ABSTRACT

Humanistic educators perceive their education to be clearly distinguishable from other types, yet they do not seem to substantiate their claims by extended statements of educational theory. The article examines some of the statements made by humanistic education writers basing the critique on both style and content. The first section of the paper attempts briefly to locate humanistic education in the context of reformist movements in education and psychology. The second section considers the self-explanation of the movement and attempts to divine assumptions that underly the various justifications presented.

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The Rhetoric of Humanistic Education

> The change is here. It is beginning. It is growing. Our culture is facing an encounter between the past and the future that makes such past encounters in our history look insignificant. As part of the giant encounter, we humans are beginning to voice our dissatisfactions with educational experiences that are not personally relevant. We are no longer satisfied with our culture's training schools.[1]

So one author ends his chapter on the human growth potential movement in education. From its style, the reader has a sense of being caught up in an invincible progression, of being included in the beginning of a mighty historical swell that will change the world for the better, of being able at last clearly to recognize good and evil. Some of the persistent themes of humanistic education make their appearance in the extract: the emphasis upon accelerated change that must be harnessed by a new process in education to avert an impending social catastrophe; the demand for personally relevant education which involves the learner's whole self such that he is conscious of a "gut-reaction" to what is taught; an exaltation of the individual and an antipathy towards forms of institutional authority, contemptuously dismissed as "our culture's training schools."

Humanistic education is more a diffuse and multiplex phenomenon than one that may be sharply caught and defined. Although in its own apologia it distinguishes itself quite dramatically from other educational systems, its rationale is elusive and the educationist must find his way through a series of exhortations, general statements on education and life, anecdotes of personal success, and recipes for particular methods. One rarely finds extended statements of educational theory that give enough detail and elaborated justification with which to concur or not. For these reasons the persuasive *form* of humanistic education writings merits particular attention. The present article, therefore, will examine some of the statements made by writers on humanistic education basing the critique on both style and content.

The first section of the paper will attempt briefly to locate humanistic education in the context of reformist movements in education and psychology. It is our contention that the present form of humanistic education can be seen as a latent consequence of the development of humanistic or third force psychology.

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The second section will consider the self-explanation of the movement and attempt to divine assumptions that underly the various justifications presented. Some of the ideals that the movement espouses such as freedom from tyranny, warm interaction between teacher and learner, availability to the person of his emotions and so on, are perenially applauded by educators, philosophers and teachers. The dispute begins over the way these ideals are to be achieved in education, and the emphasis that will be given them *vis-à-vis* other intellectual, human and societal requirements. Our concern is less to denigrate the ideals of humanistic education than to suggest that in their attempts to persuade and convert, humanistic education writers fall back on over-simplified dichotomies and naive curative assumptions. In the reductionism that serves their rhetoric, humanistic educators are in danger of violating the utopia that they plan for each individual.

Hunanistic Education in Context

The 1971-72 *Education Index* deleted entries under the heading of "Humanism" in favour of "Humanistic Education"; the entry signalled a formal acknowledgment of the "new humanism" in which people were seen as dynamic, growing organisms.

> While traditional humanism views mankind in need of shaping from without because of an innate flaw, new humanism sees the individual person containing within himself the power and pattern of his own self development.[2]

Earlier humanistic education presented learners with an ideal of noble personhood, in expectation that the students would serve God in church and state and thus develop true humanity. Humanistic educators shared a common outlook about the aims and specific methods of education. The teacher occupied a crucial position as his role was that of the excellent adult model in the formation of the virtuous person: the overall aim of humanistic education. The family was seen as an educational centre and the importance of parental supervision and home life generally to the personal development of young people was recognized. The medium by which such learning was to be engendered was the liberal arts: Latin and Greek and their literatures, history and some philosophy, perhaps also mathematics, music and physical education.

Contemporary humanistic eduction, as Lyon comments, is an "umbrella" term which encompasses a range of approaches; for example humanistic content curricula, humanistic process curricula, and humanistic school structures and a diversity of highly individualistic innovations:

> The thin glue that holds them together is the notion that the integration of affective and cognitive processes in the learning experience is a highly desirable, potentially real, but seldom practiced state of affairs.[3]

Lyon's notion of cognitive and affective integration in educational practice is founded on an optimistic view of the individual, stressed by Willers as having within himself, but suppressed, all the resources needed for the flowering of true humanity. The movement's emphasis is in reverse order to that of the "old" humanism: in this case, if the individual is made whole, the good society will automatically result. In the previous understanding of humanism, the individual perfects himself through imitation of society's model of the virtuous person, and through service to God and others.

An emphasis on newness and innovation runs through the literature of humanistic education; its supporters clearly perceive it as a reformist movement in education. For instance, Read and Simon introduce a compendium of writings in

their recent *Humanistic Education Scourcebook* thus:

> This book is dedicated to the beautiful humanistic teachers of all kinds who are struggling to make schools better for people and better than the schools they themselves knew when they were younger, and we see in the humanistic education movement the ways to do just that.[4]

The language of the extract indicates a revolutionary fervor and partisanship which is perhaps appropriate for a book offering hints on classroom practice for potential or actual believers, rather than an extended exploration of underlying assumptions. Humanistic educators, as against the other sort, are "beautiful"; they, unlike other teachers, are involved in a "struggle to make schools better" than those reactionary schools of the past. In their efforts to transform education, moreover, they are possessed of the magic key, the ways of the humanistic education movement, which will do "just that".

Although there is no agreed-upon definition of humanistic education, Roberts'[5] seven main goals summarize what the movement aims to achieve. We shall present these goals and suggest a certain commonality with other educational reformist movements to ascertain whether humanistic education makes a unique contribution.

