since they offer two sets of negotiation strategies, one clearly accepting conflicts of interests; but their problem-solving strategies are the ones that gained the most notice amongst writers on interpersonal communication and set the pattern for the literature on conflict resolution and win-win negotiation techniques that followed.

In *Getting to Yes*, an influential text devoted to the subject of negotiation, Fisher and Ury contrast 'soft', 'hard' and their preferred 'principled' negotiation strategies (1983, p.13). Fisher and Ury draw a distinction between the *positions* parties to a negotiation adopt and

the actual *interests* they may have, arguing that people will often adopt positions that are counter to their interests. Principled negotiation, therefore, involves identifying what is in people's interests and searching for creative responses to those interests, rather than concentrating on people's stated positions. By examining these distinctions, Fisher and Ury provide a more coherent theoretical base to their principled strategies than Johnson and Johnson do to their problem-solving strategies.

Nonetheless Fisher and Ury propose as one of their principled strategies that one 'avoid having a bottom line'. Again, to anyone going into a negotiation whose outcome really matters, not to decide on a point beyond which you refuse be pushed would be abjectly irresponsible. The safety and the health of people should not be negotiable. What unionists and workers before us have fought for, made sacrifices for and won should not be negotiable. The rights of minority groups, indigenous people, and the female half of the population to equitable treatment should not be negotiable. If we are moral beings at all, we must all have bottom lines, and in preparing for a negotiation we should list them, review them, and reaffirm to ourselves and the people we represent our commitment never to be pushed beyond them.

In their book *Everyone Can Win: How to Resolve Conflict* (1989) Cornelius and Faire actually use the term 'win-win', contrasting this approach to withdrawal, suppression, win-lose, and compromise. As the title indicates they make extravagant claims for the win-win approach, and as the book's sub-title indicates, they argue that this approach is not only useful in problem-solving and negotiation but can also be used to resolve conflict. The book has had some currency in recent years and has popularised the phrase 'win-win'. At one stage in a chapter entitled 'Creative Responses - Problems or Challenges?' the authors appear to offer advice on population control to dictators:

> A president with too tight a control can trigger a revolution (p.30).

And a little later they propose dealing with conflict by 'beaming out energy', and they go on:

> Mousse, the hair setting product, fills with thousands of tiny air bubbles when it emerges from its aerosol can, expanding till it occupies much more space than its original volume. This is how you can enfold a difficult person or situation with your expanding energy. Mousse them! (p.35)

A person with good reason for being difficult (a union rep on a construction site opposing a dangerous practice, say) might respond by giving our energising mousser a poke in the eye.

The win-win lot are talking about consultation, and not about negotiation or dispute. They have got their definitions wrong. In a dispute or a negotiation, if we were to use their strategies, at best we would solve the other side's problem while making no gains for ourselves, and at worst we would come out of the encounter considerably worse off. It can be self-defeating, a delusion, to enter transactions with other people and other groups on the assumption that enemies do not exist.

Thirty eight

Exploring strategies

If we use the framework drawn from industrial relations, once our learners have identified their enemies we can help them examine their relationship with those enemies. Do they and their enemies have any common interests? What are their conflicting interests? In what areas do they and their enemies have both common *and* conflicting interests?

If the common interests outweigh the conflicting ones overall, or if there are large areas of activity in which there are interests in common, then our learners might:

parley with the other parties
consult and/or
make a decision to collaborate.

Parleying would involve meeting and talking, but guardedly, still with one's own interests uppermost in one's mind and still aware that there will be inimical elements within the other parties' ranks. If the common interests clearly do prevail, then it would be possible to consult, to talk more frankly and openly. And if this openness is not abused, then it would be possible to move towards forms of collaboration.

Collaboration requires careful definition. In its pejorative meaning it implies dealing with an enemy in a craven, self-interested or defeatist way. In its positive meaning, it suggests a wholehearted form of cooperation in which the goals of the various people involved become the same, as in the case of two writers working together to produce a script. If common interests prevail, then everyone involved can gradually move towards a form of positive collaboration. But it is well to remember that there is a negative form as well, and that we must make the moves carefully, constantly ensuring that our own goals and those of the people we are representing are not subtly altered or subsumed in someone else's vision.

If our learners have both common and conflicting interests with the other parties, then they might:

negotiate
cooperate and/or
educate.

Negotiation involves hard and realistic appraisal of the other parties and their positions and interests. It will also involve detailed appraisal of one's own interests. And it may involve long and frustrating encounters. However, if the negotiation is successful, some kind of working arrangement will be arrived at. All involved will agree to some form of cooperation, however minimal or temporary. And if one can enter into cooperation with another party, one has the opportunity to educate the other party at the same time, to provide them with information, to offer them insights into one's own ideas and aspirations, to engage them with a view to shifting them closer to one's own system of values. And since cooperation involves two-way transactions, one may also engage with the intention of learning from, as well as teaching, the other parties.

And if our learners' interests are in conflict with those of the other parties, or if the conflicting interests far outweigh any common ones in any particular sphere of activity, then they might:

disengage
defend
infiltrate
subvert
oppose
contest
challenge and/or
attack.

