

**Power and Mutuality in Modern Foreign Language Education:
The Possibility of a Christian Orientation**

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This thesis expresses suspicion of the ideal of autonomy. It seems, therefore, quite fitting to note that the long process which has led to the writing of it has been one in which I have received from very many people in a variety of ways. I shall mention a few, and let them be representative of the many.

It will be quite apparent from the following chapters that I have appreciated working with Jim Olthuis as my mentor. I have both learned from his work and enjoyed his fellowship. He has taught me much and has been very accommodating towards a project which can hardly have seemed close to the mainstream of his interests at first. Mindful of gifts received in discussions over the last two years, I offer what follows to him as evidence of the fruitfulness of his thinking.

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While I would not wish to make God responsible for what follows, whatever it contains which is of value would not have been there without the grace and provision of which we have been the surprised and glad recipients.

"What do you have that you did not receive?" asked the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 4:7). A cheerful (and grateful) reply of "Nothing!" may be problematic for some of the perspectives discussed in this thesis; it seems to me, however, a true and fitting response.

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Chapter 1

A Christian Approach - Pertinent or Impertinent?

The General Question: Strange and Vague.

What significance might a Christian understanding of the human person have for the theory and practice of modern foreign language education? Can or should such an understanding make any difference to the way in which foreign language education is understood and practised? This question has been the organising principle for my studies for a number of years and is the broad, basic question underlying this thesis. Stated thus baldly, it is a question which appears both strange and vague.

Its strangeness lies in its virtual absence from contemporary discussions of modern foreign language education - the curious peruser of the considerable number of journals in which language teaching matters are discussed will not find them dotted with discussions of *imago Dei*. Perhaps an even more telling measure of its oddity is the number of *Christian* language teachers who have in my experience reacted to it with puzzlement or outright rejection. This is hardly a question which is on everyone's lips, in fact it may well be regarded as quite idiosyncratic.

Its vagueness is evident in the variety of further questions which must soon be raised by anyone willing to live with its oddity for long enough to consider it seriously, for example: which Christian understanding of the human person? Which theory of language teaching? Which practices? How are these related? If the question is to be answered at all concretely, it requires further definition at each of these points.

This first chapter will seek to deal at least in a preliminary way with these basic issues, suggesting grounds for considering the question to be meaningful and setting out the particular aspects of the question which will be investigated in this thesis. In it, I will first briefly sketch a disciplinary context for the question by placing it in relation to both historical and contemporary developments in how modern foreign language education is understood. This will serve as a preliminary defense of the question in the light of its apparent idiosyncrasy,

before its fruitfulness is tested in the main discussion. I will then move on to consider what role anthropological beliefs might play in foreign language education. Finally, I shall specify the particular Christian beliefs and the particular approaches to foreign language education which will be examined in subsequent chapters. In so doing, I shall seek to provide sufficient specificity to render the question useful in a research context.

Or Perhaps Not so Strange...

(i) A historical perspective

The apparent strangeness of the question is at least partly due to our historical vantage point. In recent times the field of foreign language education has tended to look to scientific theory and experimental research for guidance, and such theory and research was supposed to be, by definition, free from particular beliefs and values. Within this framework, there is little if any space for a question such as the one proposed here to emerge. When a broader historical backdrop is considered, however, the question is not all that strange. In fact, an interest in the implications of a Christian understanding of the human person can be found at the foundations of the modern enterprise of foreign and second language education.¹ Such reflection is present in abundance in the writings of the individual generally acknowledged as the greatest pioneer of foreign and second language teaching in the modern age, as well as a significant pioneer of modern education more generally, namely the Moravian educator John Amos Comenius (1592-1670).

Comenius proposed far-reaching educational reforms, earning for himself the epithet "the Galileo of pedagogy" (Michelet, cited in Caravolas, 1993:149), and language education held an important place among his educational interests. Two of his language text books, the *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (*Gate of Tongues Unlocked* (1632)) and the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (*World of Sensory Things in Pictures* (1658)) achieved phenomenal success. Both were widely translated and remained in print for centuries after their publication.² In addition, Comenius's

1) I use the term "modern" here in the broad sense of the modern (i.e. post-medieval) age, rather than to indicate the most immediate past.

2) According to Sadler (1966:268), the *Orbis Pictus* went through 21 editions in the 17th Century, 43 in the 18th, 33 in the 19th and 9 in the 20th.

theory of language teaching is described by Caravolas as "the first general and coherent one in the history of this old discipline" (1993:145).

As Murphy notes in his recent reassessment of Comenius, what has not always received due emphasis in accounts of his writings in the present century is the centrality to his work of the ideal of an integrally Christian philosophy, including a Christian philosophy of education (Murphy, 1995:2-4). The following passage from Comenius's *Via Lucis* (Way of Light) sounds a call which is echoed in various places elsewhere in his writings:

A new philosophy must be set up in a new light, so that there may be no reason for the continuance of that old philosophy of the Greeks which has been convicted in so many ways of being inferior and insufficient, confused and ill-ordered and yet noisy and impetuous, and has inflicted so many injuries on the Christian spirit. A new philosophy must be set up so that the children of Israel need no more be forced to turn to the Philistines to get their ploughs and hoes and axes and trowels sharpened, but may possess at home their own swords and all other necessary equipment, and not be found wanting in the day of battle (cited in Murphy, 1995:81; cf. e.g. The Great Didactic, XXV in Keatinge (ed.), 1967 [1910]).

Inspired by this motivation, Comenius followed an intellectual path which drew upon, yet was identifiably distinct from the various philosophical currents of his day (Smith, 1996a).

What is of particular relevance here is the fact that the anthropological question was central to his educational thought (Capkova, Cervenka, Floss and Kalivoda, 1989:8). The first ten chapters of the Great Didactic, which serve as a foundation for the subsequent discussions of pedagogy, are devoted to an exposition of the meaning and educational significance of the *imago Dei*. Comenius's exposition of the *imago Dei* as an interconnected interplay of reason, virtue and piety, expressed together in historical agency, becomes a *leitmotif* which informs his subsequent discussions of various aspects of the school curriculum. I have argued elsewhere that this anthropological foundation was integrally connected with the specific pedagogical reforms for which Comenius came to be admired - for instance, his association of piety with the mutual play of divine and human pleasure is echoed in his innovative emphasis on the value of play for learning, while his emphasis on historical agency as an essential aspect of authentic human life led him to reject overly deterministic approaches, and to construct alternatives

(for further discussion, see Smith, 1996a).

The question of the significance of Christian anthropology faded from view in more recent attempts to formulate general theories of modern language teaching, but it did not disappear entirely. The educational writings of Charles A. Curran in the 1960s and 1970s proposed an approach to language teaching known as Community Language Learning, which generated considerable interest. In a number of those writings Curran clearly states his intention to present a theory and practice based upon a Christian understanding of the human person (e.g. Curran, 1972:49). Since Curran's theory will be discussed in detail in chapters two and three, I will not explore his claims any further at this point; for the moment it is sufficient to note that Comenius's interest in the question of where a Christian view of the person might lead has resurfaced in a comparatively recent discussion of modern language teaching. Perhaps it is not such an idiosyncratic question after all.

That the question should come to *seem* so unusual reflects, then, a turning away from at least some of the discipline's historical roots. This turning away is doubtless intimately connected with the powerful role which positivist assumptions have played in the rise this century of applied linguistics as a scientific discipline dealing (among other things) with second language teaching and learning. Gaining status as a "scientific" discipline seemed to imply the need to rely on objective facts, unencumbered by potentially obscuring beliefs and values. Thus Weideman comments that

applied linguistics has always been linked with the expectation, inspired by the unquestioned belief in scientific enquiry and research, that if one could only subject the practice of language teaching to scientific scrutiny, one would somehow arrive at the 'best' way of actually going about the business of teaching and learning a second or foreign language (Weideman, 1987:78).³

As the early faith in the possibility of answering the significant questions about language teaching through empirical research has become more uncertain, so rational discussion and clear concepts have been offered as supplementary tools (e.g. Brumfit, 1985:84; Widdowson,

3) cf. e.g. Pennycook's characterization of applied linguistics as still holding to "its firm beliefs in the basic tenets of European Enlightenment thought and its two subsequent spinoffs, positivism and structuralism" (1990:10).

1990:25; Davies, 1993:24-5). For either approach, any intrusion of matters of faith into applied linguistic theorizing is likely to appear quaint, obscurantist or impertinent - a fact reflected in much recent commentary on both Comenius and Curran, which tends to treat the theological dimension of their work as incidental.⁴ The historical fruitfulness of Christian anthropological reflection has thus been rendered invisible, and drawing attention to it may still leave the question raised in this study sounding odd to contemporary ears. There are, however, indications even in more recent and 'secular' discussions that the question may still be relevant.

(ii) The significance of continuing dispute

Arrival at the scientifically validated 'best' way of doing things has always remained the elusive rainbow's end, always just over the next hill. The reality has been a shifting pattern of rival approaches - audio-lingual, communicative, humanistic, natural, proficiency-oriented, critical, content-based, and so on - vying for local, short-lived dominance. Applied linguistics is a loose federation, "often warring...more on the model of Yugoslavia than of Australia or the European Community...in no case is there a single monolithic, unitary view, nowhere is there complete agreement of what the discipline is about" (Davies, 1993:15). Given this reality, it is not uncommon for commentators to make observations such as the following:

Viewed historically, language teaching has always been subject to change, but the process of change has not resulted from the steady accumulation of knowledge about the most effective ways of teaching languages: it has been more the product of changing fashion (Wilkins, 1972:207).

A variety of reasons are advanced for this continuing uncomfortable state of affairs. Could it be because teachers misunderstand, uncritically assimilate or doubt the relevance of scientific theories? Is it because they appropriate them as entire packages, then discard the entire package when weaknesses show? Is it because applied linguists are an academic elite, out of touch with classroom realities and teachers' discourse? Or is it because of the interplay of market forces, political agendas or teacher preferences? (see e.g. Brumfit, 1991:136-42;

⁴) The most glaring example in relation to Comenius is Piaget's well-known essay (1967), which ignores the theological discussion which is ubiquitous in Comenius' writings and remakes Comenius as a forerunner of Piagetian geneticism. Earl Stevick's work (1990:71-99) is an exception to the tendency to discuss Curran's work without significant reference to its theological inspiration.

Kramsch, 1995a; O'Driscoll, 1993; Richards, 1984; Wrigley, 1993:461) The factors are doubtless many and complex, but there is one which is particularly relevant to the present study. It concerns the fact that discussions of language teaching, scientific or otherwise, are not self-grounding, but rather are inevitably embedded in broader cultural and philosophical trends:

ML teaching methods, like methods in other disciplines, have not created the 'fashion' of swinging from the positivist paradigm (step by step learning according to a pre-established plan...) to the subjective one (open to genuine convergence of individual and/or group value judgements by spontaneous decisions of learners). Both follow different traditions and are grounded in the history of human thought. What sounds amazing is that each time the pendulum swings from one tradition to the other we react as if we had discovered the ultimate truth. ML teaching methods, as some sources put it, have swung from wholesale self-decision to highly logically structured (prescriptive) models and back again, not bringing discoveries but causing heretical controversies and contradictions, for on each occasion heresy consisted of maintaining ideas which contradicted current dogma (Molero, 1989:161).

Davies draws the following conclusion from a similar observation:

It may be that we shall always have to take account of changing fashion simply because we have no way of finally establishing 'the best way' to learn or teach a language. Since there is no easy way of evaluating the internal logic of a theoretical model of language, the question of what constitutes the best language-learning theory may not be a matter for experimental research at all, but a matter for philosophical argument about what kinds of aims we are interested in at any one time (Davies, 1993:14).

Davies goes on to argue that it is an inescapable feature of a scientific discipline such as applied linguistics that it never ceases to be in some measure "speculative" - the positivist exclusion of all that is not empirical can never succeed. The scientific method does not tell us which possibilities to test, which experiments to conduct, so guiding inspirations must come from elsewhere.⁵ The mere collection of pieces of information does not in itself offer a

5) The recent emphasis on the validity of teacher-initiated rather than theorist-imposed understandings of language teaching invites similar conclusions. Kumaravadivelu, for instance, emphasizes that "the research path is by no means the only path that has the potential to lead to the construction of a pedagogic framework. There may well be other possibilities, all equally valid" (1994:32).

direction for educators to follow. At a time which many are labelling "post-modern" (not to mention "post-positivist"), such an assertion is decreasingly implausible.⁶ If Davies is right, then it would seem that if there are Christian approaches to the philosophy of education (a thesis which is a little more widely accepted than that of a Christian approach to language teaching), then Christian voices may be readmitted as Christian voices to the applied linguistic fold. In other words, if discussions of the best way forward involve not only experimental but also philosophical considerations, if guiding inspirations may be drawn from outside the world of empirical research, then the possibility of a participation in the discussion which is rooted in Christian belief loses at least some of its strangeness.

This brief assortment of witnesses suggests some measure of acceptance that theory is under-determined by the facts, that professional practice is under-determined by (scientific) theory, and that broad philosophical ("speculative") convictions (including, perhaps, beliefs about persons) play an inevitable role in both. This suggests that investigation of the commitments embodied in these shaping convictions is a very pertinent aspect of research on language teaching. Thus Kramsch calls for applied linguists and language teachers to engage in "an intellectual exploration of the historical and social forces that have shaped their respective discourses" (1995:13-14), arguing that such exploration is urgent because "language not only reflects the interests and biases of the discourse community which generated it, but creates and perpetuates them as well" (1995:10). In other words, it is not only the concrete practices of various sub-groupings in the language teaching world which should be investigated, but also the commitments and guiding metaphors which animate and sustain these practices.

It is a small step from here to the question with which I began. If philosophical commitments and guiding metaphors are a significant part of what needs to be investigated in foreign language education, then Christian beliefs might prove to be relevant in some way, for such commitments and metaphors may have confessional roots. It is interesting in this

⁶) Pennycook (1989:595) lists the work of critical theorists, feminists, Third World writers, postmodernists, philosophers of science, anthropologists, sociologists and philosophers of education and critical pedagogues as all in their different ways undermining "the roles of positivism and patriarchy, the claims to universality, objectivity and truth, and the belief in inherent progress, within the domains of linguistics and applied linguistics."

connection to consider the definition of "speculation" offered by Davies:

in the non-pejorative sense, philosophy which constructs a synthesis of knowledge from many fields (the sciences, the arts, religion, ethics, social sciences) and theorizes (reflects) about such things as its significance to humankind, and about what it indicates about reality as a whole (Davies, 1993:16, citing Angeles).

Here Davies seems to envisage a direct role for faith-based reflection. His comments seem to imply not only that empirical investigation cannot live without ongoing "speculative" input, but that "speculation," in the sense which he intends, must also draw its inspiration from somewhere, with religion appearing as a legitimate source alongside others. While Davies' terminology could no doubt be improved upon if the purpose here were the construction of a philosophy of science, that does not detract from the relevance of his contentions to the present inquiry; they would seem to allow that a Christian view of the person might play a positive role in the formulation of theories about language teaching. Davies' views are undoubtedly not universally accepted, but their presence in the discussion suggests that there is room for an investigation of what such a role might be.

(iii) The relation of beliefs to techniques

There is, however, another reason why the question of how a Christian understanding of the person might apply to language teaching often appears strange. This reason derives from a certain assumption regarding the relationship between beliefs and techniques, an assumption which is reflected in the response of one Christian language teacher, who countered my brief description of my research with the question: "Is there a Christian way to boil water?" What seems to be assumed here is that there will be a straightforward deductive relationship between individual beliefs and individual techniques, such that the possibility of a Christian approach stands or falls on the possibility of showing a different and distinctive set of techniques which are deduced from Christian beliefs. The mental picture which ensues is of a Christian teacher who holds the chalk differently, explains the dative case differently, uses different equipment etc. - a picture which is so hard to imagine that the initial hypothesis of a Christian approach is swiftly rejected.

It will be helpful here to consider Anthony's classic distinction between *approach*,

method and *technique* (Anthony, 1963). In this threefold division, *techniques* are specific actions and technologies which are applied in the classroom to achieve specific objectives, such as administering a vocabulary quiz or asking a question. A visitor to a class sees mostly techniques (as does the viewer of the mental picture just described) (1963:66). These techniques do not, however, occur randomly. They are organized and patterned in certain ways, making up a procedure which has an overall consistency. This general procedure, or constellation of techniques, is what Anthony terms a *method*. Method is, however, in turn dependent on a wider axiomatic framework of assumptions and beliefs; it is a procedure for realizing a certain vision of things. The overall coherence of a method, in spite of the variety of techniques which it may include, derives from its consistency with a set of beliefs about the nature of language and of language learning. This wider framework is termed by Anthony an *approach*, and is clearly related to the philosophical undercurrents and "speculations" discussed above. An approach "states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith - something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove" (Anthony, 1963:64). In sum, then, "*techniques* carry out a *method* which is consistent with an *approach*" (Anthony, 1963:63).

Before exploring some implications of Anthony's distinctions for the present study, it is necessary to consider their usefulness in the light of the recent flurry of discussion which has centered on the viability of references to method. The idea of method has come under sustained attack, leading Kumaravadivelu to characterize language teaching as having entered the "postmethod condition" (1994). One of the central problems identified in uses of the term "method" relates to the concerns of empirical research on second language acquisition, and has to do with the difficulties which researchers have experienced in defining method as an experimental variable (Kinginger, 1997:6). While discussions of language teaching have for some time characterized the field in terms of a range of rival methods, often presented and marketed as complete packages of language teaching techniques, recent commentators have stressed the highly diverse characteristics of and considerable overlaps among the various methods which make up the standard list (Brumfit, 1991:138-142; Larsen-Freeman, 1991:122); the term "method" may be used to characterize anything from a bundle of

techniques to a broad and general approach. Closer inspection of the standard list even reveals considerable uncertainty as to how many methods to distinguish (Pennycook, 1989:602). The result has been that for the purposes of empirical research, the "standard" list of "methods" is no longer regarded as a particularly helpful way of differentiating between language teaching practices; for the purposes of professional decision making, choosing one or another of the methods available is also widely questioned as the best way forward.

Pennycook reviews this line of criticism (1989:602-608), and places it in a broader context by questioning the interests which have been at work in the strong role played by the concept of method. He argues that the concept derives from and supports an "apolitical, ahistorical, positivist and progressivist orientation to education" (1989:609). Drawing on a scientific ideal of uncommitted, neutral knowledge, the concept of "method" has served the interests of western, male academics as a tool of prescription which takes little account of what actually happens in classrooms. The tendency to interpret methods as entities designed by researchers and handed down to practitioners implies an authoritarianism which undervalues the knowledge produced by practitioners (Pennycook, 1989:609-611).

What are the implications of these criticisms for the present discussion? I suggest that for the purposes of the present study, neither line of argument negates the relevance of Anthony's distinctions. The point at issue here is not to offer a judgment as to which of the standard list of "methods" should be followed, still less to defend method as the embodiment of value-free scientific progress, but rather to examine the role of certain beliefs in the more general structure of a language learning situation. It is not necessary to interpret Anthony's "method" as equating to one or another of the packages on offer or as disinterested scientific procedure; it may be understood as pointing more simply to the patterning of techniques in accordance with certain beliefs which takes place in any language classroom. This aspect of the structure of language teaching is not negated by the adoption of different units of analysis - discussions of how teachers' "coherence systems" (Kinginger, 1994) or "sense of plausibility" (Prabhu, 1990) relate to "task hierarchies" (Swaffar, Arens and Morgan, 1982) or "constellations" of practices (Brumfit, 1991) raise essentially the same issue. The point remains that techniques

must be patterned in some way, and that some beliefs must play a role in the patterning.⁷ In order to avoid confusion on this score, I shall henceforth follow Richards and Rodgers in substituting "design" for "method" as a description of the varying patterns which result (1986:19), and using "method" in its more familiar sense to denote a particular recognized package such as Community Language Learning.⁸

As regards Pennycook's criticism of the authoritarian nature of "method", I have argued above against the positivist understanding of method, and shall emphasize below that I am not taking the interrelations of approach, design and technique to represent a hierarchical division of labour. As Kinginger illustrates from teachers' professional self-descriptions, a beginning teacher with little familiarity with the research literature relating to language teaching still operates with implicit beliefs and theories which pattern his or her practice (1994:11). Reference to the grouping of techniques as "design" shifts the focus from method as a static (if elusive) entity to the activity of constructing language teaching, an activity which is open to as many contextual influences as any other human activity. In all of this, however, the basic point that beliefs play a role in constellating techniques still remains, and is supported rather than undermined by Pennycook's account.⁹

With these qualifications concerning the purpose of the discussion in mind, a number of observations are in order regarding Anthony's different levels of description. First, it should be noted that a single approach may lead to or be consistent with a plurality of designs (Anthony, 1963:65). An example here is the variety of methods with their differing designs for classroom practice which are conventionally grouped together under the heading of humanistic approaches. These both differ from one another and show a common consistency with various

7) Kumaravadivelu claims that his "macrostrategies", proposed as an alternative to "methods" as units of analysis, are "theory-neutral as well as method-neutral" in the sense that they are not tied to any one particular teaching method or theory of language and learning (1994:32). Whether or not this claim can be sustained, it is clear that Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies embrace a variety of beliefs about language learning, as can be seen, for instance, in his insistence on the importance of learner autonomy (1994:39).

8) Less seems to me to turn on whether discrete classroom practices are described as "techniques" or, as Richards and Rodgers prefer, "procedures".

9) cf. e.g. the following statement: "while there certainly are trends and shifts in language teaching, these tend to be a reordering of the same basic options, and to reflect the social, cultural, political, and philosophical environment" (Pennycook, 1989:600).

convictions characteristic of the general approach (cf. Stevick, 1990). Expanding Anthony's description, it may be argued that an approach is likely to consist partly of conscious principles and partly of unconscious assumptions drawn from such sources as experience, personality, social or cultural background, or a broad ideology or *Zeitgeist*. A given design will comport well or badly with a given approach (cf. Wolterstorff, 1984), but the approach is by its very nature *not* a set of detailed specifications for constructing a design, a blueprint which details the outcome in advance. A design is a creative construct developed under the guidance of an approach, an attempt to translate an approach into a repeatable constellation of more detailed procedures at a particular place and time. The substitution of the term "design" for "method" accentuates this point: "what links theory with practice...is design" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:19; cf. Weideman, 1987).