The goals are personal development (the student becomes more in touch with himself and knows more about himself), creative behavior (originality, creativity, imagination, new interpretations, novel meanings are valued), interpersonal awareness (how people influence each other), subject orientation (the focus is on student's feelings about a whole subject), specific context (both affective and cognitive learning of a specific bit of course content), method of teaching (affective possibilities for teaching and learning), and teachers and administrators (the educator as a growing person and a model for students). Fairfield[6] offers a series of imperatives designed to implement these humanistic goals in educational settings. Education should be relevant to the needs of students and to the problems of society. Teachers should teach students not subject matter. Educational curricula and methods should be subject to experiment and innovation. Opportunities should be made available to students to enable them to participate and share in all phases of school life. Efforts should be made to overcome the dehumanizing and alienating features of impersonal educational institutions. Fundamental aims of education should be the development of initial intelligence and the fulfillment of human potential.

Many of these goals and imperatives are not as new or innovative as is implied, since they have been shared by other reformist movements in education this century. The fact that they are not entirely unique or new, of course, does not signify that the reforms are worthless or invalid; the readers of this journal would be sympathetic to most of the reforms suggested. But it is a *rhetorical* device to claim absolute innovation for one's prescriptions, since to detail ways in which they have been tried before is somehow to demean the freshness and potency of the insights offered. Zealous reformers are reluctant to see themselves being as much product as potential transformer of society; to present one's philosophy as part of a mainstream is less likely to win converts than to present it as encapsulating human experience to date.

The concerns of humanistic education bear some similarity to the Social Education movement which sought to foster co-operative individualism through education. The stated objective of this association was "to emphasize the fact that the fundamental purpose of education should be to prepare the child for uselful service as an active and creative member of the social organism".[7] In classroom

terms, there was a reduced interest in competitiveness and an emphasis on self-initiated group activities, school subjects which made students more aware of social problems, and a great variety of extra-curricular activities. Vocational guidance counselling had the goal of matching the individual with an appropriate job. Thus, the purpose of education was seen as the socialization of the individual in order to place him in his social niche.

In Progressive Education, the critical elements are the educational ideas relating to the nature of growth, development and learning, the ideal of democracy, learner self-education and responsibility in learning and the method of intelligence reflected in problem solving.[8] The common principles existing in progressive schools were seen by Dewey as expression and cultivation of individuality, free activity, learning through experience, acquiring skills as a means to attaining ends, concentration on the "here and now" and acquaintance with a changing world. The Open Education movement encourages an equally active role for teacher and learner. The effort is to develop greater classroom democracy with an emphasis on a co-operative and sharing environment. The goal which clearly matches those of the humanistic movement is a collective concern for the child to develop a positive definition of himself as a person and a learner.

The underlying theme running through these educational movements is the place of the individual in the educational process. A case could be made in respect of contemporary humanistic education that the scales have tipped in favour of the unfolding of the individual as an educational good in itself, and as prior to consideration of the individual's contribution to society. Such a position, for instance, is taken by Leonard[9] who maintains that for society to remain viable it must produce self-actualized men on a mass scale, by Weinstein[10] who proposes a whole new curriculum area in schools in which the subject matter is the learner - his emotions, feelings and thoughts, and by Maslow[11] who supported a Third Force in psychology with a new image of man which accepts the reality of higher human needs, motives and capacities.

Much of the orientation towards personal experience that characterizes humanistic education derives from the humanistic psychology movement of the 1960's. The origins of this movement may be discerned in the late forties and particularly in non-directive counselling that emerged in the early fifties. In 1954 Maslow organized a mailing list for those wanting to read articles rejected by orthodox psychological journals on subjects such as creativity, autonomy, love, growth and so on. The demand for the articles became such that in 1957 Maslow and Sutich agreed to launch a journal devoted to such matters, the first issue of which appeared in 1961 called the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*[12]. The journal was followed two years later by the founding meeting of the Humanistic Association which began as a subsidiary of the journal. 1961 was also the year in which the influential Esalen Institute was founded and began its fusion of encounter groups, psychotherapy, art, drama, yoga and eastern mysticism.

The nineteen sixties and seventies were also marked by social phenomena such as campus protest, the drug scene, the civil rights movement, the hippie movement, and the popularity of eastern religions; in such phenomena may be discerned the threads of mistrust of authority and institutions (schools, governments, big organizations), a celebration of the rights of the individual over and against these organizations, and an emphasis on spontaneity, impulse and mistrust of "intellectualizing". The period also saw the first issues of the journals which dealt with themes of humanistic psychology: *Journal of Emotional Education* (1960),

Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry (1962), *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* (1964), *Simulation and Games* (1969), *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1969), *Journal of Transpersonal Development* (1970), and *Comparative Group Studies* (1970) (which in 1973 became *Small Group Behaviour).* The strength of the humanistic psychology movement towards a concentration of subjective experience is not confined to these journals alone, but influenced many established psychological journals dealing with personality or counselling.