If the enemy is small, localised and not part of some all-encompassing hegemony, then our learners may be able to disengage entirely. Having identified the enemy, and understood and annulled the enemy's effect on them, they may be able to ignore the enemy and go about their own business. If that is not feasible then they may have to defend themselves by defining the boundaries between them and their enemies, and keeping the enemies on the other side.

Disengaging and defending are reactive strategies. They can be sound ones, but we need to recognise that many of the strategies suggested to disempowered groups by governments, social agencies, and well-wishers are reactive or 'coping' ones. In the adult education arena, for example, there are job-seeking courses that concentrate on each job-seeker's personal presentation. These courses accept the status quo and require the victim to do the changing.

To bring about social rather than individual change, however, it is crucial for disempowered groups to consider adopting proactive strategies: strategies that will impinge on their enemies as well as on themselves. In this case we should help our learners examine ways of taking the struggle up to or even into other parties' camps. The options here are to act covertly, to infiltrate and subvert; or to take the struggle into the open, to oppose the other parties, to contest their views, to challenge their authority, and to go on the attack.

Learning by defining the enemy does not necessarily lead to open conflict or impossible divisions. On the contrary, unions develop modes of working with managements. Feminists have accepted the collaboration of men in the pursuit of the feminist cause. And indigenous people can work towards reconciliation with their invaders. But if the focus in the learning is not on the learners' own condition so much as the condition, nature and motives of their opponents, then the learning is likely to be clear-sighted, and the strategies realistic.

Thirty nine

Self-appraisal

Now we can help people engage in self-reflection and self-appraisal.

Once they have defined their enemies and taken a long, hard look at the kinds of strategy they might use to deal with them, we can encourage our learners to take a long, hard look at themselves. Now they can identify the information, skills, values and attitudes they will need to develop if they are to match the enemy, if they are to counter or neutralise the effect of the enemy, if they are to change the enemy, or if they are to push the enemy back and out of their lives. Now we and the learners can more safely use the frameworks of educators such as Mezirow and Freire to examine the kinds of value system that have controlled and constrained their view of the world and themselves in the past. The process of defining the enemy does not deny the validity of intense self-examination, but it rejects the idea that learners should *start* with self-examination.

If we encourage learners to look at themselves it should be in order to increase their strengths, not to indulge in some fastidious understanding of their past faults and weaknesses. We should avoid the kind of 'critical' thinking that focuses solely on the *learners'* values and assumptions. We should avoid the experiential forms of adult education that assume the source for all learning comes from within the learner her or himself. We should avoid the kind of 'nurturing' adult education that assumes that the learners need protection. We should avoid those therapeutic forms of adult education that assume that learners are deviant, ill or lacking. And we should avoid the kind of learning that elevates the study of oppression and injustice to a discipline, turning lived reality into statistics and isolating issues from the dust and the smell of the streets and the noisy confusion of struggle.

Instead, we should encourage sceptical, realistic thinking that generates new and 'really useful' knowledge. Like Horton, we should provide opportunities for structured reflection on past actions. Like Thompson, we should provide the academic tools and knowledge to assist in that reflection. Like Foley, we should encourage an analysis of the forces at play within ourselves and between ourselves and others.

We will want to help our learners prepare for the encounter by developing their own skills and understanding, and by planning strategies and processes. Our learners may not use the strategy of open conflict but we must remember that their enemies may not be nice people. They may be duplicitous and violent and our learners are lost if we and they have not prepared for this.

Of course we will want to encourage our learners to understand themselves in order, if they wish, to change. But we and our learners must always keep in mind that it is the *enemy* - the polluters, the despoilers, the corrupt and the corruptors, the bigots and the racists - who should change.

Forty

Learning in action

The learning, as we and our learners pass through the phases of defining our enemies, will be considerable. Identifying the enemy will involve the development and application of research skills, the gathering, evaluation and analysis of information, and the understanding and application of academic disciplines. Examining strategies will involve planning, discussion, analysis, reflection, and the devising and speculative evaluation of different options. And the process of equipping ourselves to deal with our enemies will involve self-examination, the clarification and restructuring of values, and the development of a wide range of intellectual and practical skills.

Two accounts of campaigns against the mining and use of uranium for nuclear power provide us with case studies of the kinds of learning in action described above: Brian Martin's (1988) account of the campaign in the nineteen-seventies to stop the mining of uranium in Australia; and Robert Regnier's (1991) account of the campaign against the nuclear industry's plans to increase uranium mining and construct a new nuclear reactor in Saskatchewan, Canada.

Martin describes how opponents to the mining of uranium in Australia engaged in rallies, demonstrations and lengthy campaigns; lobbied governments, corporations, political parties and unions; and educated themselves and others through the use of research, informal educational networks and the formal education structures.

They defended, opposed, contested, challenged and attacked. They infiltrated:

> The anti-nuclear movement has provided the encouragement and support for dissent by insiders ... (p.216).