Second, a given technique may appear in a variety of rival or co-existing designs which are in turn related to divergent approaches. In other words, a design is not made up out of an exclusive and unique set of techniques, but rather comprises a particular combination of techniques selected from the full range of available or conceivable techniques. A given approach or design may require, commend or exclude certain specific techniques (as a communicative approach generally requires an information gap, or Community Language Learning excludes error correction during beginner level oral practice), and may permit a range of others in varying proportions.¹⁰ What makes one design different from another, however, is principally the way in which a range of techniques is configured or patterned in a manner consistent with the approach adopted, yielding an educational experience with particular characteristic emphases and priorities (Swaffar, Arens and Morgan, 1982; Brumfit,

10) For discussion of requirement, commendation, debarment and permission as possible relationships of Christian belief to education see Allen, 1993. For a response to and expansion of Allen's account, see Smith, 1995.

1991:138; cf. Smith, 1995).¹¹ Much as the same notes, rhythms and instruments can be variously combined into very different pieces of music, so techniques are to be regarded with an awareness that "their value depends on *method* [design] and *approach*" (Anthony, 1963:66).

Third, in the day-to-day life of approaches, designs and techniques the traffic is not one-way, beginning with approach and proceeding down to technique. The movement is also, as has been noted above, not necessarily from the research community to the classroom. The development of a new technique or new discoveries concerning the effects of a given technique may modify a design or the beliefs which make up an approach (consider, for instance, the significance of the development of new printing technologies for the picture-based pedagogy of Comenius's illustrated textbooks). As Richards and Rodgers note, language teachers may "stumble on" a successful technique and form beliefs which justify it later (1986:29). Equally, teachers may begin their teaching career with some beliefs about teaching and learning which they are forced to abandon or modify as they interact with particular groups of learners. Moreover, the creative construction process which goes into the design of an episode of language teaching involves not only beliefs but also particular skills, personality strengths, traditions, experiences, educational situations and a variety of constraints (age and background of students, parental expectations, budgetary limitations etc.).¹² A formal theory-into-practice model would be misleading here - Wrigley (1993:461) reports on the basis of a national U.S. survey of ESL literacy programs that "funding mandates, as well as available resources, may

11) It is this patterning which renders suspect a "mindless eclecticism" which "engulfs learners in an endless variety of activities" (Wrigley, 1993:463). In fact, even if the conscious criterion at work in a given classroom is a pragmatic one of what "works", only the most doggedly randomised (and therefore unprofessional) selection of activities is likely to avoid exhibiting some implicit pattern of emphasis. Some empirical support for this point is provided by the detailed study of teacher responses to questionnaires designed to elicit methodological priorities in Swaffar, Arens and Morgan, 1982. The authors of the study conclude: "Methodological labels assigned to teaching activities are, in themselves, not informative, because they refer to a pool of classroom practices which are universally used. The differences among major methodologies are to be found in the ordered hierarchy, the priorities assigned to tasks. Not what classroom activity is used, but when and how form the crux of the matter in distinguishing methodological practice" (Swaffar et. al., 1982:31).

12) This points to the possibility of a given teacher believing in a particular approach but, whether consciously or unawares, using a constellation of techniques which is in tension with certain elements of that approach. In this case, the approach which is operative is surely that implied by the actual practices rather than that which is simply assented to or verbalized. This is a particularly significant issue for attempts to carry out an integrally Christian education.

be the strongest factors in determining the philosophical orientations that a program reflects."
This does not, however, mean that beliefs are irrelevant, any more than a recognition that the teacher does not produce or control every event in the classroom renders the teacher's input superfluous. A design is not purely a set of incarnated ideas, but rather an interaction between a set of beliefs (coherent or drawn from conflicting sources) and a set of available techniques, contexts, experiences and educational demands.

It follows from these points that it is mistaken to expect the beliefs which make up an approach to yield distinctive techniques which can be deduced from them (although this possibility is not excluded; an example may be the teacher's silence in the Silent Way (see Stevick, 1990:101-130)). This does not, however, mean that such beliefs only have any effect at the level of approach, remaining insignificant for the techniques adopted, for it is the beliefs making up the approach which guide the coherence of the design, which in turn structures the utilization of techniques. In a given episode of language teaching, approach, design and technique are simultaneously operative. The creativity and loose fit between approach, design and technique mean that beliefs do not correspond one-to-one with techniques; beliefs do, however, have their impact on the choice, arrangement and development of techniques.¹³

This dynamic can be compared with the ways in which worldviews, broad frameworks for understanding how the world is and ought to be, contribute to the shape of everyday life (cf. Olthuis, 1985a). The beliefs ("articles of faith") which make up an approach are, however, a specialized (although not isolated) subset of a wider network of human beliefs. If a worldview is "the integrative and interpretive framework by which order and disorder are judged, the standard by which reality is managed and pursued" (Olthuis, 1985a:155), then a language teaching approach is that more focused integrative and interpretive framework by which pedagogical order and disorder are judged and sound language teaching practice is regulated and pursued. The beliefs which constitute it are likely to include both the conclusions of research and experientially inspired hunches, both fresh insights and the received wisdom of

13) It should be noted that this dynamic is operative not only for the practice of language teaching but also for research in this area. For a survey of various approaches to research see Cumming (ed.), 1994.

the profession. They will include very mundane beliefs such as the belief that children like books with pictures better than those without, and exclude more exalted and confessional beliefs, such as particular views on baptism, which are irrelevant to the language teaching context. Might this more specific interpretive framework, like a broader worldview, have its roots in a more basic orienting faith? More specifically, if it is admitted on the one hand that faith is not the source of all worldview assumptions (Olthuis, 1985a:159), and on the other that not all Christian beliefs will necessarily be relevant to an approach to language teaching, are there still Christian beliefs which might play a role in shaping such an approach?

This returns us to the initial question, and to Davies' hint that "speculation" could be inspired by "religion". It seems clear that the beliefs which make up an approach to modern language teaching will include anthropological beliefs, beliefs about the nature of the human person.¹⁴ The modern language classroom exhibits three distinct anthropological foci: the nature and calling of the learner, the nature and calling of the teacher, and the nature and calling of those humans who are portrayed in teaching materials as representatives of the target language and culture and potential interlocutors of the learners.¹⁵ An implicit or explicit set of beliefs concerning the human beings who appear in these three roles must therefore be a significant part of any approach to modern language teaching, and will play some role in the process of organising techniques into a design. If there are characteristic Christian beliefs concerning the nature of the human person,¹⁶ then the possibility clearly exists that such

14) This is one way in which Anthony's account of "approach" requires expansion - or, if the phrase "assumptions dealing with...the nature of language teaching and learning" (1963:63-4) is taken as more of a catch-all than it is in Richards and Rodgers' interpretation, some further clarification. Richards and Rodgers take approach as consisting of linguistic and psycholinguistic assumptions (a view of language plus a theory of learning processes (1986:16-19; Richards, 1984:7)). There are, however, other assumptions which must form a part of any construction of educational practices, for instance ethical assumptions (cf. Smith, 1997a) or the broader anthropological assumptions discussed here. This expansion of what may be considered to be part of an approach undermines the positivist understanding of method criticized by Pennycook.

15) The terms nature and calling refer to the fact that anthropological reflection in an educational context has both descriptive (what is this person like? how does she function?) and normative (what should this person become? where does he fall short?) dimensions.

16) I use the term 'characteristic' here rather than 'distinctive' in order to bracket out, for present purposes, a point at which such discussions tend to get bogged down, namely the question of the degree to which beliefs can be said to be distinctively Christian if they are shared by groups or individuals who would not call themselves Christian. My concern in this context is to explore the possible consequences of Christian belief; if others find that they share the belief and/or approve the consequences, so much the better.

beliefs may be capable of playing a regulative role in this process. It is this possibility which this thesis sets out to explore.

...And Becoming Less Vague

I have sought, in the light of its perceived strangeness, to outline an initial justification for a Christian anthropological approach to modern foreign language education. I do not, however, propose to dwell in the rest of this thesis on the abstract possibility of a Christian approach, but rather to undertake a detailed case study as a test of what kind of results such an approach might yield. The remaining task, if the danger of staying at the level of generalities is to be avoided, is to specify which Christian anthropological beliefs are to be related to which language teaching approaches or designs. Before concluding this introductory discussion, I shall therefore narrow both elements of the basic question.

(i) Connection and conflict as anthropological themes

Descriptions and definitions of a Christian understanding of the human person abound, and show at least as much diversity alongside their commonalities as any other area of Christian thought. For the purposes of the present discussion I propose to focus on two common and interrelated themes, namely the basic human capacity for loving relationship and the disruptive reality of sin, and on the relation of these two themes to each other. In order to work from a clearer and more systematic statement of them, I shall draw from Olthuis' attempts to elaborate a Christian anthropological perspective (Olthuis, 1983, 1985b, 1989, 1993, 1994a/b, 1995), attempts in which the themes of intersubjectivity and alienation are particularly prominent.¹⁷

In a discussion of a Christian approach to psychotherapy, Olthuis suggests that there are "seven anthropological features that need to be addressed and accounted for in any biblical model" (1994a:37). These are i) existence as gifted/called selves, ii) alienation and reconnection, iii) personal agency, iv) multidimensional embodiment, v) existence as intersubjective, connective selves, vi) gender difference and vii) the dynamic process of

¹⁷⁾ The attunement of Olthuis' work to philosophical and psychotherapeutic as well as theological questions makes it a helpful reference point for a study such this. While the themes mentioned above will be exemplified from Olthuis' work, they are common themes of Christian anthropological reflection (see note 26).

personal becoming (1994a:47).¹⁸ Olthuis adds two cautions regarding the interpretation of such a list of basic features. First, these are all features of a multidimensional whole, and both dualistic accounts of the person and reduction of any one aspect of the person's existence to another are to be resisted (1993:159; 1985b). Second, the features are all interrelated, which implies that

a focus on any one feature will unavoidably have a certain conceptual one-sidedness and historical specificity which immediately invites expansion and correction...Since all of the parts have their unique and irreducible place within the total pattern of coherence and unity, ignoring or playing down any one of the features distorts and obscures the whole as well as each of the constituent features (Olthuis, 1993:156).

These cautions are pertinent in the present context, since I propose to concentrate on two of the seven features listed, intersubjectivity and alienation. While this means abstracting from the coherence of the whole, it will also give a sharper focus to the discussions of language teaching approaches and designs which follow.

Olthuis argues that "community, mutuality, neighborliness, intersubjectivity are constitutive of the very nature of each human person", and that therefore, "in distinction from any form of individualism...neighborly love is not a choice. It is an inherent dimension of being human" (1993:160-1). Our very sense of identity is formed in interaction with others, and growth into personal wholeness requires healthy relationships rather than independence and autonomy¹⁹ (1994a:45); "Commitment to others...is not the curtailment of my freedom, but the avenue of my freedom" (1993:161). This does not imply, however, that the self is to be

18) Slightly different versions of this list appear in Olthuis, 1983:204-5, 1993. Olthuis 1993:172 offers the following summary: "Humankind is be(com)ing a love-community, male and female, of personal selves, totally, fully and enduringly related to God, themselves, neighbors and all other creatures, called to become centered persons active on their own behalf who care for creation, nurturing it, in loving co-partnership with God and neighbor in the way of love and shalom. Disconnection and isolation from God, ourselves, other people and creation is sin and evil. Be(com)ing a whole person is experiencing (re)connection with others (intimacy), realizing my (re)connection with the rest of creation (solidarity), and realizing my root, ground, source, deliverance and healing in the love and grace of God."

19) Given the more specialized meanings which the term autonomy has come to bear in discussions of language teaching, it is necessary to underline here that it will be used in this thesis to signify an emphasis on individual self-mastery which stands in tension with interdependence, rather than a particular way of organising learning. Some connection between the two uses is not thereby precluded, but this is not the focus of the present discussion.

seen as a function of its place in the system - connection is not to be identified with submersion (1994a:46).²⁰ "Being-with" is, however, both basic to the formation of the human self and a fundamental calling for that self, a calling to image God by loving as God loves (1994b:217). This gift of and calling to connection is worked out through all the irreducible dimensions of human existence, "a fabric of many strands woven and being woven" (1994b:217).²¹

What, then, are we to make of the fact that "the experience of disconnection, disintegration, disempowerment and destruction is pervasive and pernicious" (1989:316)? If connection is basic, why does conflict abound? Olthuis fully acknowledges that there is "evil and brokenness in the world and in the heart of our being, and alienation from God, self, neighbor and creation" which "can only finally be healed in the deliverance, forgiveness, and transformation of the renewing grace of God" (1994a:40-1). He suggests that a Christian understanding of the fallenness of the world requires both that this brokenness be faced and taken seriously, and that it should not be regarded as ultimate or as an inevitable part of the inherent structure of the world: "to conclude that evil has an intrinsic place in creation not only minimizes human responsibility, but ironically denies the existence of genuine evil as that which ought not to be" (1993:170). Christian faith affirms that sin is a contingent, unnecessary fracture in a good creation, that despite its pervasiveness it will be finally overcome by God's gracious redemption, and that in the meantime God's faithfulness to a suffering world sustains hope. It is therefore not enough simply to affirm the goodness of connection with others; it is necessary to speak of "good connections (creation), broken connections (fall) and healing reconnections (salvation)" (1989:316). While our experience contains much brokenness, the call to love remains, and remains a call to authentic human existence.²²

This view stands in tension with the tendency within the modern tradition to conceive of

20) This draws attention to another feature: personal agency, and will be particularly pertinent to discussion of Kramsch's work in chapter 5.

21) cf. 1989:31: "Fundamental to the Christian faith is the affirmation that life in all its forms is a gift of love which is simultaneously a call to love."

22) This dynamic, as noted above, takes place in the context of the multidimensional whole. This means that one aspect of the person is not to be placed over against the others as the source of evil (as in views which see the body as the problem and the mind as the answer), and that connection is likewise multifaceted, and not to be reduced, for instance, to biological imperatives. cf. Olthuis, 1993:160, 168.

agency as the exercise of power over and against others. Olthuis characterizes this tendency as follows:

Such thinking seems to take the basic opposition between closed selves with all the ambiguity this involves for personal interaction as a fundamental characteristic of human nature. In this paradigm, given in modern times classic formulation in the work of Freud, Hegel and Sartre, there are only two possibilities: dominate or be dominated. In this paradigm of violence, one either exercises power and becomes dominant and independent - that is, selfish - or one surrenders and becomes submissive and dependent - that is, other-directed (Olthuis, 1997:144).²³

This paradigm envisages a world of "ceaseless conflict" until one party either wins or surrenders (Olthuis, 1997:144). It also suggests that ethical response requires a suspension of agency, which is always self-interested, and of power, which is always murderous.²⁴ While recognizing that "such degeneration is rampant in our skewed lives," in which "at every turn and in every moment the give-and-receive of mutuality threatens to degenerate into...strategies of manipulation", Olthuis holds out for the possibility of a "non-violent economy of mutuality" (Olthuis, 1997:148,141). Self and other are often historically locked in opposition, but they are not irrevocably, inevitably or intrinsically so. There remains the possibility of meeting, "graced with mutual recognition, mutual pleasure and mutual empowerment - the fundamental ingredients of love" (Olthuis, 1997:147). This loving meeting is characterized as an "oscillating rhythm of giving and receiving", a "dance of identity and intimacy" in which my agency and that of the other are not exercised at one another's expense:

In giving to the other, I, paradoxically, in being received, am enlarged and enhanced...In receiving the other, I expand, and paradoxically, through my receiving, give. Instead of power-over (with its corollary of power-under), or power-held-in-abeyance (to avoid domination), there is power-with and the dance of mutual empowerment (Olthuis, 1997:146).²⁵

Since daily reality is that over and over again "the wild spaces of love are turned into the

23) Olthuis documents this view further from the writings of Tillich, Ricoeur and Derrida as well as tracing its impact on Levinas' thought (see Olthuis, 1997:143-144,156 n.39).

24) Levinas' characterization of "power, by essence murderous of the other" is cited by Olthuis (1997:142); it is Levinas' views which are the focus of Olthuis' discussion here.

25) Olthuis cites Kristeva's comment that "the psyche is one open system connected to another, and only under those conditions is it renewable. If it lives, your psyche is in love. If it is not in love, it is dead" (cited in Olthuis, 1997:147).

"killing fields", self-sacrifice is necessary to restore mutuality, and "the give-and-receive rhythms of mutual power-with often need to become exercises in suffering-with our neighbour" (Olthuis, 1997:150). This self-sacrifice is not, however, a yielding to the inevitability of someone winning in the power struggle of agents seeking dominance, but rather a suffering love which points beyond itself to renewed mutuality, testifying that "as gift and call, love is both the description of life and the prescription for life" (Olthuis, 1997:139).

Here, then, are two interrelated Christian beliefs concerning the human person: that connection rather than autonomy is basic and authentic, forming the proper ground for the exercise of power and agency, and that brokenness, disconnection, domination are pervasive but contingent. While I have illustrated them from Olthuis' work, they clearly echo common, mainstream themes of Christian reflection.²⁶ In this thesis I shall investigate two approaches to foreign and second language teaching with the aim of establishing whether these Christian beliefs are relevant to (and, if so, consistent or inconsistent with) their concerns. If such relevance can be established, then a case has been made for the more general proposition that Christian anthropological beliefs can form an operative part of an approach to language teaching.

(ii) Humanistic and critical pedagogy

Having narrowed Christian views of the person in general to specific Christian beliefs concerning connection and conflict, it remains to replace language teaching approaches in general with specific approaches to language teaching which can provide material for a case study. I propose to examine the work of two theorists who have made significant contributions to discussions of foreign language teaching. The first is Charles A. Curran, whose descriptions of Community Language Learning caused a considerable amount of discussion in the late 1970s and early 1980s, gaining for it a place in the standard lists of methodological options. Two features of his work make it particularly interesting for the purposes of the present discussion. One is his constant claim to be offering an approach and design focused on the

²⁶) They are common, with varying conceptualization and emphases, in Christian accounts of personhood, see e.g., Anderson, 1969:176-184; Carey, 1977:46-49, 108; Jones, 1997:112-3; Ward-Wilson and Blomberg, 1993:10-11.

whole person in community. The other is his claim, mentioned above, that his approach to the whole person is grounded in Christian belief. His work offers, then, the most systematic recent example of the kind of investigation undertaken in this thesis. The second of the theorists examined is Claire Kramsch, whose book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993) received the 1994 Modern Language Association Kenneth Mildenberger Award.²⁷ Kramsch makes no claim to Christian roots and does not exhibit a major emphasis on anthropological questions. She identifies with a particular approach to education but does not offer a packaged method. A comparison of her work with that of Curran can, therefore, address a number of possible objections which might be made to a discussion of Curran alone, particularly the objection that Christian anthropological reflection is only relevant to the idiosyncrasies of Curran's unusual method. Kramsch's work is very much part of current discussions in the field, and shares with Curran's writings an openness regarding its philosophical commitments; both of these characteristics make her work a valuable point of comparison for the discussion of Curran.

A further reason for discussing Kramsch and Curran together is the differences and similarities between their basic orientations. Curran is grounded in existentialist psychology, and Community Language Learning is one of the most well-known of the humanistic methods mentioned above. Kramsch allies herself with critical pedagogy, a movement with considerably different emphases from humanistic education; in fact the two perspectives stand in some conflict with each other. I shall nevertheless argue that when they are examined from the standpoint of the anthropological themes outlined above, they share common difficulties which place them in tension with a Christian approach. Both, however, contain themes which could (from a Christian standpoint) be more fruitfully developed.

This brings us to the brink of eating the pudding, a better test of the fruitfulness of a Christian anthropological approach than this more abstract introductory description of it. The somewhat vague basic question with which this chapter opened can now be restated as follows:

27) This is awarded annually for "an outstanding research publication in the field of teaching foreign languages and literatures" (*Modern Language Journal* 66:1, 1982:59).

what relevance can particular Christian anthropological beliefs, specifically a belief that connection is basic and normative and conflict contingent and anti-normative, have for an examination and evaluation of the modern language pedagogy of Charles A. Curran and Claire Kramsch? It is to this question which the following chapters will be addressed, starting with the work of Curran.

Chapter 2

Charles A. Curran: Community Language Learning

Background and Orientation of Curran's Work

Charles A. Curran's contribution to foreign and second language teaching must be viewed in the context of broader developments in education and psychotherapy in the 1960s and early 1970s. This was the period in which a dissatisfied call for reform of traditional institutions found its educational expression in movements advocating freeschooling, deschooling and student-centered learning. The main characteristics of the crisis which led to this call for change are described by Legutke and Thomas as:

the deadening of human communication within technocratic and bureaucratic institutions, the progressive destruction of livable space in the cities, the aggravation of spiritual impoverishment and poverty in spite of a rapid growth of affluence, the obvious chauvinism of the so-called civilized world and its democracies towards the countries of the Third World and the exploitative relationship with nature which led to the progressive reduction of the quality of life in the name of progress (1991:41).

In response to this crisis, figures such as Carl Rogers, Ivan Illich and A. S. Neill led a move to humanize education and reform or abolish its institutions. Rogers condemned the overstress on the cognitive which had led to "education from the neck up" (Rogers, 1969:4), and proposed instead an educational practice based on the growth and freedom of the whole person, incorporating a greatly increased emphasis on the affective dimensions of learning and on self-initiated and self-evaluated learning (Rogers, 1969:5).¹ This new approach aimed to overcome the alienation experienced by many in traditional classrooms.

The involvement of Rogers in this debate forms the most visible link with the psychotherapeutic sources of some of the new educational theories. Existential-humanistic psychology, led by theorists such as Allport, Maslow, May and Rogers himself, emerged during this same period as the "Third Force" between behaviorism on the one side and Freudianism on the other. This movement rejected a view of the person as reactive, passive

¹⁾ Rogers went so far as to propose abandoning the idea of teaching altogether, arguing that teaching causes the learner to distrust his or her own experience - see Rogers, 1969:152-155.

and subject to forces beyond his or her control in favor of a view of human nature as "essentially active, voluntary, responsible, relational, caring and free" (Yoshikawa, 1982:391), and replaced analytic, scientific approaches to the human subject with an emphasis on process and on the holistic existential presence of the person in the counseling encounter (see May, ed., 1969 [1961]). The quest for scientific solutions to be applied to clients' problems was opposed with a focus on the capacity of clients for learning about themselves and on ways in which that capacity could be encouraged non-directively through the 'unconditional positive regard' of the counselor. Self-awareness and self-actualization through emotional integration became central goals. A number of the educational reforms proposed were firmly rooted in these psychotherapeutic approaches to the human person.