In the mid-70's it is possible to find in bookstores serving the general public up to 150 different titles, usually in paperback, dealing with personality growth, existential psychology, and do-it-yourself cures. Even earlier, growth centres had sprung up all over America prompting the comment that the movement reflected "a rage for awareness".[13] The influence in teachers' colleges and universities is by no means restricted to Student Counselling or to psychology courses, but is also evident in sociology, politics, history and education. Little wonder, then, that humanistic educators such as Steinzor could be confident that the day was not far off when

> the curriculum of our public and private institutions, from the earliest grades on, will have made the language of honest, warm dialogue a required part of general education.[14]

Humanistic educators usually couch their rationale in a sociological context that has two main points of emphasis. The *first* is a stress on the rapidity of change in the environment calling for a new type of educated person to be able to cope with such changes. The person educated under the old system is cognitively and emotionally unable to cope with new types of demands and the need for new skills. Besides this, the amount of information to be absorbed is growing so rapidly that a person whose education was predicated on the accumulation of factual knowledge is no longer able to deal with information in the traditional manner, that is, by memory and regurgitation. A more intellectually flexible person is demanded since the old methods of teaching that were static and quite well suited to a static environment have already broken down:

> Traditional methods of classroom learning are felt by today's youth to be out of step with their real world. The present-day student does not accept many of the past routine learning methods. Social scientists have been telling us for years that this is the case; and yet, until recently educators have persisted in ignoring the changes in youth and have held to the lock-step, rote-learning approach by which they were taught. We are addressing this paper to those educators who are willing to try new and different methods to replace the time-worn methods being rejected by youth.[15]

The point does not appear to be examined in any great detail by the humanistic educators, but where it is mentioned, the rapidity of change and the inability of the old system to deal with it are accepted as more or less axiomatic by those who refer to it, for example, Rogers[16]. At the same time, very few cognitive strategies are suggested by humanistic educators, and the thrust of their efforts appears to be to assist students to cope emotionally with change, that is, to give them the means to absorb changes in values rather than changes in technology or increasing amounts of scientific or scholarly understanding. While it is entirely laudable to attempt to give students the ability to cope emotionally with change, the change that is mentioned appears to have shifted from the intellectual ability to cope with current and future technological and intellectual expansion to the psychological ability to manage sociological change. The first may require new teaching methods, or greater power to synthesize, or increased ability to manipulate machines or libraries giving access to factual knowledge, or whatever. For the second, the methods presented - encounter groups and so on, may or may not be adequate; but the rhetorical trick is to imply that encounter groups or role plays or fantasy sessions

will enable one to cope with the rapidity of change in the first sense, if cope is to mean anything more than ignore.

The *second* sociological emphasis is an attempt to mitigate the effects of alienation in western man[17]. The theme is a popular one, with writers pointing to widespread feelings of isolation, alienation, frustration, impotence, loss of identity and purpose, loss of community, meaningless jobs, the dissolution of the nuclear family and high mobility which have left contemporary man personally void[18]. In Schools, this malaise finds expression in drop-outs, violence and frustration towards the establishment, and breakdown in communication between generations. A system alleged to be oriented to learning as achievement, whose motivation is social success and whose teachers see this task as providing tools for social success, is failing whereas one that is alert to emotional needs, which views learning as growth, in which motivation is the awareness of the need to grow and in which the teachers see their task as generating awareness and facilitation of growth, will succeed[19].

In an article whose title is "Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person", Stivers *et al.,* present an exploration of social unrest:

> Student riots, the violent physical activities representing the anguish of the black people, political apathy, the intolerable dominance of television over the leisure hours of man are but a few manifestations of this apparency of omission. What formal education must do is create within its process, by incorporating within its curricular activities, experiences particularly designed to assist in the linking of man's knowing the subject matter to relating with the actual, relevant ability to relate.[20]

The solutions to these problems are seen as role playing and human relations training. In relation to the extent and nature of the social problems identified by Stivers and his colleagues, the practices suggested rather seem to be along the lines of the person who says "If only people were nicer to each other there would not be all those wars" which is axiomatically true but an unreal expectation. The authors use a very ancient rhetorical device which is to generate a list of attitudes that people deplore, propose a "solution" after an intervening few paragraphs, and because there are negatives and positives mentioned in the same breath, as it were, the positives are assumed to relate to the negatives in the manner that a solution relates to a problem. In fact, one can see very few changes to political apathy, student riots, "the anguish of the black people" or even "the intolerable dominance of television over the leisure hours of man" coming from role playing or human relations training. No detail is given as to how the solution relates to the problem, no economic, social, historical or political analysis is called for: it is assumed that one will fix the other because it is good and the other is bad. The sociological framework in which much of humanistic education is set is an over-simlification of the complexity of interaction between the individual and society. There is a tendency to explain human conduct largely in terms of the motivating ideals of individuals rather than taking into account the influences of the stratification of power and divisions of interest which are reflected by society's structures[21].

The Self-explanation of the Movement

While it is convenient in polemical terms for humanistic psychology to represent itself as the opponent of behaviourist concepts of the person, which indeed it is, it also has a different bias from other philosophies of man such as the Freudian view which, crudely, regards man as fundamentally destructive, and assumes that his achievements are the result of controls placed on his wayward nature, rather than the expression of that wayward nature. Such a vision implies a concern with the

adequacy of controls and with adjustment to acceptable modes of conduct. While Freud, Jung, Murray and others conceived of personality essentially as seeking to maintain its integrity against internal and external threats, Goldstein[22] altered this homeostatic emphasis towards one of seeing the organism as constantly evolving and developing, "to become everything that one is capable of becoming"[23]. The self-actualization principle implies that the thrust of human activities in healthy persons is towards growth, fulfillment and creativity.