They subverted. Martin describes how the movement spread knowledge to 'all sorts of people', and goes on:

> In an immediate sense this has been done to mobilise opposition, but it has a deeper aspect. It has been an attempt to undercut the very value of specialist knowledge as a resource that can be wielded by experts (p.217).

People involved in the anti-uranium movement engaged in intensive learning. They read technical and political writings, and exchanged learning through what Martin calls an 'informal college' of activists, scientists and academics, informing themselves in order to

present their case to the public. This was not learning that started with themselves. It was learning that would help in a struggle with an opponent.

> The stimulus and testing ground for learning was public debate (p.207).

But they went far beyond the gathering of information for debate. They sought to develop their own ‘critical understanding’. And from Martin’s text we can see that this word ‘critical’ has two clear meanings.

The first meaning has associations with critical theory. The anti-uranium activists analysed the values and belief systems of their opponents. This led in turn to an analysis of their own values.

> [T]he critique of the ‘hard energy path’ raises crucial questions about centralisation of energy sources, energy-intensive lifestyles and destruction of indigenous cultures. The ‘debate’ has always been at cross-purposes, with proponents and opponents raising different concerns, because ultimately different values and social interests have underlaid different views on the subject (p.216).

And this led to an examination of the ways in which their opponents generated knowledge.

> [K]nowledge about the environmental movement is not something that simply develops as a result of neutral processes of research and education. There are active political interventions into knowledge creation, certification and dissemination (p.216).

The second meaning of ‘critical’ is the more colloquial one. The anti-uranium activists were ready to point the finger, to lay the blame. Their critical understanding included analyses of power and political motives, and in their education and campaigning they were ready to name their enemies.

> The dominant formal power lies in the hands of institutions which cause environmental problems, mainly corporations and governments (p.216).

And their response was both centred and decentred:

> Against this the environmental movement has sometimes tried to muster logic, counter-expertise and inside connections (the respectable approach) and sometimes tried to mobilise grassroots action (p.216).

Martin's account is an excellent example of learning by defining the enemy. On the one hand the enemy is defined in generalised, hegemonic terms, and we can interpret the anti-uranium movement's actions as an attempt to establish a counter-hegemony.

> By spelling out the wider values involved in the debate and the way they relate to the technical issues, some activists hoped to build a different basis for social decision making, in which the expertise is at the service of the people rather than the elites (p.217).

But on the other hand the activists learnt and educated others in order to engage in direct action, and here we can see the enemy defined in physically identifiable terms. Martin uses fairly unemotive language - 'institutions which cause environmental problems' - but these institutions are run by people who have names, and they and their institutions have addresses.

Martin's analysis of the campaign is written after the event. Robert Regnier (1991), on the other hand, describes a campaign that has run through the nineteen-eighties and, as he writes, is still in progress.

Regnier analyses the contest between the nuclear industry and the anti-nuclear protesters in Saskatchewan, Canada, in terms of hegemony. He demonstrates how the nuclear industry, through a number of different agencies, made use of the media to form public opinion; placed the nuclear power issue at the centre of the political agenda by publicising initiatives to coincide with the announcement of the 1991 provincial election; influenced and funded nuclear research at university level; and intervened in schools by establishing relationships with school boards, and by funding and designing programs for teachers and students.

His article makes invigorating reading. He names names - of a journalist who wrote twelve pro-nuclear industry articles in a single paper between 1988 and 1991 using a mix of ridicule and simplistic argument, and of companies and utilities such as Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, SaskPower, Canadian Nuclear Association, and the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation (SMDC). He quotes the SMDC's corporate affairs vice-president as saying that their strategy was to 'immunize' teachers to criticisms of the industry. He analyses the proposal by Goldfarb Consultants for a three-pronged pro-nuclear public education campaign; and the recommendations by another consultancy

firm, Spratt and Associates, for ‘effective communicating’ by the nuclear industry with ‘the education community’. And he analyses the budget of the Canadian Nuclear Association to demonstrate the increased expenditure on a ‘public information’ program.

All this he sees as the industry’s attempt to define and dictate the dominant system of values of people in Saskatchewan so that the majority will unquestioningly support the nuclear industry’s actions. ‘Against this hegemony,’ he says

> ... citizens groups and coalitions in Saskatchewan have engaged in resistance and counter-hegemonic actions to contest industry claims, to oppose the development of nuclear projects and to advance alternatives to nuclear development (1991, p.49).

He goes on to describe the organisations and groups resisting the nuclear industry push, and to list the kinds of community, political and educational action that make up this attempt to establish a counter-hegemony. This action includes lobbying, publishing, conducting public forums, organising demonstrations and rallies, attending hearings, engaging in research, and establishing and operating resource centres. Perhaps the most important point he makes is that the activists’ campaign to promote a counter-hegemony is a positive process:

> The emancipatory commitment to public education is not simply to oppose, but to generate possibility and advance options for the common good (p.59).

Martin’s and Regnier’s accounts go well together. Regnier analyses the policies and propaganda of the nuclear industry, while Martin concentrates more on the educational strategies of people opposing the industry. Together they provide evidence of the intensity of learning in action that can take place when the learners are pitted against a clearly defined enemy.