As this alliance of education and psychotherapy began to make inroads into second and foreign language teaching, it similarly provided many with a fresh avenue to pursue between existing alternatives, this time between the behaviorist habit formation models which had provided scientific backing for the previously dominant Audiolingual method on the one hand, and cognitive code learning, which took its inspiration from Chomsky, on the other. The humanistic movement offered a way of probing "beneath the surface" of language interactions in educational settings to find the affective roots of barriers to learning and relationship, thus beginning to account for variations in language learning success which were not adequately explained by cognitive or stimulus-response models (Stevick, 1973:259,265-270; Blair, ed., 1982:3-14). New teaching techniques appeared, many of them derived from counseling contexts - techniques which "presuppose[d] particular views of the individual, of awareness, communication and learning" (Legutke and Thomas, 1991:39). There was a shift in the new paradigm from linguistic structure to "communication...as a dynamic process in which communicators are constantly related anew. They participate jointly in the creation of new meaning, constantly adjusting to what happens from moment to moment in dynamic interaction" (Yoshikawa, 1982:392). Language became a vehicle for self-exploration and self-expression as well as intellectual growth; as Moskowitz expressed it,

some of the purposes of using humanistic communication activities to teach foreign

languages are to improve self-esteem, to develop positive thinking, to increase self-understanding, to build greater closeness among students, and to discover the strengths and goodness in oneself and one's classmates (1982:20).

Charles A. Curran, a Roman Catholic priest who was first a student and later a colleague of Carl Rogers, is unusual in that he participated to a significant degree in all three of these interwoven developments. His primary area of involvement was psychotherapy and counseling, a field in which he published a number of books and articles. In several of these publications he also sought to apply his psychotherapeutic approach to education, and eventually drew these applications together in a book devoted specifically to the elaboration of an alternative paradigm for education called 'Counseling-Learning' (CL) (Curran, 1972). A short time later he published a work devoted entirely to the implications of Counseling-Learning for second language education, outlining an approach which he called 'Community Language Learning' (CLL) (Curran, 1976). The continuity of his ideas throughout the period covered by these publications is evident in the fact that over half of this latter publication consists of unacknowledged verbatim extracts from the earlier works.

This order of involvement accurately reflects the order of priority in Curran's thought. The counseling process is the basic model which is used to interpret any other process of human growth which is discussed. The church sermon is redescribed as the creation of a situation in which the hearer is drawn into a process of self-counseling; Vatican II is characterized as the church counseling itself; unsurprisingly, education also becomes, with some qualifications, a variety of counseling (Curran, 1968:3,90; 1972:29; 1973:11,16).² The kind of counseling which provides the basic model is at many points close to (although not identical with) the approach of Rogers - eschewing behaviorist or psychoanalytic technologies, the focus is on the client's own feelings and self-expression, the therapist acting as a facilitator to assist the client in coming to greater clarity regarding his or her own feelings and self-investments (e.g. Curran, 1968:103; 1972:103). Terms such as "client-centered therapy," "unconditional positive regard," "self-actualization," "becoming a person" and

²⁾ This is a feature shared by Rogers' work; cf. Van Belle, 1980:63.

"nondirectiveness" are adopted from Rogers (Curran, 1968:39; 1969:187; 1972:21,25,52,99; 1976:47). Curran writes:

while in personal relationships and group dynamics we have yet much to learn, there can be little doubt that this century has seen the emergence of a new and exciting understanding of man...What is especially fresh and pertinent in modern counseling and psychotherapy is the way it sees man, not ideally or abstractly, but engaged in living with the totality of his being. The concept of the human person has, in this way, assumed a whole new existential dimension. This is what is particularly stimulating to our present view (1969:8).³

This anthropological viewpoint, which informs Curran's therapeutic approach and therefore also his approach to education in general and language teaching in particular, is of particular interest to the present discussion. I shall therefore proceed to outline Curran's understanding of the human person in its philosophical, theological and social/political/cultural dimensions before moving on to consider its implications for the educational practices which flow from it. In this chapter the concern will be descriptive, with the aim of showing how the different parts of Curran's work relate to each other, with particular attention given to the relation of philosophical and religious convictions to teaching methods; the following chapter will be given over to a critique of his ideas.

Philosophical Anthropology: Essential Existentialism

Philosophically, Curran's position is characterized by a firm rejection of dichotomized views of the person which have dominated in the modern Western tradition. Descartes and Kant (and occasionally Newton) are held jointly responsible for the "nonunitary mode of thinking" which "still pervades our culture to such a degree that it appears constantly in the attitudes of those whom we undertake to train as counselors or therapists...[and] colors the whole approach to teaching and learning and the attitudes of both teachers and students" (Curran, 1972:39; cf. 1976:50). Descartes held that "man, for all practical purposes, was

³⁾ For the close similarities between many of Curran's characteristic themes and those present in other existential therapists, what follows may be compared with May's essay in May, ed., 1969 [1961]:1-48. In keeping with the practice of his day, Curran uses gender-exclusive language with abandon, and is not averse to the highly sexist metaphor. Rather than lard this chapter and the next with a repetition ad nauseam of 'sic', I shall here note the appropriate disapproval and leave it to be assumed on future occasions.

really his psyche, not his soma" (Curran, 1968:54), and left us with "a mathematical mode of intellectualizing" focused on abstract analysis, the pursuit of clear and distinct ideas, and methodic doubt (Curran, 1972:39; cf. 1968:213). This bias towards abstraction and clarity "runs the danger of deformation because it is withdrawing from individual, contingent, concrete experience in order to find and distil what is common and so can be shared" - left unchecked it "produces the fanatic and the cold, inconsiderate and unsympathetic man" (Curran, 1969:38-9). Kant stands accused not only of intensifying this intellectualism through his notion of pure reason, but also of establishing obedience to exterior standards as a key virtue through his emphasis on duty. "Kant's will, like Descartes' intellect was somehow unconnected with man's body in its basic directives" (Curran, 1968:56) - once again the concrete is subordinated to the abstract and the mind-body split is confirmed. Newton symbolizes the adoption and outworking of these biases in the Western scientific tradition, particularly in its focus on predictability (Curran, 1972:38,41). More recent stimulus-response theories of learning still feed on the same initial mind-body dualism and continue to exclude affect from knowing (Curran, 1972:13).

Overcoming this basic dichotomy is an important goal for Curran, who has as a core concern the reintegration of "rational" and "animal" (1969:208; cf. 1968:51-2; 1976:8) in an enhanced view of the *person*, a term which is used in the pregnant sense made popular by Rogers (Rogers, 1961). The term is

seen in a most fecund and profound sense, denoting even the very zenith in the maximising of human psychological potential...The word "person" here signifies the most complete and integrated fulfilment of the self. This "fully functioning person" is seen as the ultimate psychological goal of the self (Curran, 1968:36).

Previous thinkers have viewed the person with various preconceived notions, dividing the person up into various segments in the image of their theories. Curran proposes instead an "essential existentialism" which, he claims, can get to grips with "man as he is, that is, man in

his unique, particularized, mysterious condition" (1969:29).⁴ The *existentialism* of this formula is to be found in a focus on the "particularized uniqueness" of the person, who exists "always at the contingent moment of experience" (Curran, 1969:29). In this experiential moment the person is a unified whole - it is pre-reflective concrete experience which incorporates mind and body in a single whole without dissolving either and thus provides a way beyond mind-body dualism. The *essentialism* is found in the definition of the person as "a being beyond himself" (Curran, 1969:29) - the shared essence of humanity is the desire to go beyond oneself, to reach out to know and be known by another, to attain self-transcendence. A more detailed examination of each term will provide a basis for later discussion and critique of Curran's understanding of the "whole person" and of self-other relationships.

(i) Existentialism - the unity of experience.

For Curran, the person is

not seen in some ideally rational view - a sort of abstract philosophical man - but in the disordered, confused, conflicting struggle of his daily reality. Our model of the *person*, then, is not ideal but real; not his rational promise but his existential, moment-to-moment, involved self. His animality and rationality and whatever other abstract names we give him, are, in fact, one unified, integrated operant as we observe him in his daily existence...engaged in living from moment to moment through all levels of unified being (1968:35 cf. 1972:72,127).

The key to reintegrating the divided parts of the person, then, is to focus on the moment of existential experience and action in which all identifiable aspects or faculties of the person are involved. Here all aspects of the person are interwoven:

When we ask how man functions, we find that every moment of life is a moment of total response. Every stimulus that comes to us from the world about us evokes response by the whole of our being. There is no such thing as a purely physical reaction, or a purely emotional, or a purely mental, or a purely spiritual...the lines of continuity reach off into all the rest of our being, and there is no part that is not

⁴⁾ cf. Curran, 1972:26: "the current effort is to approach man with no preconceived notion, but with an attitude of openness that does not segment him." May explains this emphasis in existential psychology in terms of the importance for the latter of phenomenology, pointing out that what is intended is not concept-free experience but a disciplined attention to the client which seeks to avoid the imposition of the counselor's conceptual framework on the client's experience (May, ed., 1969 [1961]:21-2).

to some degree involved (Curran, 1968:63 cf. 1976:19=1968:295; 1972:19,72).⁵

The Cartesian-Kantian idea of a detached, "pure" intellect is therefore inadequate, for "the world of the singular contingent where each man actually "lives and has his being," involves the total self and not simply intellectual awareness" (Curran, 1969:53).

This unified existential moment is not a passive reception of experiences, but rather an ongoing process of engagement, what Curran refers to as a 'value process'. A value for Curran is a self-investment, a meaning with which the whole person engages (1968:4,77,79,315; 1969:40). It involves action as well as cognition - "any kind of integrated *doing* is far more incarnately complex than *knowing*" (Curran, 1972:51). It is these active existential investments which define the individual person, for they are understood "in the sense of one's own definition of himself, in his own personal investment" (Curran, 1972:173); "they are those areas of knowledge out of which each individual makes and shapes - uniquely for him or herself - their own self-quest and engagement to others." (Curran, 1976:9). Authentic personal wholeness is, then, to be found in the active commitment of the whole person to personally chosen and internalized values.

While Curran, consistently with his position, often prefers emotive description to clear analytic concepts,⁶ he does give some account of the order of the various aspects of the person which are thus existentially unified, and this inevitably entails stepping out of the experiential particularity of that unity into the realm of distinctions and priorities. At the most general level, Curran sees his task as the reintegration of rational and animal, of psyche and soma, or of the cognitive and the affective (1969:208, 1972:55,90). When this is broken down further, a standard list of aspects emerges:

Human experience...is a psychosomatic experience relating soma, instincts,

5) cf. Sartre, 1957:68, on existential psychoanalysis: "The principle of this psychoanalysis is that man is a totality not a collection. Consequently he expresses himself as a whole in even his most insignificant and his most superficial behavior."

6) Cf. e.g. the following assertion: "Counseling-learning is more than a group process; it is also more than group learning. It is a common, deep, living engagement and an experience centering on the dramatic and intense dynamic process that engages people when a learning task is proposed and genuinely committed to by everyone." (Curran, 1972:32-3) This may be heart-warming, but it is difficult to see what precisely follows from it as a definition - unless any process which leads to a collective experience of warmth is Counseling-learning.

emotions, cognition and choice in a complicated and interrelated series of unifying functions (Curran, 1969:11).

A person at the end would therefore be more accepting of his whole self - soma, instincts and emotions as well as knowing and choice functions (Curran, 1969:222).

physical, instinctual, emotional, intellectual and voluntary functions are all integrated in any common activity (Curran, 1972:3).

...a total somatic-instinctive-emotional-intellectual-voluntary engagement that results in self-commitment (Curran, 1972:33).

At one end of this range are the somatic/instinctive aspects of bodily existence in the world. At the other are the intellect and the will, which have been represented in Curran's discussion by Descartes and Kant respectively. Curran's concern regarding the Cartesian-Kantian tradition was its tendency to regard intellect and will as detached from the body, and his central interest is in reuniting these separated terms. The key task of doing so is given to emotion, which emerges as the central organising term in Curran's anthropology. Mind and body are reunited through the mediation of the existential flow of affect; the tension between cognitive and bodily dimensions of experience is resolved by making the organism's flow of affect basic to cognition. Emotion is more immediately experiential than intellectual abstraction, and is the ground of value investments, making possible self-investment in what is known. This, then, is what Curran means by the "whole person"; as he puts it at one point, "one can be more of a whole person by letting his affects, his emotions, his feelings flow out" (1972:166).

This account of personhood as existential, affectively-founded self-investment already suggests the outlines of what it means for a person to know. The Cartesian heritage implanted the idea that "the knowing process is carried on best in cold, impersonal, purely symbolic terms", with the corollary that "the further that thought is removed from emotion, instinct and soma, the "purer" it is" (Curran, 1972:45). While Curran occasionally affirms the historic and present benefits of scientific knowledge (1968:22; 1972:63), he also dwells on its dangers - it is cold and detached, it distorts, masks and oversimplifies existential experience, it tends towards mechanistic and deterministic approaches, and for all these reasons it tends towards inhumanity rather than moral growth (1968:23,74,78-9; 1969:38; 1972:25,50,62,64,67;

1976:16). For Curran, knowing is inseparable from the self-investment of the whole person in what is valued: "When a person *cares* for something or someone, he has invested his *whole* person, not simply his conscious awareness" (1969:40). Therefore,

man experiences meaning through his total person, not simply intellectually. His "reasonableness" then consists in a kind of inner informing of his total person or, as we shall see, an affect-cognition intercommunication or intercourse with himself at all levels of his being (Curran, 1969:38).

This "conative" knowing, which Curran presents as a more biblical view of knowledge (1969:5, 1968:90) is bound up with action and implicates all of the interwoven aspects of the person which Curran has identified. Once again, the affective dimension is given particular prominence - this alternative way of knowing is "a combination of soma, instincts, feeling, intellectualizing, and desiring all pooled together in a cognitive feel or empathy" (Curran, 1972:74).

(ii) Essentialism - the move beyond self.

The second term in Curran's designation of his ideas as "essential existentialism" points to his concern for community. The account given thus far of the existentialist side of his account might issue in a radical individualism.⁷ If the distortion introduced by intellectual abstraction takes place "because it is withdrawing from individual, contingent, concrete experience in order to find and distil what is common and so can be shared" (Curran, 1969:38), and the place of integration is the point of contingent singularity, then what account can be given of human community? And why has there been such a tendency for us to seek to go beyond particularity to the universal?

Here Curran appeals to Sartre's definition of the person as the "being whose project is to be God" (1969:30; Sartre, 1957:63). Sartre rejects "equally the theory of malleable clay and that of the bundle of drives" in favour of a view of the person as a free project oriented toward transcendence (Sartre, 1957:61). This means that there is built into the human person a basic resistance to finitude and a drive towards infinitude:

Man tends toward perpetuating his own disincarnate, abstractive, reflective

⁷⁾ For analysis of the individualistic nature of Rogers' discussions of education, see Watt, 1989.

existence, that is, his own deification. He tends to be initially resistant, even hostile, to "pinning himself down" to the narrow confines of his "here and now" condition, and to the complexities in which his corporeality and his unconscious system engage him (Curran, 1972:64-5).

This is the initial state of the person, "both being and becoming himself and straining painfully to get beyond the limits of himself" (Curran, 1969:157).

In this becoming process, this reaching beyond self, the other is encountered - but in ambivalent guise. On the one hand existence goes beyond itself in reaching out to the other with mutual love as the goal. Each self has a basic existential need for "convalidation" (or "consensual validation" (Curran, 1972:20)), a process of mutual affirmation of worth, and virtue is "the consistent capacity to turn to others, not as rejecting or opposing oneself but as giving oneself in an act of love to others" (Curran, 1969:124). This "launching out into the depths and the wilderness of the mysteries of love" (Curran, 1969:40) is, however, complicated by the desire to be God which is the ground of personhood - for the individual's project of free transcendence the other appears as a limit, and in the self's narcissism this limit appears as a threat. The other looms on the horizon as the enemy of the self's freedom.

Curran applies to this situation the Biblical injunction to "love your enemy", which must involve "controlling our self-defense urges and so being open" (1969:33). He argues that "it is in the painful submission of the self to one's own limits and the beginning of the boundaries of the other that a movement out of narcissism is possible and the beginning of love occurs" (Curran, 1969:138). The individual needs a "therapy and maturity of limits" (1969:138), for there must be "some containment of his self-affirmation or will to power if he is not finally to delude himself" (Curran, 1969:31). As it pushes outwards beyond self, the will to power must first evoke the need for, then yield to the will to community. Sharing Rogers' emphasis on the basic reasonableness of the person when therapeutically assisted in emerging from confusion and conflicting values, Curran believes that this maturity of limits will be attained as the individual person achieves increasing personal congruence. Through the process of self-actualization, the person "moves toward others as the expression of his own more

complete person" (Curran, 1969:189).

It will be obvious by now that detachment and objectivity are not to be prominent elements in this move towards the other. The person is not to be regarded as a mechanism, as scientifically predictable or manipulable, but rather as a "*mysterium*," as "a complicated and partially unfathomable "mixture" of factors, some known, some unknown...in some measure always an unknown in the midst of unknowns, striving to know and be known and so to love and be loved" (Curran, 1968:52). Curran is actually very optimistic about the degree to which we can genuinely understand one another, but that understanding comes about through trust and attentive empathic listening, a "feel[ing] with" which involves the affective at least as much as the cognitive and which is therefore not reducible to clear concepts (1972:58,73-4,117). Despite the individual difference of our value investments, there is nonetheless a certain universality in our existential experience of "the basic and universal issues of life" (1968:82) and our deep value as persons which enables empathic understanding. Curran claims that "some common meaning in each man is emerging based on his very own person - not on birth, color or geography" (1968:40) - while the self-investment which shapes existential experience is individual, the basic affective reality of that experience is universal, and so can support mutual understanding.⁸

Theological Anthropology: Incarnate-Redemptive Process

The quest for self-transcendence is seen by Curran as an expression of the desire for God as Total Other, and Sartre's 'desire to be God' is assimilated to Augustine's identification of a basic restlessness in the human spirit (Curran, 1969:30,35,192). Curran claims explicitly that his anthropological approach comports well with Christian faith - he wishes to set against the Cartesian-Kantian tradition the "Judeo-Greco-Christian tradition of the view of man and of the human encounter as something engaging him in his whole, existent and corporeal person,

⁸⁾ This is also a theme in Rogers' work. Rogers writes that "as human beings trying to cope with life, to understand it and learn from it, we have vast pools of commonality to draw on. It makes no difference that I am an older white middle class American male, and you may be yellow or black or communist or Israeli or Arab or Russian or young or female. If we are openly willing to share, then there is a large area where understanding is possible...the national and racial and cultural issues come to seem unimportant as the person is discovered" (Rogers, 1977:122,137).

in living as well as knowing" (1972:49, cf. 1968:41; 1969:186). The idea of the person current in existential psychology is regarded by Curran as the closest contemporary reflection of this tradition.

This association of Christian thought with existential psychology is encouraged by Curran's Semi-Pelagian anthropology:

This is not a Pelagianism which denies the necessity of grace but rather the affirmation that man freely cooperates with grace. The degree of his conscious and responsible cooperation measures his path from sickness and sin to health and holiness. As an individual man is not hopelessly lost in his confusions, but has strength within himself which grace augments and supernaturalizes, so the Church of Men must strive in manly fashion for greater integrity and clearer purpose (Curran, 1969:292).

This Semi-Pelagianism enables an adaptation of Christian ideas to client-centered therapy (cf. Curran, 1968:103), with its optimistic trust in the process of self-actualization, for it holds that "the grace which is needed to fulfil man's destined end completes rather than reverses the tendency which is natural even to fallen man" (Berthold, cited in Curran 1969:182).⁹ A view of therapy in which the client gains "victory through his own efforts - granting that the counselor's gift of himself first was necessary to make this possible" (Curran, 1969:210) is thus theologically legitimated.

Sin and guilt are accordingly defined as "the absence of a desirable goodness for which one is, realistically, striving and the stimulation and urging on to greater efforts to acquire that goodness which a constructive and courageous self-ideal has produced." (Curran, 1969:124). Sin must be related to a personal God as well as to the neighbour (Curran, 1969:141), and represents an abnormality common to all (Curran, 1969:192). The feeling of guilt can, however, be manifested in constructive or destructive ways. Psychological guilt, or "the failure to achieve fulfilment in some aspect of one's own basic value system" (Curran, 1968:84), can

⁹) Rejecting total depravity (1969:182), and (somewhat misleadingly) arguing that even Luther and Calvin held to the "optimistic" idea of redemption, Curran appeals to Aquinas for a view which "emphasized strongly the natural capacity of man - even in his weakness - for a high degree of goodness and personal integration" (1969:191). This view enables "a confidence in a person's inner capacity - activated or encouraged by counseling therapy - to be and become more truly or more completely himself and therefore to be a better self" (Curran, 1969:191).

through the counseling process be made constructive, furthering the growth of the person from an unhealthy state of being "abnormally abnormal" (i.e. a sinner who is also psychologically sick) towards a more healthy state of being "normally abnormal" (a constructively engaged sinner) (Curran, 1969:192). As Curran puts it:

A conscious process through counseling therapy would not remove guilt necessarily. Often it would rather make such guilt positively constructive in furthering the achievement of the projects and goals to which the person's values direct him (Curran, 1968:84; cf. 1969:128).

A "fundamental acceptance of human weakness" is thus "coupled with an optimistic view of man's capacities for self-betterment" (Curran, 1969:191). The need for repentance is stated alongside a confidence in the basically constructive nature of the values which reside within the individual and the personal forces available for their fulfilment (Curran, 1968:85). Here again, a Christian theology and existential therapy are presented as highly compatible.