We have observed earlier that the genealogy of humanistic education is through psychotherapies which are based on fulfillment theories of personality, especially as popularized and extended by Rogers and Maslow. In Rogers' famous *On Becoming a Person,* there is a chapter entitled "To be that Self which One Truly is" in which Rogers crystallizes his philosophy of the person as he works through therapy.[24]The client will move away from facades; he will move away from "oughts"; he will move away from meeting expectations; he will move away from pleasing others; he will move toward self-direction, toward being process, toward being complexity, toward openness to experience, toward acceptance of others and toward trust of self. Maslow also emphasises an auto-centred system, and he is strongly individualist in his philosophy. While emphasising more than Rogers the smallness and fragility of the "inner voice" that should be the source of authority for the individual, nevertheless, the stress is still on the individual as perfectable, but essentially good;

> This inner core, even though it is biologically based and instinctoid, is weak rather than strong. It is easily overcome, suppressed or repressed. It may even be killed off permanently. Humans no longer have instincts in the animal sense - powerful, unmistakable inner voices which tell them unequivocally what to do, when, where, how and with whom. All that we have left are instinct-remnants. And furthermore, these are weak, subtle and delicate, very easily drowned out by learning, by cultural expectations, by fear, by disapproval, etc. They are *hard* to know, rather than easy. Authentic selfhood can be defined in part as being able to hear these impulses - voices within oneself, i.e. to know what one really wants or does not want, what one is fit for and what one is not fit for, etc.[25]

The need is not for authority but release from authority in a climate where individuals can explore, and educe the goodness within them, to become aware of their hitherto repressed emotional and sensual experiencing, which unlike intellectualizing, will infallibly move them towards right judgment and wisdom. The focus of humanistic education, then, is on the individual, as it is in therapy. The task of the teacher is to develop the self, to help the person find out what is already in him, rather than force him into a prearranged form. The self must be liberated, set free from exterior evaluation and the onus of responding to the emotional and moral demands of others, in order to restore the centre of evaluation to the person. One of the central aims of humanistic education is to make the student more self-aware, in touch with himself, his uniqueness, how he differs from others.[26] When feelings are repressed, the student struggles to preserve his precious self-concept which makes him resistant to change, and necessitates his using a great deal of psychic energy which could be better spent on more life-enhancing activities.[27]The liberation of the person is from two repressive forces: institutional authoritarianism as represented in the traditional school, and the repressive forces of societal and parental edicts.

A strong theme can be noticed in the passage cited above from Rogers, of liberation of the individual from edicts ingested from society and from other people. The evils that the improving client will avoid are all external: facades, oughts, meeting expectations, pleasing others. The enemy is seen to come, or at least originally to

have come, from without. As a consequence, humanistic educators become suspicious of tampering with any "natural" process, of interfering with and thereby distorting people's perceptions of their universe, which are held to be inviolable. The alienation observed by sociologists and taken up by humanistic psychologists as a rationale for the movement is grafted on to the school movement:

> Somehow we have lost touch with the time, so we find young people opting out, copping out, and dropping out of the system. The processes of education have become concerned with non-human questions, and the system is dehumanizing to the people in it.[28]

The evil of parental injunctions is translated to the classroom, where again external forces cripple the individual, but this time the enemy is over-intellectualization and barren schedules.

> Even more pervasive, however, for both success and failure in our educational system, is the subtle yet typical pedagogical alienation in which over-confidence in and over-stress on the intellect as the exclusive way of knowing produces generations befogged in illusion and fantasy, generations critically out of touch with the only reality available to them - the reality of each moment.[29]

In humanistic education, there appears to be a dialectic between the individual and society, in which the individual is seen essentially in romanticist terms as able to be real, feeling, worthy and sovereign but is contaminated by the operations of forces outside himself which include moral prescriptions, parents, schooling, authority and the corporate good. The educational solution to this is to throw off the evils of an invidious collective situation and to create a social order in which the purified individual may give full reign to his experiencing.

Educational Solutions

The centering of authority within the individual implies certain beliefs about the role of the teacher in a humanistic classroom. Essentially it is that the teacher is a releaser of the goodness within the individual rather than a person who directs and imposes systems of knowledge. The teacher's main purpose, then, is to act as a catalyst whereby the limiting accretions from society and parents may be removed and the sovereign individual released from psychic and social bondage.

The idea of the teacher in humanistic education is of a person who is more facilitator than instructor, who engages in non-formal personal relationships with his students. He displays qualities identical with those that Rogers suggests for effective therapists. The qualities are

(1) *Realness of genuineness:* which implies that the teacher has his feelings available to his awareness, can live them and is a person to his students rather than a faceless embodiment of a curriculum requirement.

(2) *Prizing, acceptance, trust:* where the teacher engages in a non-possessive caring relationship with the learner, accepting the learner's fears and hesitations as well as his satisfactions and joys, and

(3) *Empathic understanding:* where the teacher understands the students from their own point of view, without evaluation or judgment.

Such a view adds a therapeutic perspective to the progressive education orientation which has it that the teacher engages the learners' curiosity and then stands aside after providing the initial stimulating experience, and is contrasted with the Dickensian child-beater who mindlessly attempts to fill his students' heads with irrelevant instruction.

> Helping others to become more self-actualizing and to cope with their expanding freedom constitutes a major task of teachers who abandon their directing, correcting, controlling and manipulating roles to become learning facilitators.[30]

The profile that emerges, therefore, is of a teacher who is warm, close to his immediate experiencing, worthy of student trust, able to accept students "as people" no matter what their behaviour, in the secure knowledge that the goodness within the individual will emerge if allowed. Such inner goodness on the part of the student will, given the right conditions, also manifest itself in a thirst for learning and an unbound curiosity that will eventually make the teacher's role as instructor less and less important:

> The end-goal is developing the student's responsibility for his own learning; the teacher helps the student not only by providing reasonable choices for his learning, but by, when necessary, increasingly refusing to take the responsibility for doing for the student what he can do for himself.[31]

Few teachers would argue with the ideals of Mills and Scher; most educators are eager for the day when such a learning outcome is universal in their classrooms. Unfortunately, the teacher who is merely the facilitator standing quietly in the wings will see little to please him if this is all he does. The ideal of the self-motivated learner is by no means new, nor is it one to be derided; but the more difficult problem is how to engineer the classroom environment such that it occurs.