Forty one

Separate adult education

Of course the Australian anti-uranium activists described in Martin's account did not include their opponents in their 'informal college'. Their opponents were the *object of their study*, not partners in the learning. This seems so obvious as to be not worth saying, yet as we have seen there is a kind of madness abroad, encouraged by the win-win literature and manifest in a fairly extreme form in those union trainers and officials who advocate joint union-management training.

I want to return to joint union-management training as it has happened in Australia, speculate on how it has come about and examine the problems inherent in it in a little more detail. The phenomenon has occurred within a context of change in industrial relations which has been going on since the mid nineteen-eighties (and to which I referred earlier when discussing the competency movement). From roughly 1988, awards - national or state-wide agreements on wages and conditions of work - have been revised to help make work and working conditions more flexible, new ways of organising work have been introduced into many workplaces, and forms of consultation between workers and management have been put in place. From 1993, to this process of award restructuring and consultation has been added enterprise bargaining. In this more recent phase of industrial change, there has been a government-encouraged shift away from a reliance on centralised awards to agreements negotiated within individual enterprises that will recognise local contexts and - within certain parameters still relating to the award system - will allow for local variations in conditions of work and rates of pay.

These changes have by no means been universal but a large number of enterprises have established consultative councils and committees and/or set up enterprise bargaining arrangements.

It is in relation to consultation and enterprise bargaining that some union officials and union trainers have espoused the idea of joint training. The argument appears to be that if the representatives of management and unions in a single enterprise or workplace are to meet on a regular basis to consult or negotiate, then they should be trained together as part of the process of building a team and establishing a climate of cooperation. The argument may seem straightforward but it denies a number of industrial realities.

Unionists and representatives of management may sit down together to decide on new ways of organising work in order to increase production, but the conflict of interest in how that increased production will be shared is still there. Management still want their share in increased profits, and unionists still want their share in increased salaries and wages, and

better conditions of work. The lie to the bosses' position is often in the fact that they argue for increased *productivity* rather than production. And if we pause for a moment we realise of course that increased productivity enables management to continue production at the same level while 'downsizing' the workforce.

Banks and Metzgar, American labour educators, explain this conflict of interests over productivity:

> Unions and workers do have an interest in increasing productivity, but it is not and can never be as unambiguous as management's. Management *always* has an interest in *as much productivity as possible* - that is, in the the greatest amount of (quality?) product for the least amount of hours worked. Workers have an interest in increasing productivity *only to the degree* that productivity growth is necessary to support increased standards of living and/or to preserve the long-term viability of their workplace (1989, p.21).

It is only in separate training that unionists can really examine the bosses' values and motives, clarify their own position and anticipate and plan to resist management moves that may actually result in loss of jobs and a downgrading of conditions.

Again, a consultative committee may appear to offer unionists a share in making decisions, but consultative committees are advisory only. The power to implement the committee's recommendations is retained by management. Consultative committees are rarely allocated large budgets to dispose of as they will, and even more rarely do they become a forum in which workers and management can examine ways of sharing the actual ownership of the enterprise. Training constrained by the presence of management can only deal with the *techniques* of participation, not the substance. It will be in separate training that the union members of a committee can examine ways of redistributing power and wealth that would mark real worker participation in the enterprise.

If management retain control of the finances of the enterprise and guard their right to make the decisions, then unionists bring to the consultative process an authority based on the level of union organisation in their workplace, and on their knowledge. Workers often have knowledge and insight that management does not have about how work is actually done, how production is actually carried out and how people really interrelate. In Schon's terminology (1971, 1985), the workers know the theory-in-use as well as the espoused theory, the informal as well as the formal organisational structures, and understand the soft technologies - that is, the way technologies are actually applied. This knowledge is valuable and union representatives on a consultative committee should not give it away lightly. Banks and Metzgar comment:

> Once management has knowledge that only workers had before, it can do with it what it will, including moving it (1989, p.19).

And they go on to cite examples of managements instituting quality circles or 'employee involvement programs' to extract information from their workforces before closing down or relocating plants.

In Australia consultative committees often engage in process analysis and production analysis, looking for ways of cutting costs, improving quality and increasing productivity. These exercises involve the sharing of information about work practices, production line changeover, downtime, rejection rates, maintenance procedures and decision points. Again, the training of unionists for these committees should be conducted separately so that the knowledge workers have can be gauged, fully understood and evaluated; and so that strategies can be devised to protect the information and to release it in ways that will benefit rather than compromise the workforce.

Unions are organisations in which working people come together to protect one another and to promote their collective interests. Unionists on a consultative committee are still representatives of their colleagues, and should still see themselves protecting and promoting their members' interests. The situation may be more subtle than confrontational industrial relations, but that is all the more reason for separate training in which these union representatives can examine and develop their own understanding of the subtleties. If they are going to consult, share information and cooperate with management, they need to study management in order to gauge their levels of competence and in order to establish the degree to which they can and cannot be trusted. This kind of learning, *when management itself is the object of the study*, simply cannot be done in partnership with management.