Curran goes, however, beyond establishing compatibility between theology and therapy to the suggestion of fruitful mutual illumination. He proceeds on the basis of the theory that there is "a parallel or correspondence" between psychological processes and religious realities, such that "while there is obviously a basic difference between the relationship of man with God and counseling therapy or educational relationships, these can nevertheless support and reinforce one another" (1969:175).¹⁰ This means that "conceptions generally considered theological can also shed significant light on the nature of man himself and on the encounter between men" (Curran, 1969:175). By the same token, Curran suggests that "modern developments in individual and group counseling and psychotherapy, with all their evident weaknesses, yet offer religion one of the best approaches to modern man as he really is" (1969:24).

It is on the basis of this idea of correspondence that Curran develops ideas such as

¹⁰) It should be emphasized given the considerable ease of gaining the contrary impression (see discussion of Oller's criticisms in chapter 3), that Curran states his opposition to a collapsing of theology into therapy. He writes: "we are not implying in this discussion that religion's only purpose is to act as a kind of personal therapy. It is essentially a faith, hope and love commitment to a binding relationship with God" (1969:194), and affirms that "there are aspects of religious values which are unique. Religion is not a substitute for the counseling therapy relationship or vice versa" (1969:192, cf. also 12,22).

creator/creature, incarnation, redemption, rebirth, dying to self and resurrection as key metaphors in his psychological and educational theories. The most important and the most frequently invoked of these is *incarnation*, which is used with two main meanings sharing a focus on a move from separation to (affective) integration.

The *first* sense of incarnation describes a move by the individual out of the realms of intellectualized contemplation or universalized abstraction into an acceptance and reintegration of affective, instinctive and somatic aspects of personhood, so that there is congruence between the "I" and the "myself".¹¹ As noted above, the desire to be God initially resists this incarnation:

Resistance to the limits of the human condition seems so basic that it tends to keep us intellectualized rather than allowing us immediately to enter into genuine and personal engagement with life in ourselves and others...[this] might be explained, as Sartre does, by saying man has an initial urge in the direction of being infinite rather than finite. It is almost as though, in this God-project, if one cannot totally be God, at least he can be somewhere between man and God...Man takes a risk and chances failure and self-defeat if he lets himself experience his finite condition...Personal redemption - in the meaning of having acquired a sense of one's personal value and worth - only follows upon personal incarnation (Curran, 1972:67, 1976:15).

As incarnation bears its fruit, redemption occurs in the achievement of personal congruence

11) Clients who are disgusted with themselves are in a state whereby "they themselves have never really taken upon themselves "the body of a man," with all the warmth, understanding and acceptance of themselves that such incarnation into the human condition would involve" (Curran, 1968:208; cf. 1972:59,67-8; 1976:45). Incarnation means "accepting of self and others as unified persons functioning through all aspects of their emotional, instinctive and somatic selves as well as their more immediately conscious awareness" (Curran, 1968:48).

and self-acceptance.¹² This fruit is, according to Curran, experienced as "a movement from a dead "old" self to an exciting "new" self-birth" - even a "resurrection" (1976:56=1969:223).

The *second* sense of incarnation describes the relation of an individual to a group when that individual moves from aloof detachment or superiority to a sense of identification and belonging.¹³ This both follows from and facilitates incarnation in the first sense (Curran, 1969:208).¹⁴ Once again, redemption follows upon incarnation; redemption now refers to the sense of value and dignity which is conferred upon the individual by the unconditional positive regard of others - to be "redeemed" is to be secure in being loved (Curran, 1968:99). "Each person is "redeemed" through having his personal sense of worth and value enhanced" (Curran, 1976:42).

Curran's claim in relation to the Christian dimension of his work is, then, twofold. Minimally, he sees his theories in counseling, psychotherapy and education as consistent with the way in which Christian (or more specifically Roman Catholic) theology understands the human person. More positively, he believes that terms taken from Christian theology and given fresh content can helpfully illuminate those same theories through their correspondence with existential human experience.

Social/Political/Cultural Dimensions: The Primacy of the Personal

The social and the political are not prominent categories for Curran. He shares with

12) This echoes Rogers' claim that fully functioning people should be their organism, i.e. should become more and more identified with their flow of experience, implying that "the self, as the thinker about, or tinkerer with experience, must in effect die, or at least dramatically diminish in importance for the growth forces of the experiential organism to bear their fruit" (Van Belle, 1980:49). It should also be noted, however, that Curran does not follow Rogers all the way down this path. As will be explained below, he retains in his educational writings a concern for the subject matter to be studied and the authoritative role of the teacher-knower, as well as a qualified emphasis on the cognitive. For Rogers, the flow of affect seems at times to become everything: "It seems to mean letting my experiences carry me on, in a direction which appears to be forward, toward goals that I can but dimly define, as I try to understand at least the current meaning of that experience. The sensation is that of floating with a complex stream of experience, with the fascinating possibility of trying to comprehend its ever-changing complexity" (Rogers, 1969:154). Curran, wishing to retain a role for the Church and the teacher, places more emphasis on an other-centred self-control (cf. Curran, 1969:190).

13) The teacher "becomes deeply incarnate in his understanding relationship with the conflicts and confusions of the learners" (Curran, 1972:5), with the benefit that "he could admit, without defense, his own need to belong and to give and receive. He became incarnate in the learning situation with his students" (Curran, 1968:336; cf. 1968:214; 1972:31; 1976:12,46).

14) The client "begins to face his whole self through this incarnate process with another" (Curran, 1969:208; cf. 1972:68).

other humanistic therapists the conviction that the personal *is* the political - not in the sense that the political goes all the way down, but rather in the sense that the personal goes all the way up: look after the emotions and the politics will look after themselves. Personal reform precedes social change (Curran, 1969:4). Justifying his lack of attention to social and political involvement, Curran argues that:

for all their laudable motives and purpose, social and political issues may not really engage one with persons: they may, like many other "objective" issues, lead away from and displace a truly personal relationship. In any case, in addition to the importance of these issues in themselves, they derive their ultimate significance from persons. It is this personal engagement and concern that makes such social or political involvement finally authentic (1968:26, cf.32).¹⁵

Insofar as political connections are made, these consist of an affirmation of the American democratic ideal and the claim that a humanistic approach to education is better suited to its realization than the alternatives because of its more consistent affirmation of the worth of the individual.

Cultural factors are likewise subsumed to a concern for personal affect - cultural values are presented as the result of "a kind of social counseling process" which "does not perhaps differ fundamentally from what each person must, in some measure, pursue for himself" (Curran, 1968:90). As has been seen already, that which individuals share is found on the affective level which is prior to "birth, color or geography" (Curran, 1968:40). Cultural values relate to the individual in one of two ways. They may be values in which he or she personally invests, in which case they collapse into individual values; or they may be an external layer of values which cause conflict and confusion in the individual, in which case they are to be overcome by personal investment in individual values with the aid of counseling.¹⁶ Either

15) Curran argues elsewhere in relation to a primary focus on the personal counseling process that "it is this very personal and independent self-evaluation that is the most secure guarantee against passive acceptance of abuse and corruption in the civilization itself" (1968:90), and claims: "Here is the heart of the democratic vision and process: that one may experience oneself and others in worth and wholeness" (1972:7). The political is thus reduced to affective experience.

16) "Through a series of interviews, a person usually reveals to himself a complicated overlay of values that are both confused and in conflict", and with the aid of counseling the client "redesigns his life value system" according to what will "aid him to a better use of himself" (Curran, 1968:7; cf. 1968:36,42; 1972:173).

way, significant values are basically individual.

Pedagogical Proposals

(i) Counseling-Learning

Moving from Curran's general theory of human nature to his educational proposals, it soon becomes clear that his complaints concerning existing education echo his criticisms of the Western philosophical tradition. In the Cartesian-Kantian-Newtonian tradition, "human spontaneity could only be seen as threatening...and could only with difficulty lead to learning" (Curran, 1972:45-9). With the focus on intellectual abstraction, obedience to external standards and a distant and controlling stance on the part of the teacher, learners have become "merely objects of the predictions and answers of the knower" (Curran, 1982a [1979]:136). This, says Curran, is at variance with the American democratic ideal, whereby each has equal worth (1972:15). Educational testing and selection serve the purpose of sorting learners into the restricted number of further learning opportunities. A standardized curriculum is incapable of dealing with individual interests or the pluralization of values in American society, and is therefore unlikely to result in self-invested, whole-person learning. Moreover, in existing competitive education "the "good student" is supposed to prove himself superior to others by pushing them down as he rises" (Curran, 1972:16).

Curran argues that

an incarnate-redemptive model of the educative process would stand out in sharp contrast to our present highly intellectualized, socially isolated and teacher-centered educational methods. Its aim would be to incorporate teachers and learners together in a deep relationship of human belonging, worth and sharing (1969:211).

This must go beyond the provision of counselors and the training of teachers as counselors. Curran wishes to identify learning with normal psychological growth. Learning will therefore be best catered for by a unification of counseling and education, such that rather than counseling being an adjunct to education, education becomes a form of counseling (Curran, 1972:29).

Curran asserts the principle that "a person learns in proportion to the degree that his sense of self worth is convalidated by the person whom he sees as the source, agent, and model

of his learning" (1972:20 cf. 1972:36). Therefore, in keeping with his designation of his language teaching method as "Community Language Learning", he places great emphasis on "community," defined as "living task-oriented experience between knower-teacher and learner-student" (1972:20,30).¹⁷ This reflects the emphasis in Curran's anthropology on the integrating roles of affect, of action and of existential experience. The affective barriers which hamper traditional learning, with its constant rivalry and threat of humiliation, must be overcome through a consistent effort to provide an affectively supportive communal learning environment in which the value of each is unconditionally affirmed.

In Curran's community "no-one has any special power. On the contrary, there exists a contractual bind that makes both the knower and the learners of equal value, utility and importance to one another" (Curran, 1972:32). For this reason, he resists the term "learner-centered" as a description of his methods, arguing that "the learning relationship...is neither student-centered nor teacher-centered, since both knower and learners need mutual understanding and recognition" (1972:101).¹⁸ Learning is to become a communal process involving full self-investment by the whole (cognitive-affective) person of the learner and the knower, since "for internalization to take place, the self must invest totally" (Curran, 1972:104).

Once the conditions which foster defensive affective reactions such as hostility and anxiety are removed, the learner is freed to learn in a more open and engaged way. In keeping with the emphasis in Curran's discussions of counseling on the idea that the positive force for change is in the client, who counsels him or herself,¹⁹ likewise "the person of the learner is the source and center of the learning" (Curran, 1972:22), a source which is "activated" when

17) cf. 1972:110: "If the main motivation for learning is the need of the knower and the learner to belong, and if one of the main threats to learning is nonbelonging, then an essential first condition of learning is that a sense of belonging emerge for both knower and nonknower."

18) The ambivalence of the method at this point may be seen in comments by other leading exponents. Samimy and Rardin describe CLL as "a process and learner-centered approach" (1994:381), while La Forge (1982:69) comments that "in spite of the learner-centred aspects of this dictum ['learning is persons'], the most significant person in the group is the teacher-counsellor. Group life, in the final analysis, is subject to teacher responsibility and control."

19) "The person, in talking to the counselor or therapist, is really talking to himself" (Curran, 1969:208) - "One can...rethink the counseling process and see it as a means by which the person teaches himself about himself through the counselor" (Curran, 1972:12).

barriers to communal engagement are removed (Curran, 1976:49).

Differences between education and counseling are acknowledged. In particular, while counseling is entirely focused on the gaining of self-knowledge, education is focused on a subject matter which is beyond teacher and learner (Curran, 1969:225=1972:101-2=1976:58). Curran intends no "respite from the basic discipline necessary to...genuine learning," but rather a return to "the original meaning of the word disciplina" as "a value investment, a giving of self like that of a disciple" (1972:22; c.f. 1976:14) - in other words, discipline is to be intrinsically, not extrinsically applied. It involves not simply becoming more oneself, but (in contrast to Rogers) focusing on a given task and becoming like the knower with regard to that which the knower knows (Curran, 1972:35,113). Curran is even prepared to state that "the central focus is on cognition and peripherally on affect, whereas in counseling the central focus is on the client's affect and peripherally on his cognition" (1972:127) - although this statement must be weighed against the strong focus on affect throughout Curran's exposition and against the later assertion that "the kind of cognition that we are talking about is buried right in the affect. It is not separated from it. It is simply unfolded in the center of the affect" (1972:168).²⁰ Despite these caveats, however, Curran sees his project as a "counseling-learning unification" in which counseling and learning become a single process, "counselearning" (1972:29; 1976:2; cf. 1972:107). As the order of the two formerly separate terms in the new unified concept indicates, it is counseling which provides the framework within which learning is reinterpreted.

The applications which Curran offers of his counseling-learning paradigm as a general educational method are less than extensive - they amount to some suggestions for integrating counseling interviews into the school day and a method of lecturing whereby the students take the role of counselors and reflect the lecturer's statements back in summary form as the lecture

20) This statement is made during an exposition of counseling, and so it may be objected that it describes the setting which Curran characterizes as primarily focused on affect in contrast to the more cognitive educational setting. However, in Curran's counseling model, the role of the counselor is to reflect the client's affective communication in cognitive language (*loc. cit.*), and it is this primarily cognitive response by the counselor which Curran is describing here. This view of cognition as "buried right in the affect" is, of course, what Curran's anthropological theory would lead us to expect.

proceeds. Experiments by Curran and his colleagues focused more intensively on the learning of a second language, which was seen as offering a good example both of a process often threatened by affective factors, such as learner anxiety or hostility to the foreign culture, and of the possibility of total self-investment in oral exchange. It is this area of application which is by far the most detailed and well-known.

(ii) Community Language Learning

The development of Counseling-Learning into Community Language Learning (CLL) resulted in two sets of techniques for language learning. One used a set of apparatus called the Chromacord® Teaching System which "involves the use of a moving perceptual field of a learning visual tape in combination with a codal system of eight color signal lights and keys to activate them" (Curran, 1976:63=1968:325). Learners are presented with words on the moving film and identify meanings of grammatical form using the signal lights; feedback is also given through coloured signals. Cognate words in the native language are used to bridge to foreign language words. The system can be used in various permutations for individual or group learning (see Curran 1976:61-85=1968:323-352). This branch of CLL dated quickly, remained greatly indebted to existing behaviorist models, and produced no lasting impact. It was the other set of techniques which provided the most consistent outworking of Curran's ideas in a design for teaching and learning and which made the most lasting impression, being dubbed by Stevick "classical CLL" (1980:114). In subsequent descriptions of CLL, while there is usually the necessary caveat that this is not the only form which CLL can take, it is generally this second set of techniques which is used to characterize the approach (e.g. Brown, 1977:366-7; Bolitho, 1982:81-2; Rardin, 1982:65; Stevick, 1990:72-4; Samimy and Rardin,

1994:382).²¹ It is therefore this application of the approach which will form the basis of the present discussion of Curran's work in language teaching.

The basic procedure is as follows. The learners sit in a circle, with one or more knowers (maximally one per learner) who are fluent in the target language standing outside the circle. When they wish to begin speaking, the learners begin a conversation on a topic of their choice, saying whatever they wish to say to the rest of the group. At the beginning of the learning process, learners say what they want to say in their native language. The knower, in imitation of the counselor's role in non-directive counseling, slowly repeats the learner's utterance in the target language, leaving pauses for the learner in turn to repeat the target language phrases to the group. This is designed to minimize the anxiety of both speaker and hearers - the speaker does not have to generate target language utterances at the outset, and the hearers hear target language utterances which they have already heard in their own language. As the learners' feel for the target language develops, they begin to speak directly to other members of the group in the target language, offering translations of their utterances if these are requested and turning to the knower for assistance with particular words and phrases. Throughout this process the knower makes no interventions or corrections. The conversation may be taped in such a manner that only the target language utterances of the learner are recorded - "this reinforces his sense of a new self emerging in this language" (Curran,

21) cf. Stevick, 1990:73-4. Brown, noting the difficulties of tightly defining CLL, concludes: "I have chosen to examine CLL from a unitary focus rather than diffuse the critique with so many variations that CLL no longer maintains its identity" (1977:367). There is a tendency in later adaptations of CLL for specific proposals at the level of design to give way to a general ethos or teacher attitude which does not entail or exclude any specific technique or even design. Stevick, for instance, contends that "Counseling-Learning does not rule out any techniques which existed before it, or which had their birth in theories of learning which are quite different from Curran's...What is essential is not the procedure itself, or the theory out of which the procedure arose; it is, rather, that the technique be chosen, and be used, within the kind of relationship which I hope has appeared in my discussion of the five "stages"" (Stevick, 1980:114; cf. Stevick, 1973:270; 1990:74). In Samimy's 1989 study of CLL it is hard to determine from the learning activities listed quite what is to distinguish CLL from more general communicative approaches. This may represent an attempt to find continued relevance for the approach in the face of rejection of the design, and the "classical" design does undergo various modifications at the hands of other exponents such as Rardin, La Forge and Stevick; while it is Curran's work which is the focus of attention here, I have indicated some of these revisions in footnotes to chapter 3. In view of the tendency for CLL to merge with other designs (with the addition of some kind of personal warmth), I am here following Brown in finding the point of greatest interest in the way in which the CL ethos is worked out into distinctive methodological proposals in classical CLL.

1972:147). This recording is used after the conversation is over as the basis for a discussion of grammatical issues which have arisen. As the learners reach the required level of personal security in the new medium of communication, the knower is freed to offer some correction or suggested improvement to learner utterances, but the conversation itself remains under the direction of the learners. (Curran, 1972:145-159; Stevick, 1980:115). The passive receptivity required of the traditional learner is to give way to an actively asserted agency. The learning process engendered is described by Curran using the acronym SARD ®: a foundation of Security enables learner Attention and Aggression, while a phase focused on Retention and Reflection (the playback and discussion of recorded conversation) enables increasing Discrimination (1976:6-8).

Learning proceeds through five stages (Curran, 1972:128-135; 1976:29-30=1968:307-8=1969:220-1; 1982b [1961]). In the first, the "*embryonic stage*," the learner is totally dependent on the knower to facilitate speech in the new language. The learner is in control of the content and frequency of utterances, but the target language equivalents are provided by the expert in a warm, accepting tone. The expert's non-directive, warm acceptance enables the learner to begin to overcome anxiety and therefore to lower the defensive barriers which block both community and learning by minimising openness. In the second stage, the "*self-assertion stage*," the learner, growing in confidence because of the unconditional acceptance received from both the knower and the group, and growing in ability, begins to use independently phrases learnt during the embryonic stage. This growing independence progresses further in the "*separate existence stage*," in which the learner is able to sustain conversation in the target language and assistance by the knower is resented. Expressions of anger and resentment are to be seen as a normal part of this stage, which represents a highly emotionally charged transition as independence is asserted. This stage is also described in terms of adolescence (Curran, 1972:152). As the learner moves into stage four the emphasis shifts to teacher as client and learner as counselor - the learner is now responsible to create the accepting affective conditions under which the knower can offer the rest of his or her knowledge. "The learner must recognize that he is not yet a complete knower because the teacher-knower still has more to

teach" (Curran, 1972:95). Stage four is thus referred to as the "*reversal stage*." In the final "*independent stage*" the learner is fluent and only draws on the knower for fine nuances. Only in stage three or four, when learners are sufficiently secure in their new language selves, does the knower begin to correct linguistic errors (cf. Stevick, 1973:263-4) - as learner independence increases, so the person's free project is less threatened by outside help (Curran, 1968:302=1976:25).

This process is described using a fresh application of some of Curran's key terms. Incarnation takes on a third dimension in addition to its previous meanings of moving from detached intellectualism into personal congruence or from isolation into group solidarity. These meanings are clearly still present - participants must be willing to invest their whole selves in the learning process, and must also be willing to become part of a mutually supportive learning community. In addition, the learners must move from their god-like competence in their native language into a place of ignorance, dependence, vulnerability and potential humiliation in the new language - that is, they must become *incarnate* in the new language.²² This is a process fraught with anxiety; "to offset this anxiety on the part of the learners, the knowers, trained in counseling skill, become counselors...the initial anxiety of the learner is assuaged by the security of this relationship" (Curran, 1972:129-131). The learner must accept a creaturely role over against the creator-knower if he or she is to be recreated (Curran, 1972:94-6). However, in order to make this security possible, the knower must also be willing to abandon the god-like role traditionally taken by the teacher and become in turn incarnate.²³ This means admitting his or her need to be understood and strictly limiting her or his initiative in the learning situation for the sake of giving supportive space to the learner - the knower must "be willing to "die" to his own urge to move into the learner space" (Curran, 1972:93). Through

22) "If [the learner] wishes to learn from the Spanish counselor, he must first become "incarnate;" that is, he must submit himself to the insecurity and anxiety of not knowing. In doing so, however, he is then redeemed through the sensitive understanding of the counselor" (Curran, 1976:48).

23) The "god-like teacher stance...is not only not necessary to second language learning, but to other forms of learning as well. It may in fact impede learning. On the contrary, what often seems to further learning is rather an incarnate engagement in an open relationship between knower and learner which activates in the student a steady growth in the sense of self-worth and security. This seems to draw the student out of his anxiety that, unredeemed or worthless as he is, he cannot learn this task or language and assures him of his incarnate-redemptive worth and ability" (Curran, 1976:49=1969:212).

this incarnate mutual yielding, learners and knower bring validation and thus redemption to each other. The recording and playback of the learner's utterances in the target language begin a process of rebirth; in keeping with the idea of "learning as a birthing process of a new self" (Rardin in Young, 1992:163), the learners gradually give birth to a new target language self (Curran, 1972:102; 1976:59).

Conclusion

The next chapter will offer a critique of Curran's contribution to language teaching, with particular reference to the criteria outlined in chapter one. The purpose of this chapter has been to present that contribution with the aim of elucidating the Christian claims made and of making the connections between the design advocated and the basic anthropological viewpoint clear. Themes such as the centrality of the affective dimension of selfhood, the maturity of limits which diverts the will to power into the will for community, the need for convalidation, the self-directing and self-actualizing capacities of the individual, and redemptive rebirth through incarnate engagement play a substantial role in the structuring of the learning process. The learning situation is structured with the intent of minimising the affective obstacles to a vulnerable engagement of the feelings and identity as well as the intellect of the learner. According to Rardin, "the longer teachers work with this particular approach, the more of these connections between technique and approach are made" (Rardin, 1982:65). Each of the guiding themes involves specific philosophical commitments, commitments which are ultimately placed by Curran in a religious context, and their application illustrates the role which such commitments play in the organisation of techniques into a teaching design. As Curran puts it, "the question of learning theory is...part of a still larger question involving not only values but the nature of reality itself" (1968:351). It now remains to question the adequacy of Curran's account of that reality.