It is acknowledged that the people within the humanistic education movement are reacting to a system which they view as both producing, and produced by, factors of "rationalism, verbalism and scientism"[32]. At the same time, there appears to be very little development in the humanists' profile of the teacher as a person who is excited by a particular intellectual field or body of knowledge, and chooses as his profession to share his knowledge and communicate his passion for it. If this too sounds rhetorical and utopian, consider a teacher who has no real interest in "subject matter": the teacher whose only, or at least overriding, object is to enable students to become more aware of their feelings, or more accepting of self, more willing to lower personal or intellectual defenses. These quasi-therapeutic objectives, when pursued too exclusively, have the effect of devaluing knowledge that is not knowledge about the self or subjective action in the universe, but concerns non-subjective reality which does provide for some an appropriate and engrossing intellectual focus. Paradoxically, humanistic educators reinforce the dichotomy between thought and feeling which they have sought to anneal.

Although most contemporary philosophies of education subscribe to the idea of developing the person's physical, emotional and intellectural capacities, humanistic education reflects its links with counselling and clinical psychology in its emphasis on the transformation of an individual's motives, values and relationships:

> Only a small number of events in a lifetime radically change the way a person lives - deeply religious experience, getting married or divorced, having a child, the death of parents, involvement in a serious accident. . . . Obviously, we do not want to create regular apocalyptic events that drastically change students' personal lives. However, the ultimate teaching goal of Humanistic Education is to develop effective strategies and human technology for educating inner strengths as profoundly as these rare life-changing events.[33]

Several comments may be made concerning the therapeutic orientation expressed in Alschuler's statement: firstly, the statement implies that specific classroom experiences can be real substitutes for "rare-life-changing events" in such a way that the life-changing events such as marriage, birth, death, religious experience and so on are not made trivial by the parallel. The "strategies", as we

shall see later, usually embody some form of role-play, encounter groups or fantasy experiences. It is likely, however, that the person who continually and directly seeks "peak experiences" may become after a while a sort of emotional hedonist, who evaluates his or her world on the degree of psychological stimulus that a given event provides; there is a good chance that the psychological stimulus will need to be stronger and stronger to give the desired effect. Doubtless marriage, the birth of a child and similar life events have potential for human learning at a very profound level, but it is questionable whether the simulations of these events can be successfully constructed in a way that they neither diminish most valuable experience nor inflate less important experiences so that discrimination is no longer attempted; at worst, a person may become a connoisseur of emotional experiences rating them on impact on the self and amount of response elicited.

In the passage, Alschuler refers to certain cardinal events in a person's life and implies that there is consensus on the sort of learnings that emerge from such experiences. But the device is a rhetorical one in that the invocation of such events as marriage, birth, death and so on promotes an emotional response which is then linked, by assertion only, with proposals for the classroom. No details are given, however, on the means by which classroom experiences can parallel the original referent. There is some hint of faculty psychology here, a notion of strengthening emotional "muscles", even a hardening is implied so that "effective strategies" may be brought to bear on any traumatic or important life event. The image is of an emotional technician able to cope at all times with any circumstances, able to evaluate emotional experiences as to degrees of "peakness"; in the long run, the model is not of a warm and fully human person but of a rather cold, invulnerable connoisseur.

Many writers on humanistic education accept a paradigm for learning which has very immediate reference to the learner's life, which involves an emotional response and which is usually, though not invariably, self-initiated. Rogers illustrates his notions of learning in an anecdote in which he backed his car out of his driveway and squashed a well-loved plant at the side of the drive;

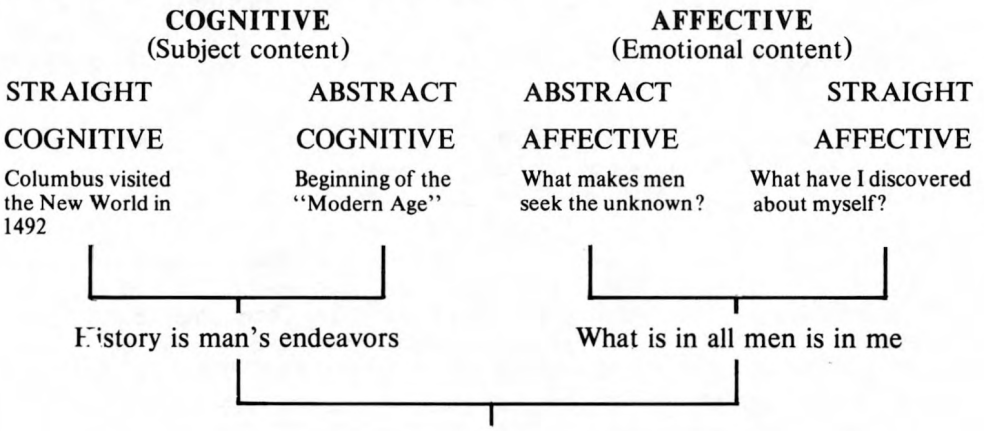
> I found myself repeating the sentence, "don't turn the wheel until you're out in the street. Don't turn the wheel until you're out in the street". Now that was *learning*. It had its cognition element, which even a five-year-old could have grasped. It certainly had its feelings components - several of them. And it had the gut-level quality of experiential learning. All of me had learned a lesson which I will not soon forget, and that is the sort of thing I wish to discuss.[34]