Analogous arguments to those put forward for joint union-management training are made to justify putting Aboriginal and white people together in training and education, or placing individual Aboriginal people within an otherwise wholly 'Anglo' educational institution.

Placing individual students in Anglo institutions is justified on the grounds of access and equity. But unless the whole experience is very carefully controlled by the Aboriginal student him or herself, and unless he or she is given strong support by other Aboriginal people, the result may well be assimilation, since to succeed the student may have to let him or herself be absorbed into the dominant culture.

In joint educational ventures, with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together, the odds are not even since the 'joint' activity takes place within a country whose dominant culture is Anglo. To prevent this kind of educational assimilation, I would argue that the individual needs to have the opportunity (to be taken up or not as she or he wishes) to withdraw into a wholly Aboriginal context, and groups need to have access to dedicated educational provision under Aboriginal control.

Arguments for joint training and joint education and for access of the kind that can easily result in assimilation are often based on the assumptions that education is neutral; that learning is simply learning; that good teaching always presents a balanced point of view; and that our education system has controls and traditions and educational principles that make objectivity in teaching and learning achievable.

Feminists such as Thompson (1983a, 1983b, 1988) and Hart (1992) have shown these ideas to be nonsense. Despite inroads by women into the education system, the system and the political structure that controls it remain male-dominated and at the service of the patriarchy. Thompson, for example, advocates separate education for women, and her arguments have resonances for Aboriginal adult education and union training as well. She points out how ridiculous it is to examine oppression, and to consider ways of combatting it, when representatives of the oppressors are present. Women, she argues, need to conduct their own education, control their own educational resources, and develop their own knowledge and educational traditions. From this position of intellectual autonomy it would then be possible

> ... to renegotiate relationships with men in our personal lives and in society generally; make strategic allegiances where appropriate with those groups, including men, who are concerned to challenge prevailing oppression; and to include men in our activities only when they come to learn, or to offer support, rather than to interfere and control (Thompson, 1983a, p.204).

Thompson, therefore, argues for a separate education but does not locate that argument within an exclusively separatist feminism. In this she appears closer to the socialist feminist position than to that of the radical feminists. Alliances, she says, are possible. Where the different parties really do have interests in common, separate education can still lead to common action.

Section Nine: Challenges and safeguards

Forty two

Death and the Maiden

Ariel Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden* is set in Chile in 1990, seventeen years after the military coup that ended the country's longstanding democracy and resulted in the killing of President Allende and the imprisonment and torture of thousands of people. There are three characters in the play. Paulina was an active resister of the regime in its early days and was arrested and tortured by 'security' forces. Now, as the country moves towards a democratic government, she is married to Gerardo, a lawyer. By chance Gerardo encounters Roberto, a doctor, who comes into the house and stays the night.

Paulina recognises Roberto as the doctor who supervised her torture, and once Roberto has fallen asleep, traps him and binds him to a chair. By reversing the roles, Dorfman sets up a situation in which he can examine the effects of oppression on both oppressed and oppressor, and debate the dilemmas facing the liberal lawyer trying to look to the future, the victim of torture trapped in an ugly past of profound physical and emotional suffering, and the doctor being confronted with his own inhumanity. The play is a taut thriller, filled with menace, pain, fear, and the desire for revenge, and it is driven by a need on the part of the three characters, each in their different ways, to undergo some kind of ritual cleansing.

Towards the end of the play, in a cry of rage and anguish, Paulina rails against the restrictions that people who try to be decent impose upon themselves when they come face to face with ruthless, immoral, indecent enemies. She has Roberto at gunpoint and has demanded not only a confession but repentance. She has counted to eight. Roberto argues with her.

> PAULINA. Nine.
>
> ROBERTO. So we go on and on with violence, always more violence. Yesterday they did terrible things to you and now you do terrible things to me and tomorrow the same cycle will begin all over again. Isn't it time we stopped?
>
> PAULINA. Why is it always people like me who have to sacrifice, who have to concede when concessions are needed, biting my tongue, why? What do we lose? What do we lose by killing just one of you? What do we lose?

Earlier I mentioned that Myles Horton was present at a strike in Wilder, Tennessee in 1933 when his friend and president of the United Mineworkers local (union branch) was killed by professional killers (Horton, Kohl and Kohl, 1990, pp.39-41). The killers had been recognised when they arrived in the town from photographs taken of them at another dispute in another state. It was clear why they had come and Horton and some of the strikers met to discuss what they should do. The question they had to address was: should they kill the killers to prevent them killing Barney Graham?

Forty three

Safeguards

If we withdraw into a dedicated or single interest group and focus on our enemies, how do we prevent the learning from becoming a litany of hate? How do I distinguish learning through defining the enemy from some of the documented practices of fascism? Anger will obviously surface. Some people will be impatient. There may be calls for rash and ill-considered action. Violence, even.

Considerable responsibility devolves on adult educators who choose to encourage and facilitate learning by defining enemies. We must emphasise the learning in the process. We must set in place certain safeguards. And we must be open about the values we bring to the process.