Chapter 3

Power and Mutuality in Curran

Community Language Learning has never won the widespread acceptance accorded to more mainstream communicative designs. It has been widely discussed, but also frequently criticized. After briefly surveying the criticisms which others in the field of foreign and second language teaching have made of CLL, I shall turn in more detail to issues which have been neglected in the literature but which are central to the argument of this study, namely issues having to do with the relevance of a Christian understanding of the nature of the person and of interpersonal relationships.

Previous objections

There have been a variety of objections to (and defences of) Curran's proposed design. There have been criticisms first on *pragmatic* grounds; Curran's proposals, with their high degree of individual control over course content, do not reckon sufficiently with the institutional and social constraints of learning, especially testing and evaluation requirements, the ease of student transfer between schools, or the economic viability of widespread adoption of small group learning (Brown, 1977:370; Stevick, 1990:97; Legutke and Thomas, 1991:39,48). Others have objected on *professional* and *pedagogical* grounds - are language teachers either competent or willing to counsel in their second or third language or to deal with personal emotional issues in the classroom? Why should the language classroom be regarded as a suitable place for these issues to emerge? Can learners in general, as opposed to the small, monolingual groups of graduate students who participated in many of Curran's experiments, really be expected to engage in such high-risk personal disclosure in this setting? Are cognitive factors not being excessively downplayed to the detriment of learning? (Brown, 1977:369; Bolitho, 1982:81; Brumfit, 1985:81; Legutke and Thomas, 1991:39). A third kind of objection relates to the question of *contextual* applicability - should we not expect that learners with different learning styles and from different cultural backgrounds will find this approach helpful, unhelpful or even objectionable to varying degrees? (The more general sense that too

much faith was at the time being placed in gurus offering whole-package methods is related to this kind of criticism.) (Brown, 1977:368; Maley, 1983; Brumfit, 1985:86). Finally, some have objected on *epistemological* grounds - rational criticism, not intuition or experience, is the only proper basis for beliefs about language teaching (Brumfit, 1985:84).

At least some of these objections fail to go to the heart of Curran's work. For instance, if Curran's design were in fact a superior or more humane way of teaching languages, then objections in terms of institutional constraints or professional reluctance might imply the need for educational reform rather than rejection of CLL. Criticisms in terms of cultural adaptability raise an important issue and support a rejection of teaching methods as universally applicable package deals, but such criticisms clearly only hold in those cultural contexts where CLL proves unhelpful, and speak for selective use rather than outright rejection of Curran's design. Such criticisms may neglect the possibility of a culturally transformative role for pedagogy. The epistemological objection is more fundamental, but it is not clear that it amounts to much more than a rival statement of faith - from the standpoint of Curran's understanding of knowledge, it misses the point entirely (and, of course, *vice versa*).¹

Perhaps closer to the heart of Curran's concerns are the theological objections which have been raised by Oller and discussed at greater length by Stevick (Oller and Richard-Amato, 1983:xii,146; Stevick, 1990:77-95). Oller questions whether the association of language learning processes with incarnation and redemption does not load too much value onto the language learning situation and result in an idolatrous overestimation of what the teacher can offer to learners. Stevick, pointing to Curran's delimitation of his use of theological terms (see chapter 2, note 10), maintains that Oller has misunderstood Curran's use of these terms. Curran's claim is not that incarnation or redemption take place in the sense

¹) Brumfit argues that rational criticism is the only valid basis because it is public, while appeals to intuition or experience are private. Curran, as has been detailed in the previous chapter, has as a fundamental part of his project a rejection of the idea that it is necessary to abstract in order to find that which is shared - he regards existential experience as more likely to enable genuine communication than intellectual ideas. Whether Brumfit is right or not (and he does not develop a case for his contention that only rational criticism is publicly viable), it is clear from the contrast with Curran's position that he is in fact offering an alternative ideological stance (one which seeks to retain fact/value and public/private splits) rather than an internal criticism of Curran's work.

intended by Christian theology in the language classroom, but that group learning can be redemptive in some very broad sense of increased personal wholeness. While Curran's ideas are "not incompatible with a secular brand of humanism", it is also possible, suggests Stevick, to read them as reflecting the interconnection of the sacred and the secular (1990:98).

It seems to me that while idolatry will result if theological terms are transposed into education in such a way that the new use supplants rather than unfolds the old, making education a secular replacement for God's grace, Stevick is justified in claiming that there is no *a priori* reason why the Christian account of redemption should not be referred to in order to shed light on the nature of education, provided that the claims made are appropriately delimited. If a description of the language classroom as a place where God's grace may be active, or where redemptively oriented processes may be underway, begins to sound like a claim that certain language teaching procedures can in themselves redeem the person, Christian suspicions are likely to be aroused. Whether this delimitation is adequate in Curran's case is open to debate, and may depend on how charitably he is read, on which of his works are taken into account and on the particular theological viewpoint of the reader.²

It may be noted here that other theological objections are possible. Christians with evangelical or Reformed theological convictions will find Curran's Semi-Pelagian anthropology with its stress on the basic goodness of the individual, unpalatable (cf. Hodge, 1995; Ortberg, 1982). Given the way in which this anthropology is integrated with Curran's approach to counseling and to education, this is likely to lead to objections to the more learner-centered features of his pedagogy: Curran seems to assume that once affective barriers are removed, the individual will be revealed as inherently good and constructive and deep community will result in the group. This will, of course, remain an external critique if Curran's approach is found to be successfully consistent with his own theological starting point.

In the discussion that follows I shall follow a different line of criticism, one focused on

2) A significant factor in this discussion may be the fact that it is necessary to read Curran's earlier work on counseling and psychotherapy to find his more careful delimitations of the use of these terms; such qualifications are lacking in the main educational writings. Any study which focuses only on the educational works will therefore be ill-placed to make a judgement on this issue.

the philosophical dimension of Curran's concepts of the whole person and of community. This approach more directly addresses the central theme of this study - that of how self-other relationships are conceived in language learning situations. I suggest that this might also provide grounds for a more fundamental Christian critique of Curran's approach than is provided by objections to his use of theological language.

Learning in Community

Curran describes the distinctive nature of his educational approach in the following words:

It is radical, not in the popular sense of that word, but because it goes to the roots of man's unified being and of his need for social convalidation in the learning process. Learning is viewed as a unified, personal, and social experience that bestows unique and special worth on the learner. The whole person is involved in learning - not simply his understanding and memory - while he is engaged in a concomitantly deep social experience that is filled with worth and meaning for him. He is no longer seen as learning in isolation and in competition with others. He learns in and through them (1972:11-12).

Here, two of his most characteristic themes, "whole person" learning and the emphasis on community, are brought together to express his basic intent. The importance of community for the growth of the whole person is stressed in various ways. At a basic level, learning comes through others, and the learner should not be expected to reinvent or forego the heritage of human wisdom (Curran, 1968:8,75; 1969:141). Moreover, the learner needs others to convalidate his or her worth in order to gain the confidence necessary for full self-investment in learning (Curran, 1968:28,99; 1969:35,190; 1972:119; 1976:45-6), and being linked to others in love is necessary to becoming a fully functioning person -"the person needs a sustaining and aiding social structure" (Curran, 1969:13; cf. 1968:180). Given that "maturity is the capacity both to love self and yet to offer oneself as a genuine gift to others" (Curran, 1969:153), a learning situation which overcomes defensiveness and anxiety must be grounded in deep mutual trust and characterized by faith, hope and love (Curran, 1968:108, 1972:133, 1976:51). "The core of the educative process," Curran argues, "...consists in a mutual faith investment between knower and learner" (1972:140). Curran draws here on the "deep regard

for persons in communion and in relation" which marks the Christian tradition, looking to Augustine's discussions of the Trinity in support of a central concern for "communication, communion and community" (1968:37, 1969:23,188, 1976:51).³ Curran clearly shares the Christian concern for the self's relation to others which was discussed in chapter one, and wishes to build this concern into his educational theory and practice. Any problems which arise in relation to this issue are, given the high priority which he places upon it, problems which lie close to the heart of Curran's project.

"Community," like the "whole person," is a notion which is heart-warming but capable of being invested with various specific meanings. Classroom community may mean little more than that "each party should, for the time being, identify himself with the transitory conversational interests of the other" (Grice, cited in Little and Sanders, 1989:279). Or it may, following Tönnies, be a "warm and personal" *Gemeinschaft* as opposed to the more impersonal social interaction of a *Gesellschaft* (Little and Sanders, 1989:279). This is clearly closer to Curran's definition, which posits the learner as a full-bodied, totally engaged member of a warmly supportive learning community which shares together a "joy and creative satisfaction" (1972:117). The overall rhetorical effect is a warm sense of paradise regained. Few educators would repudiate this to any significant degree as a description of an attractive learning situation. Beyond their rhetorical value, however, the warm evocations of success have little definite meaning until they are given more specificity in a developed model which specifies how they are to be realized. It is here that the problems begin.

"Community" and the "Whole Person": Paradise Relost

The basic structure of Curran's model of the "whole person", with its existential integration of mind and body, was detailed in chapter two. In keeping with his approach, Curran argues that in communication in the classroom, "in contrast to intellectualizing and factualizing, cognitive-affective and affective-cognitive expressions...can be considered as the main means of communication" (1972:97). In the classroom, as in the counseling experience,

3) cf. Curran, 1968:3: "Of all the basic values that a man searches for and purposes, an authentic and genuine relationship with another person and if possible with many persons, seems to be among the most profound. If and when achieved, it becomes one of the most convalidating of all his personal fulfilments."

affect takes on an integrating role, being responsible for drawing together mind and body in unified existential experience. As a result, it also becomes the centrally defining feature of community. This understanding of community displays three related weaknesses which relate to its mode of realization, its range of interests and its basic purpose.

(i) Community as affective experience

Re-integrating a dichotomy is no guarantee of capturing the whole unless that whole was indeed made up of two complementary segments. Curran's process of reintegration, intent on reuniting mind and body through the mediation of affect, still carries the echo of the Cartesian dualism which he repudiates - the liberal application of the glue only draws attention to the original breakage. While this is clearly a response to a certain historical circumstance, i.e. to the way in which the person has typically come to be viewed, it does raise the question of whether Curran's account of the "whole person", and of that person in community, is sufficiently differentiated. On the one hand the affective dimension is narrowed, taking account only of those causes of anxiety which fit Curran's description of the incarnation-redemption process; existential anxiety, resulting from the threat to the learner's core identity of becoming incarnate in a group and a new language, is placed center-stage, while anxieties resulting from learner beliefs about successful learning, anxieties which may be heightened in the unorthodox CLL setting, are not explored (Stevick, 1973:264-5; Young, 1991:428; cf. Samimy and Rardin, 1994:387). On the other hand, the affective dimension of the person and of learning is over-emphasized, tending to absorb other aspects of the person; as has been seen above, the political, the social, and the cultural tend to be reduced to their affective moments.⁴ The learning process is then entirely restructured around this aspect (Curran, 1972:105).

The combined effect is that types of interrelation other than the affective are underemphasized or ignored and that the realization of community is narrowed to the immediate affective experience of the learning circle. For instance, the possibility of cultural

4) It is not uncommon to find Curran criticised for overemphasising the affective at the expense of the cognitive; comparison with Asher's Total Physical Response method suggests the possibility that the body might equally be underemphasised in Curran's somewhat sedentary method. Regarding affect as that which brings the body into the mind's game, Curran perhaps feels that his emphasis on affect automatically does justice to the body; if so this suggests that yet another aspect is in danger of being reduced to the affective.

or economic differences between learners playing a significant role in classroom communication is assumed to have little relevance once affective openness is achieved. Expressions of anger and hostility in the classroom are interpreted solely in terms of the affective dynamic of the learning process - the rejection of any need for guilt or apology signals an underemphasis on the ethical dimension of community. Christian ideas of community under covenant introduce ethical and fiduciary dimensions which in Curran's account are in danger of being reduced to the affective. Even in such a temporary 'community of learning', the mutual obligation to honour one another may have more do with clearly set standards rooted in a normative vision of life together and an openness to repentance and forgiveness than with values construed entirely as inner, personal self-definitions (c.f. Smith, 1997a). To an existentialist approach such as Curran's, such a sense of overarching obligation remains suspect, similar fruits being sought from trust in each learner's inner process.⁵ Once the affective aspect is trusted to hold the whole together, community is reduced to one of its constituent moments, the *feeling* of belonging.

(ii) Community as self-enclosed

The second weakness is already implicit in what has been said above. Curran's theory tends not only to reduce the description of community *within* the classroom to its affective dimension, but also to regard the learning community as essentially self-contained and unconnected in any substantial way with wider communities *beyond* the classroom. Affective barriers to and realizations of community are discussed only in relation to the group with which the learner is in immediate contact. The general optimism about the nature of the individual seems to extend to the capacity of the individual to become free from the wider social context. Conscious recognition of the values which have shaped the surrounding culture, and which through being imposed on our persons cause confusion and conflict, will give us a "freeing experience" which will enable us to enter the "new age of the person" unencumbered (Curran,

5) La Forge, reporting some difficulties commonly encountered when using CLL, states that "students...find great difficulty in functioning without some kind of well-defined social structure and purpose. The lack of structure implied by the terms 'student-centred' and 'short-term counselling' may be excuses for a lack of action by the teacher in presenting supportive structure for the students" (1982:71).

1972:38; 1982a [1979]; cf. Rardin, 1976:21). As the person, through counseling, becomes more free and integrated, he or she may choose to adopt some of the values of the culture; the cultural context, however, does not seem to be acknowledged as a significant part of the person's (or the learning community's) identity.

This is reflected in the inadequate amount of reference to the significance of other groupings outside the learning group, such as race, economic background or faith tradition (c.f. Hulmes, 1989; Maley, 1983; Scovel, 1983), for the identity and interaction of the participants, a lack which led to some of the criticisms listed above to the effect that CL is contextually limited.⁶ Where there is slight allusion to the possibility of such background factors conflicting with the values of the educational setting, they seem to represent alternative loyalties which are to be overcome through the counseling-learning process (Curran, 1972:108), and the cohesion of the immediate learning community thus seems to take precedence over commitment to other communities and their values. In CL/CLL, the learning group seems to be regarded as autonomous, a feature which does not sit well with attempts by Christian educators in many settings to re-integrate education with the family, the church and responsible involvement in the surrounding culture.

This leads to a particular weakness in CLL as an approach to foreign language learning. The relationships discussed are always binary relationships of knower-learner (and learner-learner). The actual speakers of the language learnt, together with their culture and any actual future speech situation in which learners will find themselves, go virtually unmentioned. There is an assumption that cultural differences play little role in communication as long as there is affective integration and openness - an assumption reflected in the construction of the curriculum for language study out of the internal frames of reference of the native culture learners, thus excluding perspectives from the target culture.⁷ The emphasis in Curran's

6) La Forge, recognizing this weakness, suggests an extension of CL/CLL to include a "sociolinguistic viewpoint" (1982:69). This recommendation arises, significantly, from experience of using CLL in Japan, i.e. in a cultural context different from that assumed by Curran.

7) La Forge (1982:72,79) reports and suggests correctives for a tendency toward confusion of content and process in the CLL classroom: "The CLL group may become so focused on 'process' that the 'content' goals become dim." Even here, however, "content" is understood only in terms of grammatical skills; a cultural dimension is not mentioned.

experimental classes was on languages and cultures which were close to the native language and culture of the learners, with the common ground stressed (Curran, 1982b [1961]:130). The focus for Curran is inward, on personal redemption and the birth of the new self, not outward, on contact with others in the wider world. The focus on shared existential experience leads to a downplaying of cultural difference.⁸

This must be regarded as a defect. The foreign language and culture are not simply something possessed by the teacher as knower, even as a new 'language self'; they are a reality existing beyond the educational setting. Helping learners to come to grips with that reality must be a core concern in a culturally diverse world. This is not impossible within Curran's approach, but neither is there anything in the approach which would necessarily encourage it.

(iii) Community as self-justifying

This last point raises the question of the purpose of communal learning. As a consequence of the understanding of community as a relatively self-enclosed affective experience of belonging, there seems to be little suggestion of a purpose or wider context outside the group onto which the achievement of community might open. On Stevick's highly sympathetic reading of Curran, the meeting of the individual need for convalidation seems to be the primary reason for moving to a group model which can better "foster the growth of group feeling among students, and thus...contribute toward meeting each individual's need to belong", providing a setting where each student can "explore and enjoy his own powers of originating" (Stevick, 1980:199). Weideman comments that

In the human self the...humanistic ways of language teaching find their end and ultimate purpose; there is no, or indeed very little, understanding that commitment may lead not so much to individual self-clarification and growth (or perhaps to communal experience) for its own sake, but may in fact open up the life of the individual or the group to something *outside* of itself, e.g. to the productive service of others (Weideman, 1987:160).

Here again, the aims and practice of many Christian educators point in a different direction - a striking example is Edna Greenway's account of a service-learning project in the Dominican

8) The discussion of Claire Kramsch's approach which takes up the next two chapters will provide a clear point of contrast.

Republic for learners of Spanish from the United States (Greenway, 1994). Curran's community appears to be a need of individuals more than a matrix for individuals, and is in danger of becoming self-enclosed not only in terms of the influences which it admits but also in terms of the scope of its purposive vision.

These three related weaknesses suggest that while Curran offers a great deal of reflection on the specifically affective dimension of the learning situation, reflection which has been generally seen as in some measure constructive and helpful, the learner as social, cultural, moral, accountable, fallen being with central faith commitments remains under-explored. Community relationships are, in consequence, too narrowly identified with the subjective feeling of belonging and security, and the resulting danger is of a learning experience which is turned in upon itself. This feeling may be a necessary component but it is not the whole. Its implication of a core focus on the inner experience of the self-actualizing individual raises, moreover a further question, that of the relationship between individual feeling and communal demands.

Individual versus Community.

Alongside all the glowing talk of mutuality, there appears to be a profound ambivalence regarding the question of how a meeting of individual centers of agency can come into such a state of mutuality. A close examination of the way in which individual and community are related reveals considerable tensions between the two. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Curran describes the basic nature of the person as being made up of two impulses:

There are within us two wills that are in conflict with one another. The first, the will to power over another, can be described as self-centered satisfaction in controlling another. The opposite of this is the will to community - the urge to give oneself to another and to the needs of others (1968:114).

This state of affairs is not accidental, but is rather regarded as a basic structural feature of human existence - Curran's "essential existentialism" regards the person as an existential singularity seeking to go beyond its own particularity, thus giving rise to "the conflict inherent in the human condition" (1969:29, cf. 274). The basicality of this conflict may explain why, rather than affirming the will to community over against the will to power, as might have been

expected, Curran argues that the will to power must also be affirmed:

By having this self-assertion approved and encouraged by the adults around them, children then grow in the sense of their own self-worth and esteem. They need this genuine consensual validation of their early ego-assertions, or expressions of "will to power" (1976:7).

As a result of this basic will to power, the approach of others is construed as a threat:

They are in themselves...threatening and anxiety-provoking. They are so because, as a result of their mystery and uniqueness, we cannot control or manipulate them and so protect ourselves (Curran, 1968:44, cf. 1969:32, 1972:95).

If, however, I can learn to control my primitive defensive reactions of anxiety and hostility, and recognize that my will to power must submit to the narrow confines of the empirical situation in order for any of its desires to be actualized, then an acceptance of the other as boundary becomes possible (cf. Curran, 1968:101,115; 1969:31, 1972:68):

Control of my will to power leads to community since it involves a sense of the limits of myself and the recognition of the other (Curran, 1968:114).

Once this "tempering self-containment," this "containment and cylindering of the self," is established, then the urge to give oneself to another which is the expression of the will to community can come to the fore (Curran, 1968:96,109), leading to

a balanced integration between our own rights and duties to ourselves and our own self-meaning and the rights others have and their meaning as persons and our duty and love toward them (Curran, 1969:124).

The difficulty for Curran's emphasis on community is clear. If my duties to myself are understood in terms of an affirmed quest for autonomy and are conceived as being in inherent conflict with my urge to belong, such that community is a limiting boundary rather than an enabling context, then what results is an attempt to describe a community formed of autonomous individuals who are seeking both warm belonging and complete independence.

What is of particular interest in the present context is that the effects of this basic tension can be clearly traced in Curran's design for teaching. Curran's extension of the affirmation of children's will to power to adult learners suggests several of the key issues:

An adult is then also encouraged to learn aggressively and assert his knowledge - supported by the community around him. At the same time, each individual

experiences a committed awareness of, and concern for, the community he is engaged with. This provides a learning structure balanced between the forces of self-assertion and the need to belong (1976:7).

I shall comment in more detail on four issues raised by this paragraph: i) the ways in which the affirmation of the "forces of self-assertion" becomes evident in Curran's description of learning as maximization of independence; ii) the way in which this is expressed in the encouragement to "learn aggressively"; iii) the nature of being "supported by the community" and its association with passivity, leading to knower agency and learner agency being construed as mutually exclusive; and iv) the resulting limitations in the account given of the "need to belong".

(i) The forces of self-assertion

In the initial stages of learning the learner is highly dependent on the knower, being in total need of the knower's resources in the new language but possessing none of them. There is therefore a danger that this dependence will, "unless it is carefully controlled, enhance, on the other side, the teacher-knower's will-to-power needs and satisfactions" (Curran, 1976:49). This not only signifies an unhealthy lack of limits on the knower's side, it also perpetuates learner dependence, and dependence is likened by Curran to sickness:

Illness can be thought of as similar to ignorance, in that both force the person into a kind of invalid regression where he is fearful, anxious and dependent. Growing health is the mobilization of forces within oneself that push one back out again, from a kind of imitation of the embryonic state, to self-assertion and independent self-determination. The continuum of illness to health, or the process of getting well, seems to parallel the process of learning...The self will tolerate dependency and anxiety, for which paternal or maternal embryonic support is helpful, for only so long. It then develops the courage and the self-assertion needed to plunge into an independent state (1972:103).