Quite often, the story of a person learning to ride a bicycle is given as a learning paradigm. The difficulty with accepting such models is that they refer validly to a type of learning but that type is somewhat limited. Riding a bicycle or backing one's car out of a drive both involve a physical experience. In both cases, there is a rather simple motivation to succeed in the activity, but neither implies a very high level of cognition ("Don't turn the wheel"), nor any great refinement of human sensibility. In such activities, the role of the teacher would be limited. The examples are inappropriately chosen as a paradigm of learning, since the activities described are not likely to advance or maintain the complex cultural transactions that are expected of schooling. The fact that people, if hungry, will very quickly learn to hunt for split peanuts does not imply that exactly the same type of learning experience may be involved if it is calculus that the teacher wants to teach and the students want to learn. Learning to ride a bicycle does not involve the same qualities in the learning experience as does learning to speak French. Frequently, in our culture, complex information demands a great deal of *instruction* without a feeling component such as when dental students are directed to the

problem: "this root system is healthy and this one is atypical and unhealthy". Many similar learning tasks are required to be mastered not merely to allow society to function, but also, so that we as individuals may reach our appropriate intellectual fulfilment. Quite often, the learning experiences involved in attaining that fulfilment have very little affective impact or even spontaneous motivation, but are associated in the long run with being the sort of person that the learner desires to be (for example, an architect or a palaeontologist).

Although advocates of humanistic education do from time to time mention the need for "traditional" subject matter, and to maintain a balance between subjective and objective knowledge, rather than an overload in favour of one or the other, their arguments in favour of "objective" knowledge do not come with a great deal of force. Perhaps this is because they consider that schools have already leaned towards an objective, formal curriculum, and the role of humanistic education is therefore to redress the balance by leaning a little further in the opposite direction. Whatever the reason, the stress is most assuredly on private, affective experience in a learning situation that is full of personal, immediate impact for the student. One could be forgiven for imagining, after considering the body of writings on humanistic education, that such personal, immediate learnings should encompass the whole curriculum. Learning, then, should be "gut-level", self-initiated, significant, experiential; it should be rooted in the person's affective life, fantasy and actions. It follows that a new implicit definition of learning is accepted which posits that the type of learning illustrated in Rogers' anecdote and Maslow's ordering of significant experiences is "real" learning, and any other sort is somehow invalid. As Brown[35] puts it: "If the contents of the package are not something the learner can feel about, real learning will not take place".

To be fair, more complex learning models than those involving simple skills such as learning to ride a bicycle are employed by humanistic educators, particularly those who subscribe to "confluent education" which attempts to bring together affective and cognitive elements in individual and group learning. G. I. Brown[36], one of the founders of confluent education, presents the following diagram as a way in which the approach to confluent education can be applied to the study of Columbus' discovery of America.



What I discover about myself is what makes history

Brown's model is an appropriate one for occasional use; the questions that he suggests are amongst a series of valid questions that may be asked about an historical theme. Imaginative re-creation of historical incidents with students acting as the centre of that event and exploring their motivations can make a lesson vivid and can be an effective antidote to the students' feelings of utter remoteness from both the historical period and the content of the lesson.

The model has serious drawbacks, however, if consistently used. In the first place, it creates the very dichotomy between "subject content" and "emotional content" which it seeks to remedy. The emotional content is not connected with Columbus' voyage of discovery nor with any sense of excitement at the "beginning of the 'Modern Age'", but with "what I have discovered about myself". The model almost relegates the "cognitive" to "dull facts" and the "affective" to "interesting things about myself". It seems to preclude the notion that learning about external events can be subjectively exciting even when these events have no direct relationship to oneself. For instance, an historian may be excited when he discovers a date on a tomb-stone which adds a little extra knowledge to what is already known about an historical period. This excitement is not necessarily connected with any self-discovery or philosophising about the self in relation to civilization. Even more remotely, a chemist may find the process of analysing a chemical reaction satisfying both emotionally and intellectually, even if no attempt is made to draw conclusions about his personal functioning. The point is that the model creates a perception of reality as uninteresting unless spiced up with introspective exploration or expression.

Secondly, we consider that habitual linking of material in the matter suggested distorts, falsifies and trivializes the "historical events" being investigated. In giving equal stress to "emotional content", there will be a tendency to assume that historical actions are solely or largely the products of individual motivation and that extra-individual forces are relatively unimportant. The distortion also lies in the assumption that "I am truly like Columbus", that "what is in all men is in me" and most inaccurate of all, that "what I discover about myself is what makes history". To repeat, these objections do not apply if the empathic method illustrated by Brown were only an occasional device employed to highlight one aspect of the historical events being considered. But if these and similar devices are used constantly, and indeed form the basis of an educational philosophy, then we would hope that events which *do* occur outside the individual will maintain their resistance to such facile tamperings.

Few articles and writings on humanistic education are theoretical in orientation, but are concerned with how a humanistic emphasis can be promoted in a school setting, and consequently they tend to exhort the reader to respond to "previously unanswered student questions about setting goals, clarifying values, forming identity, increasing their sense of personal efficacy and having more satisfying relations with others"[37]. These exhortations are followed by recipes for classroom practice and anecdotes of successful interventions. In point of fact, the range of activities offered is somewhat limited. The most commonly advocated or debated activity is a form of sensitivity training or encounter group. In Read and Simon[38], nineteen out of the fifty-seven articles are concerned with sensitivity training, three are on values clarification, and others have such titles as "Depth Unfoldment Experience: A method for Treating Interpersonal Closeness"; "Let's be an Ice Cream Machine"; "Creative Dramatics", "Communication Views in a 'Magic Circle' ", and "Letting go: Emotion in the classroom".