In some contexts the adult educator can emphasise the learning by separating learning from decision-making. In a union context for example, a course is different from a committee. The trainer can quite legitimately point out to the participants on a course that there are other forums in which calls for action can be made and decisions to act can be taken. She or he can then encourage the participants to study their opposition in depth, to take their time, and to bide their time. With the emphasis on learning and with no decisions to be taken, the trainer and the participants can take intellectual risks. They can explore extravagant ideas and ponder a whole range of action. It will be after the course, when the participants have returned to their workplaces and their union activities, and when they take what they have learnt to their members in the workplace or to a union committee or to the floor of their union's conference that the learning will have to stand the test.

Some formal courses will be made up of representatives from different organisations. Aboriginal participants in a course may have to take what is learnt back to people living in different communities and different kinds of community, some urban, some in or on the edge of country towns, some in coastal communities, some operating rural properties, and some in more traditional contexts. Decisions on action can only be taken in each specific community context.

In some formal educational contexts, however, the distinction between learning and action becomes blurred. What is learnt in some women's studies courses may impinge immediately upon the way women in the group conduct their private, political and professional lives. And in less formal educational contexts the distinction between learning and action ceases to exist. Reflection and action become fused in a praxis. Environmental activists camped on the edge of a rain forest that is under threat learn in order to act, and take various actions in order to learn. Gathering information, acquiring skills, organising

the campaign and conducting the campaign become the one all-consuming, all-encompassing activity.

Whether the context is formal or informal, the adult educator needs to emphasise that defining the enemy is far more than *naming* the enemy. Definitions must be justified and documented. The educator must help learners move through the full cycle. She or he must help the learners locate, study and assess the enemy, and then check that they really are the enemy. She or he must help the learners examine the various strategies available for dealing with the enemy. And she or he must help the learners examine themselves against what they have learnt about the enemy and against the demands of the strategies they have considered.

In the formal context the educator may be able to structure the learning, and call on his or her authority as the educator within an institutional context to ensure that the learners move through all stages in the process. In an informal context the educator will have to engage in dialogic teaching and learning. The educator will accompany the learners, asking questions, posing problems, and finding and creating opportunities to help the learners reflect on the action they are involved in. The educator will have to go with events, seeking to ensure that all stages of the process are addressed in an order that relates to the action. And in this context the educator's only 'authority' to intervene and facilitate learning will derive from her or his solidarity with the learners.

Educators can be accorded the role of outsiders: providers of information and skills who withdraw at the first whiff of action, arguing that what is done with the information and skills is of no concern to them.

Mezirow offers another kind of outsider: the educator who maintains an intellectual distance in order to help the learners question, who adopts the role of 'an empathic provocateur' (1990, p.360). He argues that this kind of adult educator does not necessarily stand apart from social action but is nevertheless 'one who should strive to stay outside the dominant culture to be better able to see taken-for-granted assumptions for what they are ...' (1994, p.231).

Others sometimes expect the educator to provide guidance and leadership, as can be seen in the way some people use the words 'teacher' and 'leader' interchangeably, particularly when talking of charismatic and religious figures.

But there is another option for the adult educator. She or he can act in solidarity with the learners as part of the same group. Everyone will be engaged in the action, but some will be concerned with tactics and strategies, some with logistics and coordination, some with resources and finance, and some with the group's relationship with other groups and

other publics. In the adult educator's case, her or his role will be to encourage learning that both derives from and contributes to the action.

It is difficult to imagine anyone but a feminist adult educator working with women during a period of active struggle against a particular expression of patriarchy. In union training, the trainer is often a member of the same union as the participants or at least a member of a union and so part of the union movement. In Aboriginal adult education, increasingly the practice is to seek adult educators from within the community and where this cannot be immediately done and outsiders have to be found, to ensure that those outsiders are Aboriginal.

Sometimes a male adult educator might be called upon by the women (although I know of few examples of this happening). Sometimes a non-unionist trainer might be employed by a union for a particular purpose. And sometimes non-Aboriginal trainers and adult educators are asked to work with Aboriginal groups. This leads to a fourth role the adult educator can assume - that of a resource. But ideally, in this case, the adult educator is coopted or contracted by the group and, because he or she may be a representative or have connections with the enemy, retained as a resource only so long as the group finds his or her contribution useful.

Adult educators helping learners define their enemies must also see that certain structural safeguards are set in place. The learners must engage in the learning of their own free will. In the case of a formal course, the learners may have been directed towards the course but the final decision to attend must be their own. And there must be no coercion to continue. Should the learning be offensive, counter-productive or simply of no use, individual participants should be able to leave easily and without embarrassment.

In informal learning in action, the activist learners cannot leave because to do so would mean withdrawing from the action. In this case it is the educator who may have to leave. The adult educator should be subject to the judgement of the group and the learning should be subject to continuous evaluation, so that if the educational element of the action is found wanting, the adult educator would have to withdraw or change the processes being used.

The adult educator will also have to accord to the learners the absolute freedom to contest any points made during the teaching and learning, and create a climate in which they can do this spontaneously and immediately. This will mean adopting a role very different from the teacher who uses his or her position to ignore interruptions or to organise the time so that questions and counter-arguments are relegated to a discrete part of the session - usually near the the end - and so downgraded in importance.