This rejection of dependence on others' support is identified with learning, for "it is this independent self-assertion which marks the internalization of knowledge and the complete cessation of dependency needs on the knower" (Curran, 1972:104).⁹ It is this view of the

⁹) cf. Curran, 1968:310: "the experts as language counselors had slowly to give up their "will to power" over their clients, and see them grow to be increasingly independent of them."

learning process which causes Curran to structure even the earliest stage of learning, when learner dependence is at its strongest, in such a way that learner autonomy is maximized, since "students completely control not only what is said but how it is said and, under certain conditions, they determine the nature of what is being studied" (Curran, 1968:345, cf.347). It will be recalled that learners not only choose when and even whether to speak, but also provide the course content, since it is their recorded utterances which are used as the basis for discussions of linguistic structure. This independence must precede any acknowledgement of debt - "later on, of course, there will be gratitude and appreciation. But basic to this is the person's conviction that he can be truly independent" (Curran, 1969:206-7, cf.1968:83).

(ii) Aggressive learning

This drive for independence fosters aggression. Curran claims that as learners move into the "adolescent" stage of their learning, anger and hostility are normal responses: "there is an almost dramatic determination for learning growth, which is sometimes manifested as strong self-assertion over the knower, and even anger if the learner is impeded from using what he has learned" (1972:103). This "strong self-assertion against any dependency on the knower" is the natural development of that resistance to dependency which has been fostered from the beginning:

The hesitant, insecure client comes to trust the counselor and, that trust having been made, each is at ease with the other. The indignation and anger of Stage III begin to change this and are thus a constructive force for learner independence (Curran, 1972:133).

This anger is, moreover, not only directed against the knower, but also "shows itself in direct hostility to other group members, especially if their behavior or manner seems to impede the person's progress in learning" (Curran, 1969:217). Given Curran's definition of virtue as "giving oneself in an act of love to others," (1969:124) some resistance to this open expression of hostility towards other group members might be expected; instead it is affirmed as a sign of constructive engagement, and is to be expressed "without any feeling of guilt or of a need to

apologize afterwards" (1972:102, 1969:219).¹⁰ It is as this total acceptance of the individual's will to power is experienced that the will to community will, according to Curran, emerge.

(iii) Support as passivity

This throws into relief a key difficulty in Curran's pedagogy, which is that once agency is identified with the will to power, the agency of two different individuals has to be construed as in mutually exclusive tension. With its association of intersubjectivity with conflicting agencies, this construal leaves little sense of positive mutual interconnection. This becomes evident in various oppositions in Curran's account. First, knower and learner agency are characterized using spatial metaphors: knower and learner, in their mutually exclusive will to power, are rivals for the same space:

One way of explaining this kind of hostility and resistance on the part of the learner is to consider such an experience as an encroachment by the knower into the space of the learner...if the knower projects himself into that space, allowing no room in it for the learner, he destroys any opportunity for the learner to expand into it...In allowing the learner to occupy all the learning space, the knower must be willing to "die" to his own urge to move into the learner space, for it is only in allowing the learner himself to fill that space that the knower can bring about new life, both in himself and in the learner (Curran, 1972:91-93).¹¹

The space between knower and learner is not a space where they can meet and interact, a space which bears the interweaving traces of both, but rather a receptacle which must be exclusively filled by either one or the other, a site of competing territorial claims. Learning becomes a struggle for property rights.

Second, there is an opposition between interior and exterior in which the former is associated with the realm of the individual's sovereignty while the latter represents the threat of

10) cf. Rardin, 1976:21; the only context in which this hostility is spoken of as destructive is if it is covered over by learning activity and not openly expressed (Curran, 1972:91) - the only possible sin seems to be lack of emotional authenticity. Curran's trust that this authentically expressed hostility is a positive dynamic may be compared with Bolitho's report that "on one occasion...I had to intervene and suspend a session when two students with a hearty contempt for each other used the freedom of the CLL situation to vent their aggression on each other" (1982:85).

11) cf. Curran, 1968:114: "Often one of the chief values in acquiring counseling skills is that they enable us to control our own wilfulness toward others, to repress our own urges toward assertion of power over them...such intervention may weaken a person's own urge to the self-affirmation of maturity by making him more dependent. But by recognizing my own limits as a counselor or therapist, I am giving the other person his place."

control by the other. The "reflective" phase of learning is "intended to increase the internalization-identification of the learner as, say, a "French" person and to decrease the external existence of...the counselor-expert" (Curran, 1972:131). This emphasis on inner self-investment is accompanied by a resistance to outside input:

the difficulty in prescription or advice, even when correct, is that it assumes a kind of superiority over the advisee that produces resistance and a lack of cooperation...the person may be impeded by being told from the *outside* what he "ought" to do and what he "ought" to know (Curran, 1972:99, 104, cf. 1968:350).¹²

Such outside intervention is rendered unappealing through rhetorical association with manipulation and force - "the personality is not changed by being forced from the outside like a machine" (Curran, 1968:70, cf. 1968:337). The positive force for change, the "unique and personal learning potential", is within the learner; it "is known only to the learner himself, and only he can unfold and activate it" (Curran, 1969:225=1976:58, cf. 1968:59; Rardin, 1982:62). The learning process is located inside the learner rather than intersubjectively including learner and knower.

A third opposition is that between activity and passivity: there is a repeated assumption that in order for the learner to become active, the knower's agency must be suspended. Curran writes of the self-assertive learning process that

this process can be depended upon to occur provided that nothing is done to impede, interrupt, or conflict with it...The physician, too, is often thought of as someone who has learned to do the things that do not impede nature's process of enabling the person to become healthy again; he is often the one who merely removes the impediments to nature's process. The teacher, likewise, may be seen as someone like the counselor and physician who creates those conditions which enable the internal forces in the person himself to move toward the independent learning growth process (1972:104).

Counselors in the experimental classes made observations such as the following:

12) As Stevick puts it, the client/learner must "work and speak out of his own wholeness, which is unlike the wholeness of any other person" instead of becoming "entangled in the ... web of the understander's expectations" (1980:101). As with Rogers, the expectations and demands of the other are portrayed as fundamentally threatening to personal congruence.

It is important that there be in me no willing or wishing, but a relaxed state of almost passiveness, which is, however, creative as it provides additional creative force to the other person.

I am participating in one continuous flow of thoughts that goes through me in two directions...I am participating in a passive role, giving myself to what they want to say, not producing something myself (Curran, 1968:311-2=1982b [1961]:128).

The theme of agency as aggression, discussed above, fits the same pattern - elsewhere, Curran asserts that "the very fact that learners in this process begin by speaking puts them in an assertive or aggressive position" (1982a [1979]:143). Curran can even speak of "the learner, whose cooperation in letting...keys enter, submitting to the aggression of the key-turning process of the knower, and then in turn actively being aggressive to pull the bar in the lock, is equally important to the entire process" (1982a [1979]:138). Leaving aside the inconsistency of the images of passivity and aggression presented for the teacher's role, underlying both is a recurring sense that knower and learner can assert themselves only *alternately*. The knower exerts agency in structuring the learning situation, but structures it in such a way that he or she is contained in order to allow maximum space for learner agency.

This dynamic of alternating agency is expressed frequently in metaphors of death: To the extent that the knower freely undergoes a constructive death-wish for himself (which is simultaneously a life-wish for the learner), the learner experiences a know-feel learning space into which he can expand. The knower self-destructs while the learner self-constructs. Obstruction to learning, therefore, is removed in inverse ratio of knower destruct to learner construct (Curran, 1972:93, cf.140).

It would seem that knower and learner can only live at each other's expense, and indeed the knower is spoken of as under threat of "annihilation" and of being "devoured" (1972:92) as the learners' independence grows - "he is ceasing to be a knower to the other and is becoming, in a sense, "nonexistent"" (Curran, 1972:95). This "annihilation" of the knower is built into the teaching design in the form of the language counselor's passivity:

if a question were to be asked, the language counselor would not answer it because he is trained to accept his state of "nonexistence." He has his existence only in and through his client (Curran, 1972:148-9, cf. 130).

As the learning process reaches its final stage, the state of knower power versus learner dependence has been reversed, and the learner now is in a position of power over the knower, whose role is to be "reinforcing and reassuring, especially in his silence" (Curran, 1969:221). Because of the requirement that both the knower and other group members must affirm the learner's will to power in order to minimize the learner's perception of the other as threat, the kind of support offered by both knower and group, even in the face of anger and hostility, is a passively supportive presence, designed to maximize the engagement of the learner's own learning resources.¹³

(iv) The need to belong

As already noted, the maturing process is to lead to a balance between the rights of the independent individual and a sense of belonging to the group, and there is much warm rhetoric in favor of learning as a community experience. The dynamics described above, however, make the relationship between the model of educational processes and the desired outcome of mutually supportive community deeply problematic. Curran comments that

Such mutual self-investment is possible in a truly understanding relationship which does not involve either approval or disapproval, either agreement or disagreement. There is simply an "unconditional positive regard" for each other, or what we would call an "incarnate-redemptive regard" (1976:47).

Mutual self-investment seems to require mutual abstention from allowing one's distinctive stance to come into play - that creative communication, "which involves not an expression of the segmented self but a total openness of the self" and which "would have to be present in an authentic community", apparently does not include total openness of the evaluating self (Curran, 1972:30).¹⁴ Despite all the talk of the "whole person", it seems that those persons

13) An inversion of this dynamic can be seen as the learners take on the counselor's role. In the lecturing method which was briefly described in chapter two, one or more students are responsible for reflecting the lecturer's utterances back to him or her in the style of a Rogerian counselor. In a transcript of such a session, the lecture is abruptly halted and the process regarded as sabotaged as soon as a student offers any of his or her own thoughts rather than simply reflecting back what the lecturer said (Curran, 1972:178-9). Curran's approach can thus by turns appear learner-centered and authoritarian, depending on whose turn it is to assert power over the other.

14) cf. Stevick, 1980:101: "The "counselor" avoids criticizing what the other person says, of course. But he is equally careful to keep from agreeing with it or praising it. To do either would be to put himself in the position of a judge." Stevick questions this, pointing out that "in some situations, it is appropriate to agree, to commiserate, even to raise objections" (1980:105).

who can come into mutuality must at the moment of meeting be somewhat evacuated of their commitments. Each is involved in the "reasonable pursuit of his own excellence without encroaching on others" (Curran, 1969:215=1976:51), and meeting can only take place if the self is first evacuated of difference.¹⁵

Curran and his Sources

The difficulties which have been outlined above do not spring directly from Curran's core concerns, or even from the mere attempt to apply therapeutic ideas to language teaching.¹⁶ In fact it may seem curious that a design which claims as its distinctives a desire to honor the whole person and to emphasize loving, trusting community should end up in danger of reducing the whole person to affective experience and community to an incipiently conflictual interaction of autonomous individual agents. Given Curran's claim to be in the business of redistributing power evenly among the learning community (Curran, 1972:32), why does he repeatedly imply that learning takes place by an alternation of assertions of power? Here the burden of Curran's debt to some of his sources in existential philosophy and psychology becomes apparent. I shall substantiate this point by adding to the passing references already made a slightly more extended discussion of the parallels between Curran's thought and that of Jean-Paul Sartre and Carl Rogers, two of Curran's most significant influences.¹⁷

Sartre, as has been noted, understands the person as a free project oriented towards transcendence, a center of infinite possibilities. "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself", and therefore "can no longer want but one thing, and that is freedom, as the basis of all values" (Sartre, 1957:15,45). He does not, however, intend this to imply a collection of

15) As one might expect from Curran's acceptance of existing conceptions of democracy, this perspective coheres well with the modern liberal strategy of bracketing differences in order to delineate a shared public space uncomplicated by their presence. Consideration of Kramsch's work, which is sensitive to the oppressions which have resulted from the submergence of difference and sympathetic to a more postmodern foregrounding of differences, will provide a contrast in relation to this point.

16) As Brown (1977:367) notes, there were and are other models of therapy which could be applied; it is Curran's application of a specifically Rogerian approach which structures his method.

17) The following discussion is not intended to suggest that these two thinkers are the sources of all of Curran's key ideas, nor should it be taken as implying any relationship of dependence between Sartre and Rogers. Curran interacts with a range of psychological and theological literature. Ideas from Sartre and Rogers do, however, seem to play a strong shaping role in Curran's anthropological and therapeutic views and do exhibit some affinity with each other at certain points.

monadic subjectivities without essential interconnection - he looks for a "fundamental transcending connection with the Other which would be constitutive of each consciousness in its very upsurge" (1966 [1956]:315). Drawing on the "richness and profundity of the detailed insights with which the theory of the Master and Slave is filled to overflowing" (1966 [1956]:322; Hegel, 1971:171-176), Sartre follows Hegel in regarding the being of others as based on a negation - the other is "the self which *is not* myself", founded on a "double, reciprocal relation of exclusion" (1966 [1956]:312,319).¹⁸⁾ His objection to Hegel's account is that being is associated with knowledge rather than concrete existence - he turns from (*epistemo*)logical relations as a basis for self-other relations to the individual's *affective* experience of shame, fear and pride when another's gaze is felt (1966 [1956]:387).

This encounter with the evaluating gaze of another brings a basic threat to the transcendent possibilities of the subject. Until now, the objects around me were objects in my world, organized by my subjectivity. Suddenly, with the arrival of another subject, "an object has appeared which has stolen the world from me," bringing about the "total disintegration of the universe" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:342,344). By the appearance of this other subject, "I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:302). Thus I perceive "my transcendence transcended", "the death of my possibility" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:352,354) - for this reason Sartre asserts that "my original fall is the existence of the Other" (1966 [1956]:352), for "nothing can limit me except the Other" (1966 [1956]:382).

This fall places the individual in a quandary. The Other brings me both shame and new self-awareness - I "need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:303), yet I must also pursue the death of the Other, the reduction of the

18) Sartre distinguishes external and internal negation. Here he intends not an external negation which would result in separate monads, but rather an internal, connecting negation, a "synthetic, active connection of the two terms, each one of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the other" (1966:339). This negation "posits the original distinction between the Other and Myself as being such that it determines me by means of the Other and determines the Other by means of me" (1966:315).

other to an object, in order to regain my own possibilities (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:319,394).¹⁹ This struggle for subjectivity can have no harmonious resolution - "so long as consciousnesses exist, the separation and conflict of consciousness will remain" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:329). Self and Other are both intrinsically related and in fundamental opposition to each other. The Other's subjectivity must be faced as a threat, for "the Other...cannot without contradiction appear to us as organizing our experience: there would be in this an over-determination of the phenomenon" (Sartre, 1966 [1956]:307).²⁰ Subjective possibility can only be maintained in the suspension of the subjectivity of the Other. While I cannot escape the Other, as subject "I carry the weight of the world by myself alone without anything or any person being able to lighten it" (Sartre, 1957:57).

Rogers does not share Sartre's pessimism - quite the opposite; he does, however, share some of Sartre's existentialist emphases. For Rogers too, individual freedom is a core value.

The fully functioning person

increasingly comes to feel that [the] locus of evaluation lies within himself...He recognizes that it rests within himself to choose; that the only question which matters is, "Am I living in a way which is deeply satisfying to me, and which truly expresses me?" This I think is perhaps *the* most important question for the creative individual (Rogers, 1966:119).

This freedom will be realized as the individual more fully becomes a person, a term which for Rogers indicates "the goal, or end-product of a process of becoming autonomous, self-sufficient, free, self-valuing and experientially oriented" (Van Belle, 1980:154). This free individual will live existentially, focused on and open to the full range of present experience and guided by what feels right; consciousness is no longer a "watchman", but rather "the comfortable inhabitant of a society of impulses and feelings and thoughts" (Rogers, 1966:119).

The greatest threat to the forces of self-actualization which reside within the individual is the distortion which comes through the evaluations of others, evaluations which are made from

19) Sartre speaks of the "discovery of a world which we shall call intersubjectivity", but defines this as "the world in which man decides what he is and what others are" (1957:38). It appears that this "intersubjectivity" only works as long as one of the subjects is an object.

20) It is worth pausing to reflect on the implications of this statement for the role of a teacher, or rather the negation of that role.

within their frames of reference and imposed upon the evaluated individual, changing that individual from a subject into an object.²¹ The individual must be freed from the judgments of others and of society. This leads to Rogers' emphasis on unconditional positive regard and the non-directive nature of the counseling relationship, as well as to his reluctance to retain the idea of teaching - if the other refrains from evaluating me, then the threat posed by that other is removed, and interpersonal relationship becomes possible (Rogers, 1977:139).

Such a relationship will be characterized by warmth and openness, but the autonomy of the individual remains primary in it. For Rogers, the group process is inter-personal "in the sense that its material, its content is necessarily the expression, the interplay and the facilitation of the internal frames of reference of the participants" (Van Belle, 1980:66), i.e. in the sense that it is an interaction of persons in the Rogerian sense. This means that there is no sense of community having a distinctive value - interpersonal relationships are seen as valuable to the degree that they enhance the individual's self-actualization. What is sought is an "approach to human relationships and human growth which recognizes that the potential to learn and the power to act lie *within* the person" (Rogers, 1977:151).²² Rogers reports the comment of a workshop participant that "I am so in touch with my power...Somehow a support group right now is less urgent than I expected, because there is so much more of me!" (Rogers, 1977:179; cf. Van Belle, 1980:66).

Clearly there are dissimilarities between Rogers and Sartre, as well as between both thinkers and Curran. Curran departs, for instance, from Rogers in seeking to retain a strong structuring role for the teacher, and from Sartre in emphasising the role of faith, hope and love, as opposed to fear, shame and pride in the achievement of genuine human community. He also tries to resituate their ideas in a Christian context by finding parallels in such thinkers

21) "Conditional regard by one person for another, that is, regard for that person, or aspects of him, which evaluates him or what he does in terms other than his own frame of reference tends to have a stultifying effect on the intrapersonal actualization process of that person. This happens because in giving conditional regard we perceive him as a perceptual object in our experiential field, rather than as a subject in his own right" (Van Belle, 1980:90).

22) cf Van Belle, 1980:154: "A "person" is thus a human being who works out his destiny, independent of any social support and free from any outside interference. This view of the person differs markedly from a dialogical view of the person which stresses the inherent relatedness of individual human beings to other human beings". I shall have cause to return to this observation in the final chapter.

as Augustine or Aquinas. However, there are clearly many echoes of Sartre and Rogers in Curran's work, and some of their basic assumptions resurface, perhaps unbidden, in his theories. Once the autonomous freedom of the subject (the desire to be God which issues in the will to power) is affirmed as basic to (rather than, for instance, a distortion of) personhood, the mere existence of the other becomes inherently threatening. If my subjectivity is my sovereign realm defined by the exclusion of the other and limited by the presence of the other, then the possible interference of the other becomes equally threatening. The other subject will render me an object.²³ If Sartre's pessimistic acceptance of perpetual conflict is regarded as unwelcome (as it is for Curran and Rogers), and a desire to affirm and achieve community exists, then it becomes necessary to introduce self to other in a way which minimizes the threat. Thus the other's (the teacher's or counselor's) subjective agency is minimized in order to provide maximum retention of autonomy for the self. It is the outcome of this basic logic which has been explored in the last two chapters in Curran's theoretical statements and in the structure of his pedagogical design.²⁴

As a result of this tension between individual self-actualization and community belonging, certain counter-themes which can be found in Curran's writings remain undeveloped in his pedagogy. In his discussion of sin and guilt, for instance, Curran suggests in relation to the achievement of a mature sense of limits that

Valid ethical imperatives should, it seems, aid this, sometimes even by painful confrontation, in order to make one aware of one's disguised narcissism...permissiveness is not always loving; it can, in fact, simply be not caring enough to intervene. So confrontation is not necessarily rejecting.
(1969:138-140)

Some standard outside the self is necessary, for "to become oneself the tribunal of oneself is to be alienated" (Curran, 1969:141, citing Ricoeur). There is a valid impulse to struggle against what is, but

such impulses need the cautions of the Old and New Testament and the inherent

23) cf. Curran, 1968:58: "when one attempts to "figure out" another, when one tries to "get his number" for the purpose of cataloguing him, one generally ends up by "getting his goat" instead...The living being asserts himself in all his conscious and unconscious powers of resistance, attack, escape withdrawal."

24) I have presented some of the arguments of these chapters in more concise form in Smith, forthcoming.

respect for law, with all its inadequacies, that the Judaeo-Christian tradition has maintained (1969:139-140).

In similar vein, Curran notes that sin "connotes a dimension of offense against not only oneself and others, but more basically, against God," and requires "some formal, conscious repentance" and "the acceptance...of the restoration of the divine love relationship" (Curran, 1968:85).

Curran's theological discussions include, then, various acknowledgements of standards to which the individual is accountable and of the possibility that such standards might be constructive rather than intrusive for the individual. Such reflections might point to a more positive role in the educational process for standards and norms which are not designed autonomously by the learners in their interaction, but which might nonetheless demonstrate care rather than manipulation. The theological cautions, however, fall prey to the tensions already described when the focus turns to counseling and education.

In the therapeutic context Curran associates these external standards with the limits to the self which must be painfully faced in order to emerge from narcissism, limits which have been associated with the other's threat to the individual's will to power (1969:138-140). I have described above how the minimizing of this threat through evacuating the other's agency and affirming the self's aggression is the path along which, it is hoped, the will to community will emerge. Are we then to conclude that these ethical imperatives outside the self are also only constructive if held in abeyance, or does the assertion that confrontation can be loving point to different possibilities? Is resistance to such ethical imperatives sin, and if so, is the will to power abnormal? Or, if sin is the absence of a goodness for which one is striving (Curran, 1969:124), is such resistance only sin if the imperative in question is owned as a personal value? If the will to power is connected with sin and the ethical imperatives which challenge it are valid, then why is hostility towards others affirmed as part of normal growth? Such questions indicate some of the tensions in Curran's account in relation to these issues.

Regarding education there are also statements which seem to run counter to the framework put forward by Curran. Curran argues that "conscience needs education. It does not

function adequately on complex issues without education and guidance" (1969:139). He observes (in my view quite correctly) that learning requires that the learners "recognize that some aspect of their being is owed to another" (Curran, 1972:96). Elsewhere, however, dependence on another is to be regarded as a sickness to be overcome through self-assertion, and aggression towards the knower is accepted as growth. Once again the passing recognition of a possible positive role for the other's agency is undermined by a framework which construes intersubjectivity as conflict.