Some of the activities described may be capable of producing useful interpersonal skills, and while it could be appropriate for an individual to examine and perhaps discard some of his personal defences and limiting factors in his personal operations, we consider that the exercises, if they encompass the whole corpus of exercises available, in fact relate to a diminished notion of humanistic education. That is, a system that concentrates to this extent on the fully functioning individual is subscribing to the notion that the term "fully functioning person" is applied in a completely intra-systemic way and that a person so described is one who is self aware, in touch with his feelings, his uniqueness, has a strong self-concept, is aware how people influence each other in small groups, can easily express feelings, and so on. These undoubtedly admirable qualities are held up as the cardinal virtues; we find them rather introspective, a-social, limited and eventually the very counter to the unlimited development of the person which is being advertised.

Kirschenbaum sees five major themes in the humanistic classroom. These are:

(i) The student exercises choice or control, sets goals.

(ii) Studies are in areas of felt concerns.

(iii) The content involves life skills - designated as feeling, choosing, communicating and acting.

(iv) The emphasis is on self-evaluating - students test their own progress towards goals.

(v) The teacher is a facilitator rather than a director.[39]

What distinguishes these themes from those of progressive education is the emphasis in point three on cultivation of the emotions. The means of arriving at improved affective functioning are usually based on work in very small groups whose focus is the emotional status of individuals in the group and the interaction between members of the group. Small groups of this kind, although giving the appearance of value-neutrality and of allowing the individual "naturally" to emerge, contain hidden values, ideologies and pressures at least as strong as the pressures in a "traditional" classroom. There is frequently a presumption of lawfulness in such small groups that is quite as coercive as the explicit authoritarianism of the classrooms against which humanistic educators rail (purport to react). There is much intolerance of deviance except that, in this case, the deviant is he who cannot or will not subscribe to the implicit norms of openness to experience, trust, spontaneity and so on.[40]

The normative expectations of such a classroom may be very powerful, although not explicit, and perhaps even disguised in the absence of structure characteristic of small groups. But the norms that are set up may have a particular salience for the individual student, since what is dealt with in the new authoritarianism is not homework, memory for lessons, punctuality, polite behaviour and so on, the discipline of which was formerly administered by the teacher-authority, but self-revelation, understanding of the self, interpersonal communication and classification of feelings administered by the new group-authority. Deviance is punished not by admonition from one teacher but by psychological exclusion by thirty peers.

Concluding Statement

Personal growth is defined in humanistic terms as spontaneity, activity, openness to experience, self-acceptance, self-awareness, trusting self-revelation and expression of feelings. Humanistic educators aim to foster these qualities in

children through a variety of methods that have a great deal in common with those of reformist educational movements of this century; a new dimension, however, is a concentration on emotions, the use of non-verbal techniques, and methodology borrowed from psychotherapy and the encounter movement. The teacher in this context is to be understood more as a facilitator, or even as therapist, than instructor.

Humanistic education is a composite phenomenon, the parameters of which are not always clear; since both by ideology and in fact its definition is highly dependent on the subjective and personal stamp of its proponents, a critique is best located in the style of its documents as well as in its content, when the latter can be found. Very frequently the educational discourse is rhetorical in nature, either presuming a converted audience and exhorting it to further efforts, or revealing new recipes of proven success to entice the newcomer. It seeks to proselytize the reader by arguments that appeal to the finer impulses in mankind, but which gloss over difficulties and simplify or reduce complex data about persons in society.

At the core of humanistic psychology and education is a belief that the individual has the ability to expand and develop when the constraints of a repressive society and internalized authoritarian injunctions are removed. The teacher in this system is seen as one exercising essentially a remissive rather than a proscriptive role; he uses his authority to absolve the learner from these other authoritarian voices to which he has paid self-damaging attention. The humanistic education movement shares with other contemporary philosophies an esentially counter-definitional flavour that exists in opposition to the common definition of reality or "consciousness of everyday life"[41]. The movement's goal is the production of *self-actualized* individuals as a consequence of the revolutionary experience of humanistic education. Nevertheless, the concern with the primacy of the individual in humanistic psychology and education is not greatly removed from the economic principle of personal aggrandisement in liberal capitalism; self-interest is substituted for material gain, pleasure has replaced wealth and personal fulfilment has succeeded private property as the mark of the approved individual. But the movement fails as one that truly enhances individual functioning because its self-set brief of dealing with fulfilment in purely personal terms insulates it from a necessary cultural analysis of the ways in which the individual is coerced by non-personal forces in society.

Whilst there is little disagreement with the humanistic demand that "people not programs, matter - that students, not sets of courses, are the essence of education [42] questions," of the selection, organisation and evaluation of knowledge for students in schools cannot be ignored. The school is almost the only institution reaching the whole population which attempts, in a formal way, to introduce students to all realms of meaning.

Unless humanistic educators can clarify the content of education -especially the nature of and balance between "courses" and "subjects" relating to objective *and* subjective knowledge, they lay themselves open to criticisms that they:

(i) contract the learning model to one that must in every case include a strong affective element which may trivialize and even falsify the material under consideration,

(ii) diminish the very notion of the self which they had sought to expand to one where the person achieves recognition through a narrow band of behaviour conceived as "interpersonal functioning", and

(iii) actually reduce the competence of their students to cope with and alter a society that decidedly functions in an historical, political, economic and supra-individual fashion.