And in any publicity to recruit learners, in any negotiation with the learners preceding the learning, and at the outset of learning, the adult educator must be clear about the objectives and the processes to be used. The adult educator must make it clear to the learners that she or he will envisage the existence of enemies and will take them through the process of defining and understanding those enemies. The adult educator must make it clear that what is offered will not be neutral, nor academic in the sense of being 'detached', 'objective' or 'balanced'. And she or he must make it clear that, while they may examine the cases put by other parties, it may very well be in order to contest those ideas and to oppose those parties.

Forty four

Values and resolutions

If there is no coercion on the learners to attend or stay, if everyone has the right to contest any of the learning at any time, and if we have been clear about our objectives and methods, then we should feel free to focus the learning on oppression, exploitation and injustice, and to help the learners sheet home the blame to the people, the parties and the organisations responsible for that oppression, exploitation and injustice.

More than that. We should *resolve* to help people sheet home the blame. If we hesitate, if we think for a moment about giving the other side a fair hearing, adding a little balance, then we are domesticated and lost. Throughout the better part of our waking lives, the status quo is promoted by people who never pause for a moment to question their right to do so. Advertisers who would have us buy things we had not thought of buying and may not need, purveyors of gratuitous violence and violent pornography, public protectors of our morals who would deny gay men and lesbians the right to express their sexual preference, institutions that in the name of a doctrine or tradition continue to discriminate against women, developers who see the environment as endlessly exploitable, managers who describe workers as functions or resources and deny their humanity, all of these and many more who manipulate, belittle, exploit and damage others for their own ends conduct their affairs and promote their views without imposing on themselves the kinds of safeguard I have described above.

The manufacturers of land mines now littering parts of Asia, the owners, the ones who take the profit, the shareholders, people hiding behind a pyramid of companies, leading apparently blameless lives may call for 'objectivity' and 'detachment' in the education services that form a comfortable and effective part of their hegemony. They may not like my idea of education being openly used to sheet home blame but then I do not like them and I see nothing wrong and everything right in helping people define them as the enemy.

It comes down to a faith in our own values. And by values I mean moral values, values that govern those actions of ours that really matter, values that mark us off from the animals and can make us fully human, values that make us *think* (Freire, 1972b, pp.72-3). To help others learn we must feel reasonably secure that we are on the right track. Assuming we do, and with the safeguards in place, then I say:

If I have the opportunity to help people learn, and if those people stay, then I will work very hard at making them loathe what I loathe and like what I like. We - you, I, and the other learners and educators we meet - should define our enemies so that we can deal

with them, counteract their influence and search for ways of putting the world they degrade to rights.

Afterword

My father was a Methodist minister. When the Japanese abruptly entered the Second World War, people in the small country town in northern New South Wales where we lived flocked to the Sunday service, probably seeking reassurance and comfort in those suddenly very threatening times, and my father climbed into the pulpit and told them he was a pacifist. Some misheard him and thought he had said he was a fascist, but even among those who heard him aright there were a number who did not appreciate his honesty. With Japan eager to recruit our sector of the world into their 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere' it was possibly not the best time to put the pacifist case.

Our family story took a number of turns after that. My father had been hoping to be appointed principal of a theological college but the post went to someone else, and other appointments were suddenly not open to him so 1943 saw him more or less obliged to leave Australia for a post as principal of a school in Tonga, taking my mother, my sister, my brother and me with him. To get there we flew to New Zealand, then took a small cargo boat through waters that were said to be patrolled by Japanese submarines. Ironically, my father's pacifism put his and our lives at risk in a war zone. To heighten everyone's anxiety, the ship's engines broke down twice during the trip and on each occasion the ship drifted for a number of hours at the mercy of the currents and, as one of the crew cheerfully remarked to my mother, any Japanese submarine that might come along.

The cargo boat had one gun mounted on the stern, and every day the crew went through a ritual gun practice. So far I have recounted the family story as it is told by my sister, since I was too young to remember the events leading up to our voyage into the middle of the Pacific Ocean. But one of my first memories is from the voyage itself, and it is of my mother taking me by the hand as the crew began their gun practice and suggesting that we go below. My memory is not so much of the incident but of her almost palpable anxiety.

I was three and a half (halves were important then) and am fifty four now. I am a lecturer in the School of Adult and Language Education. As the name of the School suggests we engage in the education of adult educators and the education of language teachers. My colleagues in the language bit of the School provide courses for adult basic educators, and for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. They also have a Graduate Diploma in Modern Language Teaching which is specifically for teachers of Japanese in English language contexts - that is, mainly for Japanese people teaching in Australia.

Often this course meets in a classroom near my office and often the classroom door is open. The war is a long time ago and I was only five when it ended but I still feel uneasy - a faint residue of the intense anxiety my mother communicated to me on the deck of the scruffy little Pacific island cargo boat - when I pass the door and look in on a room full of Japanese people. Or perhaps I feel a sort of echo of the madness and anger in some of the adults around me as I was growing up after the war: a friend's father who had been on the Burma railway, or a teacher in my school whose platoon, so the story went, had been all but wiped out in an engagement of terrible ferocity with Japanese forces in New Guinea.