On the one hand we have indications of a theologically motivated desire to affirm the person's accountability to ethical imperatives and openness to receiving from others. On the other, and more dominantly, we find an articulation of an approach to therapy and education in which riches are found within, threats abound without and aggression towards the other is the path of growth. The structure of Curran's pedagogy seems to cohere better with a focus on individual autonomy with its accompanying ideal of avoidance of outside interference, than with an affirmation of intersubjective mutuality. If confrontation can be love, if concern for standards outside the self can be constructive, if we are implicated in each other's being and must learn that we have received from another, if repentance has an important role to play, then it is not clear why the role of the knower should as far as possible approach passivity, why all choices must be in the hands of the learners, why the will to power and the sense of maximal independence should be fostered, and why there should be openness to hostility being expressed towards others without guilt or apology. If a mutually edifying relationship with another is possible, then the only thing which is annihilated by the growth of the other is the spurious claim to radical autonomy and power over the other.

Conclusion

It seems that the existentialist anthropology adopted by Curran works against certain of his stated Christian intentions. His work is characterized by conflicting themes - on the one hand an affirmation of belonging in a community of love which is motivated by Christian concerns, and on the other an emphasis on the autonomous freedom of the individual and the location of growth and power within the individual which has Sartrean and Rogerian roots.

These themes emerge in a basic conflict between a will to power and a will to community, a conflict which leads to "a learning structure balanced between the forces of self-assertion and the need to belong" (Curran, 1976:8). It seems to me that Curran is quite right and following sound Christian instincts when he emphasizes the need for trust, faith, hope and love in the classroom context. These aims are consistent with the anthropological perspective outlined in chapter one. As he develops a detailed model of his learning structure, though, his considerable debt to certain strands of existentialist thought seems to push the forces of self-assertion to the fore, with the consequent truncation of knower and sometimes learner agency. Curran's work thus shows that it is possible for a language teaching design to be in tension with a basic Christian assumption. Even more significantly, it shows that this can be the case even when its author affirms that assumption, a fact which suggests that for a consistent Christian approach to language education such assumptions cannot be left at the level of broad statements of intent, but must be reflected in the structure of classroom designs.²⁵ I shall return to further discussion of these points in the final chapter; first, however, I shall expand the basis for that discussion with an examination of related themes in the more recent work of Claire Kramsch.

25) A briefer treatment of parts of the argument of this chapter can be found in Smith, forthcoming.

Chapter 4

Claire Kramsch: Critical Language Pedagogy

Curran and Kramsch - Contrasting Approaches

Alongside his approach to language teaching Charles A. Curran offered an explicitly developed theory of the human person; Claire Kramsch does not. Curran produced a detailed design which has become distinctively associated with his approach; Kramsch has not. Curran makes psychological categories primary, rendering theories of language and of culture at best peripheral; for Kramsch this order of priority is reversed. Curran aligned himself with humanist psychology, emphasizing the primacy of individual experience; Kramsch identifies with a critical pedagogy which is suspicious of such emphases. Curran envisages a meeting of selves in which differences are suspended; Kramsch displays a more postmodern emphasis on the disruption of sameness and the emergence of difference. Curran claimed Christian inspiration for his basic perspective; Kramsch makes no such claim. These are a few of the principal points of contrast between the two thinkers, points which make a comparison of their work in the light of the question being investigated here particularly interesting.

An evaluative comparison of Curran's and Kramsch's work will be attempted in the final chapter. The next two chapters will adopt the same order of presentation as was followed with Curran, offering first an exposition of Kramsch's recent discussions of a critical foreign language pedagogy (chapter 4) and then a more critical discussion of themes which are particularly relevant to the present study (chapter 5). I will begin by outlining some of the background to Kramsch's approach.

Background and Orientation of Kramsch's Work¹

The starting point for Kramsch's work lies within the mainstream tradition of communicative language teaching. This broad movement shifted the focus of attention away

1) As Kramsch would herself be quick to emphasize, in selecting particular contexts within which to discuss her work and passing more swiftly over others (e.g. the work of Halliday) I am constructing a particular picture of her work with selective emphases. It is not claimed that the thinkers discussed here are the only significant sources for Kramsch's work. The emphases selected are the ones most relevant to the present line of inquiry, and do represent not only a significant strand of Kramsch's work but also important features of the overall orientation espoused in her confessed alignment to critical pedagogy.

from linguistic competence, or the mastery of rules and structures, towards communicative competence. Dell Hymes argued influentially that the idea of linguistic competence must be broadened to include "knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical but also as appropriate" (Hymes, 1972:277). Communicative competence came to be understood as "knowing not only the language code, but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation" (Saville-Troike, cited in Williams, 1992:179) - grammatically correct sentences can be socially and culturally wrong, and vice versa. This shift of focus gave rise to a variety of communicative designs for teaching and learning, sharing an emphasis on learning to use language to communicate rather than mastering language as a structure and an emphasis on correctness as appropriateness to interactional norms rather than as conformity to grammatical structures.

Kramsch identifies her work as a communicative approach and states that she does not wish to lose the momentum which communicative approaches to language teaching have generated (1993a:70,96). She is, however, quite critical in her recent writings of some of its major assumptions, and wishes to revise the theoretical framework within which communicative pedagogy is designed.² She states that "after years of communicative euphoria, some language teachers are becoming dissatisfied with purely functional uses of language" (1995b:83), and proposes a way forward which places an increased emphasis on the cultural dimension of discourse. Although it only receives passing mention, Kramsch's treatment of Curran's favorite theme of the "whole person" is revealing of her somewhat different range of interests:

FLL [Foreign Language Learning] is oriented towards the learner, but the whole learner, in his or her biological, neurological, psychological, social, affective and personal make-up. FLL takes an integrative view of the learner drawing on a

2) The following discussion of Kramsch's approach will focus mainly on her publications since 1987, for it is in these that the themes characteristic of her critical foreign language pedagogy begin to clearly emerge. Her earlier publications are closer to conventional communicative pedagogy, and share with it some assumptions which are abandoned and contested in later writings. For instance, there is in earlier essays a confidence in the possibility of bridging cultural difference through abstract overarching constructs or universal principles and a view of communication as governed by shared rules which are, as will be seen below, emphatically repudiated in her more recent work (see Kramsch, 1983a:443; 1983b:175-6; 1983c:14; 1984:15,77-79 (where Curran's work is described in positive terms); 1985a:170,178; 1986:367; 1987a:98).

variety of related fields: psycho- and sociolinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, information-processing theory, cultural anthropology and ethnography, literacy studies and teaching of English as a second language, and even foreign language policy (Kramsch, 1990:29).

While Curran's "whole person" was understood primarily in affective categories, Kramsch's "integrative view" of the learner foregrounds linguistic, socio-cultural and political categories. It is in fact at the intersection of language and culture that Kramsch's attention is focused. She identifies her approach to language teaching as a "critical language pedagogy that values dissent, dialogue and double-voiced discourse" (1993a:13). She relates her conception of critical pedagogy principally to the work of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux (Kramsch, 1993a:243); the idea of double-voiced discourse is drawn from the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:12; Kramsch, 1993a:27), which has also significantly influenced Giroux (Giroux, 1997c [1986]:122). Before turning to a more detailed account of Kramsch's views, including her use of Bakhtinian themes, I will first outline as a necessary backdrop the tradition of critical pedagogy inspired by Freire and articulated in the contemporary context by Giroux.

(i) Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Freire, like Rogers, developed a radical pedagogy in the 1960s and 1970s. His concern was to develop a pedagogy which would contribute to the liberation of the oppressed (Freire initially had in mind the poor of Latin America) from their oppression at the hands of dominant elites. Freire argues that traditional educational methods turn learners into objects of the educational process; the use of such methods with the oppressed, even by revolutionary leaders, cannot serve liberatory goals, for such use confirms their loss of voice and their reduction to the status of objects of others' cultural action. The difficulty is that oppression creates in the oppressed an inauthentic fatalism, fear of freedom and adherence to the values of the oppressor; "their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression" (Freire, 1996 [1970]:27). Thus Freire states that:

The central problem is this: How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they

discover themselves to be the "hosts" of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy (1996 [1970]:30).

A liberatory pedagogy must therefore promote as a primary priority this discovery of the relationships, contradictions and causes which are shaping the learners' existential situation, a discovery which must, moreover, go beyond mere perception to praxis, that is action grounded in critical reflection. This deepening awareness, which leads the learner out of that submersion in the situation which renders the situation invisible and "normal", is termed "conscientization" ("conscientização") by Freire.³ It requires that the situation be posed as a problem to learners, rather than taught to them through a transmission of information, in order for them to gain the status of subjects of their own critical action. Conscientization can only emerge from a "dialogic" pedagogy in which cultural workers and the oppressed work in cooperation to make the essential conflict between oppressor and oppressed visible and to turn it into revolutionary struggle.

(ii) Giroux's Critical Pedagogy

Giroux's educational theories have been developed in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s. While Freire's work is an important source (Giroux, 1997c [1986]:122), Giroux's development of critical pedagogical themes places them in a new context and a new key. He shifts the main focus to questions of language, identity and the production of meaning - "how we are constituted in language is no less important than how we are constructed as subjects within relations of production" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:116). Drawing on postmodern thought, he rejects the "humanist notion of the subject as a free, unified, stable and coherent self" in favour of a view of the human subject as multi-layered and founded in difference, "a terrain of conflict and struggle,...a site of both liberation and subjugation" (1997d [1990]:202-

3) cf. Freire, 1996 [1970]:90: "Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very conditions of existence: critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be "in a situation." Only as this situation ceases to present itself as a dense, enveloping reality or a tormenting blind alley, and they come to perceive it as an objective-problematic situation - only then can commitment exist. Humankind emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality - historical awareness itself - thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientização of the situation. Conscientização is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence."

3). The struggle referred to here is a struggle played out in discourse, a struggle for meaning, for the right to name experience and the world. Language and power are intertwined; in language the meanings which legitimate specific ideologies are constructed, maintained and contested (Giroux, 1989:143-4). Discourse is, in short, "the power which one is striving to seize" (Giroux, 1989:144, citing Foucault). It is from and amid this existing, conflicting array of ideological positions that the individual constructs, or authors, his or her subjectivity.

Despite his emphasis on the embeddedness of the subject in social discourses, Giroux is critical of theories of education and ideology on both the left and the right which emphasize the school as a site of cultural reproduction and stress the deterministic hegemony of dominant ideologies (1997c [1986]). He emphasizes an emancipatory agency which is not only shaped by existing discourses, but can also contest them. The possibility of resistance requires a continued focus on "consciousness and the possibility of a critical monitoring of the relationship between consciousness and the structures and ideologies that make up the dominant society" (1997b [1983]:80). This means that the voices, experiences, desires and pleasures of students, as well as popular culture, must be affirmed over against the repressions of the dominant culture, but also that those same voices, given their implication in the ideological conflicts of society, must be critically interrogated for their oppressive elements as well as their emancipatory potential. As Giroux comments, "experience has to be read critically: it never speaks for itself" (1992:158). Students are to be made aware of their own role in the production of knowledge and meaning and the naming of reality. Conscientization here means an awareness of alternative readings of the experienced world, of how those alternative readings are suppressed by dominant discourses, and of the limitations and contradictions of those dominant discourses (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:121,127).

This emphasis on emancipatory critique reflects Giroux's intention of retaining some distinctive themes of modernity (1997d [1990]:190). He seeks to combine a modern emphasis on emancipation with a postmodern rejection of the idea of a universal rationality, arguing that we need to combine the modernist emphasis on the capacity of individuals to use critical reason in addressing public life with a critical postmodernist concern with

how we might experience agency in a world constituted in differences unsupported by transcendent phenomena or metaphysical guarantees (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:117).

The emancipatory goal is a radical democracy grounded in permanent difference and the empowerment of subordinated groups. Here Freire's paradox re-emerges - how can subjects constructed from existing discourses come to critique those discourses? In response, difference and emancipation are brought into alliance. The existing ideological terrain is full of contradictions, and so gives rise to multiple subjectivities (Giroux, 1997b [1983]:77), and critique seems to emerge for Giroux from the dialectical interplay of differences, especially as the margins are affirmed in opposition to the center (1997b [1983]:81; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:141).⁴ In this struggle for critical agency, all perspectives are partial, any claimed harmony is mistrusted, and it is the political which is primary and fundamental (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:126).

In addition to conservative views of education as the transmission of knowledge, Giroux's critical pedagogy therefore also rejects both a liberal pluralism, which removes difference from the arena of struggles for power and assumes a false consensus, and an optimistic humanism, which views individual experience or autonomous rationality as ideologically innocent.⁵ It asserts the "centrality of power and struggle in defining both the nature and purpose of what it means to be educated" (Giroux and McLaren, 1989:xxi), and the

4) The question of how this critique is to be grounded after the abandonment of universal reason is an issue in critical pedagogy which cannot be explored in detail here (cf. McLaren, 1994:207-8). For present purposes it is of most relevance to note that a basis for critique of dominant discourses is sought in those oppositional discourses which they marginalize (e.g. popular culture in opposition to high culture). Aronowitz writes: "if there is no place outside the system from which criticism may derive, we are obligated to find the spaces for resistance and for alternative visions in the swamp of "degraded" intellectual and cultural forms" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:141). This appeal to the margins for leverage is reflected in Kramsch's view of the role of the foreign culture in language education, which will be explored below.

5) On pluralism, see e.g. Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:73,102-3. Given the comparison which is being made between Kramsch's use of themes from Giroux and work of Curran, it is relevant to quote Giroux at greater length on the humanist subject. Giroux attacks "the liberal-progressive tradition in which teaching is reduced to getting students merely to express or assess their own experiences. Teaching collapses in this case into a banal notion of facilitation, and student experience becomes an unproblematic vehicle for self-affirmation and self-consciousness. Within this perspective, it is assumed that student experience produces forms of understanding that escape the conditions that inform them. Understanding the limits of a particular position, engaging its contradictory messages, or extending its insights beyond the limits of particular experiences is lost in this position. It overprivileges the notion of student voice, and refuses to address its contradictory nature" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:117).

focus is therefore on "how teachers and students sustain, or resist, or accommodate those languages, ideologies, social processes, and myths that position them within existing relations of power and dependency" (Giroux, 1997c [1986]:134). The voices of the teacher, the student and the educational institution are to be understood as "an interplay of dominant and subordinate practices that shape each other in an ongoing struggle over power, meaning and authorship" (Giroux, 1997c [1986]:141).

In the light of this constant struggle over meaning, educators should employ a "border pedagogy", focused not on truths and essences, but rather on the interactions and intersections of multiple discourses within and between contradictory, multilayered subjects (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:114-133). Students are to "engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences and languages," learning to operate as "border-crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:118-9).⁶ The transmission of information is replaced by the collision of worlds. It is here at the intersections and in the margins that the space for resistance and critique of dominant discourses will be found. It is here that Kramsch locates the enterprise of foreign language teaching and learning.

Kramsch's approach to language and culture

Viewing language learning in the context of a critical pedagogical discourse, Kramsch is critical of a number of assumptions which have informed past approaches to the cultural dimension of language learning. Her main criticisms relate to the separability of cultural information from language as its medium, the assumption of cultural consensus, and the accessibility of the target culture to a base culture learner.

(i) From information to discourse worlds.

Kramsch refers on a number of occasions to a widespread assumption that language is a means by which information can be passed from one person to another, a means which itself is

6) This is related to "a notion of border identity that challenges any essentialized notion of subjectivity" such that "ethnicity becomes a constantly traversed borderland of differences in which identities are fashioned in relationship to the shifting terrains of history, experience and power" (Giroux, 1994:38,51).

a transparent and innocent vehicle for the content to be delivered (e.g. 1991:232). Mainstream communicative language teaching, with its characteristic use of the information gap, is built upon this assumption. This assumption leads to culture being regarded as a "fifth skill" to be added alongside language learning; whether the emphasis is on high culture, tourist information or characteristic attitudes and beliefs, culture has been dealt with as a body of facts, attitudes or behaviors which are to be transmitted to learners through language (Kramsch, 1991:218; 1993a:191,205). Kramsch argues that language cannot be an innocent medium, and that an emphasis on information which ignores the irreducible differences embodied in discourse itself cannot bring learners into a genuine critical encounter with difference. As she puts it on one occasion, "experimenting with snails and truffles hardly shows deep understanding of and empathy toward French attitudes and values" (Kramsch, 1991:227). The "facts" teach little if they are not "evaluated critically and put in relation to the students' own cultural experience" (Kramsch, 1993b:11, cf. Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:20).

Kramsch suggests a redefinition of communicative ability. It is not the ability to process information, but rather the ability to create worlds (1995c:10; 1988:104). The notion of language as a vehicle for cultural information should be replaced by an emphasis on exploring the cultural dimensions of languages themselves. Language and culture should be understood as "linguaculture,"⁷ representing a "single universe or domain of experience" (1991:218). Language must be seen as expressing the worldview of the community in which it is spoken (Kramsch, 1991:235) - here Kramsch appeals to Halliday's understanding of language as a social signifying practice (Kramsch 1993a:67, 1993b:5-8), defining language as "a social act, embedded in a web of social practices" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:5). Rather than viewing the context as an accessory to the linguistic text, text and context are to be understood as intimately interrelated. Language both constructs and is constructed by its contexts.

Contexts are specified further by Kramsch as "alignments of reality along five different

7) The term is taken by Kramsch from an unpublished manuscript by J. Attinasi and P. Friedrich titled Dialogic Breakthrough: Catalysis and Synthesis in Life-Changing Dialogue (1988).

axes: linguistic, situational, interactional, cultural and intertextual" (1993a:46). The first three of these are already acknowledged in existing approaches. Linguistic choices are constrained by linguistic context, by the sentences and structures which come before and after and the demands of discourse coherence; they also have a situational context which the utterances refer to and draw upon, and an interactional context, made up of the assumptions which speakers bring to an encounter regarding types and norms of interaction. Kramsch wishes to go further than past approaches in emphasising that these three contexts take their place within a broader cultural and intertextual context, which locates the speaker in relation to a complex network of prior worldview assumptions and linguistic texts. The speaker's discourse is full of implicit or explicit citations of prior texts, and is inhabited by the assumptions and intellectual styles of his or her community.

According to Kramsch, text and context are mutually defining. Discourse both emerges from and creates contexts; the context is both that which forms utterances and that which is maintained, contested, reshaped by them (Kramsch, 1995a:10). Kramsch points, for instance, to the way in which "people (re)construct social classes, age categories, gender, and power relations as they talk with one another, but they typically operate within the bounds of appropriateness prevailing in some relevant group toward which their social practice is oriented" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:8).⁸ Contexts are therefore not to be seen as natural givens, but as socially constructed and reconstructed through the linguistic interaction of individuals, interaction which is itself contextually coloured (Kramsch, 1993a:46).

It follows in Kramsch's view that language cannot be construed as a transparent medium carrying facts from one context to another. It must instead be acknowledged that native speakers of a language speak not only with their own individual voices, but through them speak also the established knowledge of their native community and society, the stock of metaphors this community lives by, and the categories they use to represent their experience (Kramsch, 1993a:43).

Language does not transmit information without shaping it; rather discourse inhabits and

8) A further example of this dynamic can be found in Kramsch's discussion of how the French media both reflect the way the French view themselves and the world and also contribute to the formation of their worldview. See Kramsch, 1993a:195.

creates worlds of meaning. Culture is not simply an additional skill or item of knowledge, but "a world view to be discovered in the language itself" (Kramsch, 1991:237).

(ii) From consensus to confrontation.

This denial of the innocence of language and insistence on the importance of the social construction of context is closely related to a further objection on Kramsch's part to existing approaches. Kramsch points to a traditional orientation towards consensus which is bound up with the belief that beneath our surface differences we are deep down all the same (1995b:85). She claims that communicative language teaching has maintained traditional assumptions of a uniformity underlying differences in linguistic code; while cultural variation is recognized in communicative language teaching, it is construed in terms of shared codes or sets of rules for interaction which can be learned and used to express any of a variety of meanings appropriately. Foreign language teaching thus continues to be "predicated on the conviction that because we are all humans, we can easily understand each other provided we share the same code" (Kramsch, 1993a:1; c.f. 109). In other words, if we learn the appropriate communication skills, we will be able to transmit our meanings cleanly and effectively across cultural boundaries. Such an approach, Kramsch complains, "although it does show differences...does not address the conflicts and paradoxes that ensue from these differences" (1993a:24). The differences are overcome too easily, success is claimed too prematurely, and learners are left "blind to their own social and cultural identity, implicitly assuming a consensus between their world and the other" (Kramsch, 1993a:24).

If culture is allowed to become more of a focal point in language teaching, traditional assumptions are destabilized, "for culture is difference, variability, and always a potential source of conflict" (Kramsch, 1993a:1). This poses a fresh challenge to learners, "making evident the limitations of their hard won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them" (Kramsch, 1993a:1). Kramsch wishes to explore and accent this challenge, taking "a philosophy of conflict as [a] point of departure, thus reversing the traditional view of language teaching as the teaching of forms to express universal meanings" (1993a:1-2). She proposes an emphasis on "particular meanings, contextual

difference and learner variability," and professes to be "more interested in fault lines than in smooth landscapes" (1993a:2). In keeping with this attentiveness to ruptures in the communicative landscape, she is "convinced that understanding and shared meaning, when it occurs, is a small miracle, brought about by the leap of faith that we call "communication across cultures"" (1993a:2). If communicative competence as commonly understood may be characterized as a bridge offering the learner passage into the target culture, Kramsch appears as a border guard, insisting that the boundary not be overlooked, that those who cross should be made aware of the canyon which they aim to span - insisting, in fact, that the bridge is unsafe, and the canyon must be descended on foot.

This suspicion of assumed consensus extends not only to relationships *between* cultures but to how cultures themselves are conceived, for "variability in context precludes the notion of a unitary foreign national culture of which every individual would be a reflection" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:11). A consensus orientation assumes that it is adequate to speak of national cultures as discrete entities and to teach their characteristics. Kramsch argues that this obscures the differences which are present within both the base culture represented in the classroom and the target culture. She refers to Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia' stating that "cultural reality is as heterogeneous and heteroglossic as language itself" (1995b:89).⁹ Although a culture does display some core patterns, national characteristics "cannot be adduced without further specification of other cultural factors such as age, gender, regional origin, ethnic background, and social class" (Kramsch, 1993a:206,234). For this reason, Habermas' understanding of communicative competence (Habermas, 1970) is rejected because of its basis in an "ideal social consensus" which "occludes particular existence and concrete particularity" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:11).