Footnotes

[1]D. H. Clark, "Encounter in Education" in L. Blank, G. Gottsegen and M. Gottsegen (eds.) *Confrontation Encounters in Self and Interpersonal Awareness* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1971), p. 366

[2]J. Willers, "Humanistic Education: Concepts, Criteria and Criticism", *Peabody Journal of Education,* 53 (1975): 40

[3]*H. Lyon, Learning to Feel - Feeling to Learn,* (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill, 1971), p. 66.

[4]D. Read and S. Simon (eds), *Humanistic Education Sourcebook* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975). This statement appears as a dedication on an unnumbered page.

[5]T. B. Roberts, "Seven Major Foci of Affective Experiences: A Typology for Educational Design, Planning, Analysis and Research" in T. B. Roberts (ed) *Four Psychologies Applied to Education* (New York: John Wiley, 1975), 330-335.

[6]R. Fairfield (ed), *Humanistic Frontiers in American Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), xi-xii.

[7]J. Spring, "Education and Progressivism", *History of Education Quarterly 10 (1970): 59.*

[8]*J. B. MacDonald, "Introduction" in J. Squire (ed), A New Look at Progressive Education* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1972), pp. 1-13

[9]G. Leonard, *Education and Ecstasy* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968).

[10]G. Weinstein, "Self-Science Education: The Trumpet", *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* May (1973): 100-122

[11]A. Maslow, *Goals of Humanistic Education* (Big Sur, California: Esalen Institute, 1968).

[12]For a fuller account, see J. Rowan, *Ordinary Ecstasy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976).

[13]Cited in G. Weinstein and M. Fantini (eds), *Toward Humanistic Education* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 217.

[14]B. Steinzor, "Psychotherapy as a Way of Life", *Psychiatry and Social Science Review* 29 (1969): 5.

[15]T. Michels & N. Hatcher, "Sociodrama in the Classroom - A Different Approach to Learning", *The High School Journal* January (1972): 151.

[16]Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill, 1969).

[17]For a discussion of the use of the encounter group for this purpose, see A. J. Williams, "The Social Setting of the Encounter", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 3 (1976): 236-242.

[18]For example, G. I. Brown, *The Live Classroom* (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), C. Rogers, *Encounter Groups* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), Lloyd Kleine, *Education and the Personal Quest* (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill, 1971) and B. Strom and E. Torrance (eds), *Education for Affective Achievement* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973).

[19]C. Weinberg, "Social Science and Humanistic Education", in C. W. Gordon (ed) *Uses of Sociology of Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 100-122.

[20]S. Stivers, L. Buchan, C. Detloff and D. Orlich, "Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person", *The Clearing House* May (1972): 556-560.

[21]A. Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London: Hutchinson, 1976) pp. 155-162.

[22]K. Goldstein, *The Organism* (New York: American Book Co., 1939).

[23]Goldstein's intent appears to be caught by Maslow's words which are found in: A. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 92.

[24]Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1961), pp. 161-175.

[25]A. Maslow, "Some Basic Propositions of a Growth and Self-Actualizing Psychology", in *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming: A New Focus* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1962), pp. 37-38.

[26]These ideas are emphasised and explored in, for example, D. Davis, *Model for A Humanistic Education: The Danish Folk High School* (Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill, 1971); D. Mills and S. Scher, "A Confluent Approach to Education in the Sciences", in Roberts (1975) pp. 330-335; J. Wittmer and R. Myrick, *Facilitative Teaching: Theory and Practice* (California: Goodyear, 1974).

[27]See G. I. Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971).

[28]A. W. Combs, "The Human Side of Learning," *The National Elementary Principal* January (1973): 38.

[29]Brown (1971), 94.

[30]Willers (1975), pp. 41-42.

[31]Mills and Scher (1975), p. 337.

[32]A. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 163.

[33]A. Alschuler, "Humanistic Education", in Read and Simon (1975), pp. 62-63.

[34]Carl Rogers, "Bringing Together Ideas and Feelings in Learning", in Read and Simon (1975), p. 39.

[35]Brown (1971), p. 10.

[36]George Brown, "What is 'Confluent Education'?" in Read and Simon (1975), p. 51.

[37]Alschuler (1975), p. 63.

[38]Read and Simon (1975), pp. v-ix.

[39]Howard Kirschenbaum, "What is Humanistic Education?' in Roberts (1975), pp. 327-329.

[40]These issues receive attention in, for example, R. Haskell, "Presumptions of Group Work: A Value Analysis," *Small Group Behaviour* 6 (1975): 469-486; Williams (1976); 236-242; J. Stevens, *Awareness: Exploring, Experimenting, Experiencing* (Utah: Real People Press, 1971) and R. Wahrman, "Status, Deviance, Sanctions and Group Discussion," *Small Group Behavior* 8 (1977): 147-168.

[41]The "consciousness of everyday life" is defined in P. Berger, B. Berger and H. Kellner, *The Homeless Mind* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), P. 18 as "the web of meanings that allow the individual to navigate his way through the ordinary events and encounters of his life with others".

[42]W. McGill, "Prolegomenon to Humanistic Learning", *Liberal Education* 60 (1974): 254.

Résumé

Les éducateurs humanistes perçoivent leur système comme étant distinct des autres. Cependant ils ne semblent pas soutenir ces affirmations par des réferences précices à l'une ou l'autre théorie.

Cet article examine les affirmations des éducateurs humanistes et les critique quant à la forme et au fond. La 1[e] partie de l'article essaye de situer la tendance humaniste dans le contexte des réformes de l'éducation et de la psychologie.

La 2[e] partie envisage l'explication que ce mouvement donne de lui-même et tente de dégager les hypothèses qu' impliquent les diverses justifications de cette tendance.