At another, more intellectual level, the sight of those Japanese teacher-colleagues in that room is reassuring. Enemies can cease being enemies.

Australia has been to war a number of times. Australian troops went to the Boer war, to Gallipoli, the Middle East and France in the First World War (in vast numbers for such a small and distant country), to North Africa, the Middle East, Greece, Asia and the Pacific in the Second World War, to Korea, to Malaysia and to Vietnam. For a country that has very little history of civil unrest, we have been remarkably bellicose outside our borders.

Looking back, we may be able to see that Australia's sorties into war were not always as justifiable as they may have appeared at the time. It does seem strange that a newly independent country should become involved in a war to ensure that Boers remained subject to Britain. We could argue that the First World War was mainly a European affair. The domino theory that led us into Korea and Vietnam now seems discredited. And our adventures in Sabah and Sarawak brought us into conflict with a close neighbour. But in the case of the Second World War, Japanese forces attacked Australia and the Japanese government did seem intent upon invading and taking control of countries in our region and possibly Australia as well. Australia was threatened and we did not wait for the Japanese to cross our borders, but sent troops into the disastrous campaigns in the Malay peninsular and Singapore, then fought and stopped the Japanese advance in New Guinea.

My problem as I come to the end of a book in which I have talked of enemies is to reconcile my desire to go along with my father and argue that in no case, no matter how grave, can violence by condoned, with a belief, borne of my being part of the Australian culture and therefore influenced by its history, that there are times when violent action can be justified.

Do we kill the killers to stop them killing Barney Graham? Myles Horton helped the group of striking miners in Wilder, Tennessee, reach their decision by asking questions

and getting them to articulate and examine the problem. Horton facilitated the group process, as a modern experiential adult educator might say. The group decided against killing the killers and several days later the killers duly murdered Barney Graham. Graham was Horton's friend, and leader and union comrade of the others in the group who made the decision. The decision went against violent action, and it also went against Barney Graham. One violent death followed, rather than several, perhaps many (Horton, Kohl and Kohl, 1990, pp.39-41). But the decision might have gone the other way, and Horton when he helped facilitate the process must have known that.

Some years later Horton recounted the story to a group of pacifists. He pointed out that he had played a part in condemning a man to die, instead of condemning two men to die. He asked them what they would have done in his place. Horton recalled:

> I couldn't get anybody in the room to say anything other than that they wouldn't get themselves in such a situation. I said, "That's just bald cowardice; somebody has to deal with problems like this. Certainly the miners in Wilder had to deal with it!"

And he went on:

> Of course any person in their right mind would be for non-violence over violence if it were a simple choice, but that's not the problem the world has to face (Horton, Kohl and Kohl, 1990, p.41).

Horton did not shy away from helping people decide on action, so long as it was *action that would result in further learning*. He recognised that this kind of education was dangerous, that people might 'get in some kind of trouble'. He knew that a lot can be learnt from successes, but he argued that

> ... some equally valuable learning takes place when you escalate your demands to the place where you finally lose (Horton, Kohl and Kohl, 1990, p.176).

The miners at Wilder had the problem of choosing between different levels of violence forced upon them by the killers' arrival in town. But where does the educator stand if her or his intervention in people's lives, her or his facilitation, leads a group to contemplate *initiating* action that might lead to violence?

In the book I made a brief reference to David Head and his intervention as an adult education outreach worker in the lives of a group of single homeless people in London -

dossers, they were called in England then. Writing in the seventies I used Head's experience with the dossers to explore the issue of education and action. With Head 'facilitating', the dossers began writing a letter to the Westminster City Council calling for changes in the conditions of a central London hostel - that is, they moved beyond a discussion of their own condition and started taking action. Some might argue that once this occurred the educator should have withdrawn, but I stand by what I wrote then:

> Imagine the loss of faith, the anger and bitterness, the seriously destructive effect it could have had on those dossers if, having got this group of people ... to begin lifting up their heads, the outreach worker had suddenly felt obliged to act in accordance with some formula and let them drop. The dossers would have seen no logic in his action, just a simple and devastating case of desertion (1979, pp 179-80).

Along with Horton I am for non-violence over violence. I have also argued that as an adult educator I can legitimately use my position and skills to communicate my own values. So I will intervene in order to help learners define their enemies but will do all I can to encourage them to develop constructive, non-violent ways of addressing, dealing with and, if possible, disempowering those enemies.

Again along with Horton, I will try not to shy away from helping people decide on action, so long as it is action aimed at leading to further learning. But I have argued that violence has been justified in the past, and I accept that it might be justified in the future. So ... if I act in solidarity with a group of learners, if I share in their endeavour to take control of their own lives and counteract the effects of those who are holding them back, and if in this process they canvass action which may lead to violence, I cannot pull out. If I am committed to helping people learn in social action, I must stay.

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