An adequate view of culture, Kramsch argues, must regard it as a place of social struggle and confrontation as different groups seek to establish meanings, and culture in the classroom

⁹) 'Heteroglossia' (*raznorecie*) is Bakhtin's term for a view of language and society as made up of a multiplicity of conflicting, ideologically located voices (Bakhtin, 1981:263). The point which Kramsch is making here also emerges in her comments on German teaching textbooks: "Too many textbook publishers believe that there is a universally 'German' link between the German language and any German speech community, and that any speaker of German is automatically representative of any given German society" (1993a:181).

must be understood as "a place of struggle between the learners' meanings and those of native speakers" (1993a:24).¹⁰ This undermines the conventional appeal to the "questionable ideal of mainstream native speaker socialization" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:11), according to which learners aspire to the communicative competence of an ideal native speaker who stands for the target culture.¹¹ This ideal of native speaker emulation leads to a dilemma between a merely instrumental relationship to the foreign language on the one hand, and absorption into the foreign cultural identity on the other, a dilemma reflected in the conventional division of motivations for language learning into instrumental and integrative varieties (see Oxford and Shearin, 1994). Kramsch replaces the dilemma of distance versus fusion with a focus on confrontation. To attempt to express our own messages in the words of another language, rooted in a different cultural context, involves a conflict of perspectives, a *struggle* between our own lingually embodied way of relating conceptually to the world and that of another people, another community. The point is captured well by an example which Kramsch cites from Saville-Troike:

One of her professors told her that she shouldn't bow in English or to American professors, because that wasn't considered appropriate. This professor was trying to teach her a sociolinguistic rule in English. She was crushed. "I know Americans don't bow," she said, "but that's my culture, and if I don't do that, I'm not being respectful and I won't be a good person" (1993a:44).

Kramsch argues that instead of seeking to reproduce target culture meanings, learners should be given space to make their own meanings, to (in Bakhtin's words) "appropriate for themselves a language they have not made in contexts they have not chosen" (1993a:26). Given that language is (again citing Bakhtin) "overpopulated with the intentions of others" (Kramsch, 1993a:27), the struggle to become authors of our own words, to produce speech which is both understandable and original, is a complex process of self-discovery through dialogue. Dialogue is the place where cultural differences are neither held at arm's length nor

10) This of course echoes Giroux's characterization, cited above.

11) Kramsch argues that the idea of culture which has accompanied mainstream communicative language teaching "with its standardised native speaker norms, was as much of a utopia as Chomsky's idealised speaker-hearer, the 'linguistic utopia' of the 1950s" (1993c:349).

held up for uncritical emulation, but rather brought into confrontation as each seeks to establish his or her own voice.

Here Kramsch draws upon Bakhtin's notion of double-voiced discourse. Bakhtin emphasizes the presence of the voices of others in the speech of a given individual; language is not inertly available to us for encoding our meanings, but is rather already imbued with evaluative accents.¹² The word is not freely wielded by the individual, but "enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value-judgments and accents" (Bakhtin, 1981:276). Our utterances must take into account this ideological environment:

the unique speech experience of each individual is shaped and developed in continuous and constant interaction with others' individual utterances. This experience can be characterized to some degree as the process of assimilation - more or less creative - of others' words (and not the words of a language). Our speech ... is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness," ... These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework and accentuate (Bakhtin, 1986:89).

Linguistic agency consists of a reweaving of others' words in the light of the speaker's own evaluative stance and intended theme, in order to render them "internally persuasive" to the speaker (cf. Emerson, 1986:31). The word is therefore inherently dialogic - monologic or single-voiced discourse represents for Bakhtin the misguided attempt to own the speech-deed in its totality, closing it off to the other's influence and speaking with a determinate finality. The norm is dialogic or double-voiced discourse, in which the difference within speech is lived with and the voices of self and other interpenetrate and modify each other (Bakhtin, 1984:181-199). Authentic speech therefore involves neither distance nor fusion, neither the retention of a pure personal voice unmodified by the other nor a passive adaptation to the voice of the other.

Kramsch suggests in the light of these ideas that learners should not aspire to the single-voiced discourse of "the ideal native speaker, speaking with one voice in all situations," but

12) Bakhtin's views stand in opposition to structuralist approaches, in particular Saussure's opposition between *langue* (shared, abstract language system) and *parole* (free, individual speech act) (Saussure, 1986).

should rather engage in double-voiced discourse, in which there is a primary focus on the speaker's own intentions but an essential secondary focus on those of the hearer (1993a:27). The teacher's task is not to "have learners...parrot a society's conventional discourse but find a voice of their own in the foreign language", and Kramsch suggests that Bakthin's ideas show a way forward which can do greater justice to the differences and conflicts within and between cultures (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:12).

(iii) From Understanding to Paradox

The above discussion has already raised the further issue of the accessibility of a foreign culture to base culture learners. If discourse and culture are so intertwined, is it feasible or even desirable to understand another culture? (Kramsch, 1993a:177).¹³ Kramsch reviews and rejects various cross-cultural bridges which have been proposed as access roads into the target culture. A structuralist approach proposes *cognitive bridges*, suggesting that learners learn to identify cognitive typologies or networks of meaning which are universal and to relate them to concrete cultural variants. Examples of invariant structures would include rituals, government, sustenance needs, enjoyment/pain; study would involve comparison of concrete instances of these in different cultural settings. This leaves Kramsch wondering how culture-free these categories actually are, and how the learner is supposed to "proceed from the universal to the particular, from the categories of his or her native culture, which are deemed universal, to the other's categories" (1993a:226; cf. Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:20). Any enumeration of "universal" patterns of meaning will be enacted by an observer with a particular worldview. The ethnographer who enumerates the universals is always culturally situated.

Alternatively, some point to *professional bridges*, claiming that business and technology are universal and that experts understand each other on the basis of their expertise, regardless of their culture. Kramsch counters that "the very meaning of the business culture is rooted in a cultural imagination" (1993a:227). Any apparent universality merely reflects the current dominance of this particular cultural imagination. Still others trust in *ideological bridges*, or

13) For further discussion of this aspect of Kramsch's argument, see Smith, 1997d.

what Kramsch calls the "fallacy of democratic pluralism" (1993a:228). This view favours the "horizontal juxtaposition of cultural facts" leaving contrast and synthesis up to the learner. This "pluralism" is, however, mediated through the cultural priorities of text books, and "only thinly conceals a conservative, ethnocentric pedagogy" (Kramsch, 1993a:228). In other words, what offers itself as a value-free pluralist presentation in fact involves a particular selection of materials which reflect a very particular cultural agenda. Moreover, lacking understanding of their own membership of a given culture, learners are ill-placed to interpret what is presented. "The reluctance of young teachers to help their students interpret and construct their own social reality in the light of the other often leaves both teacher and students unsatisfied" (Kramsch, 1993a:228).

The canyon, then, remains. Kramsch's emphasis on the power of discourse to shape educational realities, on the culturally located nature of thought, and on cross-cultural encounter as a place of conflict over meaning leads to a skeptical attitude towards bridges. Two further aspects of Kramsch's argument deepen the difficulty. The first is her description of culture as not only multiple but in flux, constantly changed by an array of mutually influencing cultural perceptions. She points out, for example, that the German image of America, which is coloured by film, literature, WWII, etc., also "has deep roots in the way Germans perceive themselves, their hopes and fears, their dreams and aspirations" - and vice versa (1993a:208). Furthermore, German *self*-perception is not a simple or infallible reflection of German 'reality' either, but is subject to the same gravitational pulls. Where is one to find a place to stand amidst this flux of mutually influencing and interdependent perceptions, in which "perceptions and counterperceptions bounce images back and forth often based on the polysemy of language itself" (Kramsch, 1993a:207)? This constantly changing interaction between cultural meanings lends additional weight to the contention that "there can be no non-ideological absolute standpoint" (Kramsch, 1991:226).

The second additional difficulty relates to the nature of the educational enterprise. Education takes place not only within a given culture, but within larger political and institutional structures which seek to shape it in particular ways (Kramsch, 1993a:247).

Kramsch states: "I believe with Bourdieu...that systems of education breed systems of thought and that those systems of thought constitute a great deal of what we call the "culture" of a given society" (1991:221). The pedagogy which takes place in these institutional settings has its own intertextuality, partaking of particular values and referring back to prior educational statements and practices (Kramsch, 1993a:45). It is therefore "a fallacy to believe that a pedagogical structure can be free of the educational and cultural values of the anglophone discourse community in which it was conceived" (Kramsch, 1995c:9).¹⁴ This leads Kramsch to a reformulation for foreign language teachers of a basic problem raised by Freire and Giroux (see above), as she points to "the fundamental paradox of language teaching: how to teach a foreign culture via an educational culture that is part of the learner's native culture" (1993a:202).¹⁵ If foreign language teaching is inescapably embedded in the native cultural and educational context, how can the foreign language equivalent of conscientization begin? Is cross-cultural understanding not "doomed from the start" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:21)?

Kramsch's response is to advocate a shift from attempts to define a universal ground underlying cultural differences as a basis for "objective" description to a "dialogic approach" (1993a:224-5) focused on the process of confrontation between divergent cultural perspectives and on the individual (re)construction of meaning which takes place in such an encounter. We should not be aiming for an understanding of the foreign culture, but an understanding of *foreignness*, of difference itself (Kramsch, 1993a:206; 1993c:350). For Kramsch, "what we should seek in cross-cultural education are less bridges than a deep understanding of the boundaries. We can teach the boundary, we cannot teach the bridge" (1993a:228). Teaching a foreign language and culture is therefore founded in paradox, for "the capacity to understand is

14) cf. Kramsch, 1993a:183: "Cultural relativity stops at the threshold of the teacher's classroom. Not because the educational culture of the language class reflects by necessity the dominant culture of the institution, but because teachers could not teach if they did not make pedagogical choices. Indeed, I would argue that the seeming lack of educational vision among some language teachers is a sign not of eclectic choices but of the uncritical acceptance of the dominant educational culture of their society."

15) Kramsch points to a number of culture-specific values which inform the American educational context, such as a preoccupation with physical health, a valuing of action, efficiency and utility above reflection, and a belief in tolerance and individualist egalitarianism (see 1986:367-8; 1987b:243; 1991:228,237; 1993a:182,228,244; 1995c:8).

predicated on the failure to understand" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:21), on realising that in place of the presumed sameness there stands irreducible difference. The goal of learning is

not to reach a right or wrong solution, nor even to find ways of bridging the gap, but to identify and explore the boundary and to explore oneself in the process ... The goal is not a balance of opposites, or a moderate pluralism of opinions but a paradoxical, irreducible confrontation that may change one in the process (Kramsch, 1993a:231).

Dissonance rather than negotiated consensus becomes central to learning; the learning process "draws its impetus from the tension between a multitude of psychological, social, political, moral and linguistic oppositions in conflict with one another for the construction of meaning" (Kramsch, 1993a:11).

In this struggle among conflicting meanings, "life-changing dialogues" which bring about "fundamental realignment and reevaluation of psychological values in the minds of the interlocutors" (1993a:28-9) may suddenly occur, "like startled pheasants taking off" (Kramsch, 1993a:232). The teacher can unsettle learners and raise awareness of the ruptures: if they are crossed and transforming contact occurs, that will be a fleeting, momentary gift which no methodology can secure, a "miracle", a "leap of faith", an "epiphany" (Kramsch, 1993:2, 1995e:x). These surprising moments of contact create "a special space and time at the boundaries between two views of the world" (Kramsch, 1993a:30), a "third place" belonging to neither culture. This "third place" is not a stable location but a momentary, ever-different experience - "we have to view the boundary not as an actual event but, rather, as a state of mind, as a positioning of the learner at the intersection of multiple social roles and individual choices" (Kramsch, 1993a:234). At least momentarily it offers a kind of clearing in the ideological forest, enabling critical insight into both the native and the target culture. This clearing is located in the friction between cultures, in the margins, at the fringe of the dominant culture and its would-be hegemony where it confronts its rivals and where there is more potential for change. Understanding foreign language learning as the pursuit of third places is thus bound up with a redefinition of the discipline as a place at the border, a place

where cultural hegemony is contested and new meanings are made.

Kramsch's Anthropological Viewpoint

While Kramsch does not explicitly develop a theory of the person as Curran did, it is possible in the light of the above to sketch some outlines of her implicit understanding of personhood, an understanding which has close affinities with that of Giroux. In Kramsch's view, the self is first of all embedded in a social and cultural context. The individual carries the voices of a community within him or herself, "our personal thoughts are shaped by those of others", and our discourse is "full of invisible quotes, borrowed consciously or unconsciously" (Kramsch, 1993a:34,48). The conscious subject must construct its identity using resources from the social environment, for intellectual styles and patterns of thought derive not from individual self-expression but from social and cultural forces (Kramsch, 1991:226).¹⁶ Society provides the grounds of the individual's becoming, the discourses from which the individual must draw.

Like Freire and Giroux, however, Kramsch refuses to conclude that the individual is simply and inevitably a product of dominant social and cultural patterns - people do "have considerable creative leeway in what they do and say" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:8). Therefore, as has been noted above, she echoes one of their basic questions: the "ultimate mystery of human understanding and learning" has to do with asking, "given the interaction of context and text, of the cultural and the particular, of social experience and individual learning, where do understanding and change take place?" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:21).

As with Giroux, the notion of difference plays an important role in answering this question. Social reality is not monolithic but multiple, and dominant discourses are therefore not uncontested but rather in competition for their dominance. The socially-informed self is likewise multiple; it is not necessarily totally enveloped by dominant discourses. As it is

16) Kramsch quotes the following comment from Shweder: "Every human being has her or his subjectivity and mental life altered through the processes of seizing meanings and resources from some socio-cultural environment and using them" (1993a:103).

constructed amid conflicting voices it carries difference within itself.¹⁷ This is not a "monologic autonomous subject," but rather "the multi-voiced subject fostered by postmodernism" and by recent feminist theory (Kramsch and von Hoene, 1995:332-3,340).

In encountering the different voices which make up discourse, individuals can be dislodged from the illusion of monologic selfhood and sensitized to the difference within. A learner of a foreign language encountering a foreign meaning might experience "in a flash, how what she had seen up to now as one, namely her personal and social self, could in fact be seen as two different parts of her way of being in the world" (Kramsch, 1993a:48). This discovery of distance between personal and social voices creates a space for resistance to the discourses which have shaped the self; a "destabilization of one's own subject position" enables "an exploration of the many discursive voices that such a position entails" (Kramsch and von Hoene, 1995:333). As the learner comes to realize that culture is arbitrary, not in the sense of being randomly gratuitous, but rather in the sense that "different events could have been recorded if other people had had the power to record them" (Kramsch, 1995b:85), the possibility of opposing existing constructions of meaning and engaging in new ones becomes real. Multiplicity means choice, and recognition of the culturally constructed nature of meaning highlights responsibility, since each individual must consciously either maintain or contest existing patterns once they are brought to that individual's conscious awareness as arbitrary choices. Thus Kramsch argues that

because learning a language is learning to exercise both a social and a personal voice, it is both a process of socialization into a given speech community and the acquisition of literacy as a means of expressing personal meanings that may put in question those of the speech community...The language that is being learned can be used both to maintain traditional social practices, and to bring about change in the

17) Kristeva's work is alluded to in connection with this focus on the difference within, and the multi-voiced subject described is linked with her "subject-in-process" (Kramsch and von Hoene, 1995:333). The connection is not, however, explored in any detail.

very practices that brought about this learning (Kramsch, 1993a:233).¹⁸

Discovery of the differences in discourse is not intended to culminate in introspection, but in an empowerment of the learner as an agent of social change.

Kramsch refers repeatedly to a "personal self" which is distinct from the social self, and which takes up existing discourses in differing ways, exploiting the variability of context and the spaces for resistance created by the clash of meanings. The nature of this seat of agency is not explicitly discussed. It is not a universal reason outside of discourse, but neither is it simply a product of discourse, as it can gain critical distance from the discourses which shape it. The emphasis on critical consciousness and on the ability to author change which comes with critical reflection gives the description of self a marked cognitive emphasis. Critical reflection is valued above changes in behavior or breadth of experience (see below). The mind may be sunk deeper into culture than in more traditional accounts, but liberation still seems to be entrusted primarily to the mind in its encounter with difference and its ability to author original speech.¹⁹

What does seem clear is that for authentic selfhood to be achieved, this personal self must not simply repeat conventional meanings, but should rather struggle to control the discourses which have shaped it and to impose upon them its own voice (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:12). It is a self which finds pleasure and authenticity in moving from the powerlessness of repeating existing discourse to the empowerment of using that discourse to create new meanings, new worlds, new social realities (Kramsch, 1993a:238-9):

Because language is at the intersection of the individual and the social, of text and discourse, it both reflects and construes the social reality called 'context.' Because of the multiplicity of meanings inherent in any stretch of speech, contexts are not stable; they are constantly changed and recreated by individual speakers and

18) The balance attempted between social embeddedness and creative agency is a delicate one, with the emphasis varying. For instance, it is not clear how much room for agency is left by the assertion that intellectual styles and patterns of thought are "socially and culturally determined" (Kramsch, 1991:226, emphasis added), or how much weight is to be placed on assertions such as the following: "a dialogic approach can better link language and culture in an exploration of the boundaries created by language itself in the cultural construction of reality" (1993a:225, emphasis added).

19) Ellsworth's contention (1989:301) that the focus in critical pedagogy on critical reflection implies a continuing reliance on a universal reason would therefore be overstated if applied to Kramsch; it is, however, the case that a transformed consciousness is the primary target.

hearers, writers and readers. The dominance of any established 'culture' is alternately adopted and contested, adapted and ironicized, by the emergence of new meanings. In the creation of spoken and written texts, individuals manipulate and shape imposed contexts to fit their own individual needs and bring to the fore their own meanings (1993a:67).

We are, then, given in outline a view of both the nature and the calling of the person, both that which is given with personhood and the way in which authenticity is to be pursued. The individual not only draws from and indwells a social context, but also contributes to the recreation of society.

Pedagogical Proposals

Kramsch does not offer a packaged 'method' in the manner of Curran. She comments at one point that "richer cultural and sociolinguistic education for language teachers may ultimately prove much more important than training in pedagogical methods" (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:10). She does, however, call for a "new kind of pedagogy" (1993a:91), and her approach does yield characteristic pedagogical emphases, some of which have already been outlined above. The pedagogical implications of Kramsch's approach will be summarized here in terms of the goals proposed for learning, the role of the teacher, and the techniques suggested for achieving prioritized goals.

(i) The goals of learning.

It will be clear from the above account that Kramsch follows Freire in seeing conscientization as a foundational pedagogical goal which paves the way for subsequent social change (1993a:243), implying a central place for political goals in foreign language education.²⁰ What learners are missing is "not an ever greater amount of information, but an awareness of their own frame of reference" (Kramsch, 1993a:124). If they are to responsibly take up their role as agents of social change, learners must become aware of the cultural location of their discourse, of the ways in which the voice of the dominant culture is present in

20) cf. Kramsch, 1995c:10: "when school administrators make curricular decisions, they may have to consider factors besides psycholinguistic ones, such as the need to draw American children early out of their Anglocentric mindsets. And that is a political decision, not a developmental factor." She does also argue that critical awareness of voice will have pedagogical benefits, such as an increased ability to recognize the intentions and assumptions behind literary texts, see e.g. 1986:369.

what they see as their personal utterances, and of the arbitrariness and openness to revision of cultural meanings. Without a recognition of the social voices which permeate their personal voice, and therefore of the cultural particularity of their voice, learners will be ill-placed to perceive the difference of the foreign voices of the target language, and will assume that the new language is simply a new code into which their existing messages can be injected.²¹

Kramsch suggests that foreign language pedagogy should focus not simply on the proficient use of language, but on understanding one's language, for "understanding one's place in the world starts with understanding one's uses of language" (1993b:9). "A critical pedagogy...searches for evidence of effective language learning in the insights gained by the learners about foreign attitudes and mindsets" (Kramsch, 1993a:184). Learners' minds are to be opened to alternative worldviews, "diversifying the students' context of reality" (Kramsch, 1993a:136,150; cf:196). Language learning materials should challenge not only learners' ability to acquire the language but also their traditional intellectual style through confrontation with different imaginative universes (Kramsch, 1993a:175,189). The kind of cognition in view is clearly not the more narrowly rationalistic kind against which Curran reacted so strongly; it is a more general critical consciousness, a developing mindset or worldview. The goals of learning are nevertheless cognitive in emphasis rather than behavioral or pragmatic - changes in outward behavior or levels of skill are regarded as inadequate goals unless accompanied by intellectual transformation.²²

Through confrontation with difference, learners will be sensitized to their own role in shaping contexts of meaning; they must come to realize that meanings are not simply given, but rather constructed, and that they are creators as well as consumers of meaning and context (Kramsch, 1993a:105). They should become aware of the effects created by choosing one form

21) Learners "have to be aware of their own cultural myths and realities that ease or impede their understanding of the foreign imagination" (Kramsch, 1993a:216; cf. 1983a:438). Kramsch criticizes the 1979 report of the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies because it "implicitly assumes the universality of the US democratic, utilitarian system of thought by decrying US citizens' diminished "comprehension of the world", but not their diminished comprehension of their own society" (1991:220).

22) Kramsch questions whether the assumptions of certain approaches, such as "natural" approaches, undermine a "more reflective, cognitive type of learning" and therefore fail to encourage critical awareness (1993a:92).

or expression rather than another (Kramsch, 1993a:35), and also of the new meanings which foreign language structures make available to them for the first time (Kramsch, 1993a:105).²³

The foregrounding of learner voices is intended to lead neither to a straightforward affirmation of them, nor to an assimilation of the uncritical insider's view of the target culture, but rather to a critical perspective (Kramsch, 1992:11; 1993a:144,171,181-2). Learners are to be engaged in the shaping of a new culture, and ultimately in the shaping of a new social reality (Kramsch, 1993a:47,240; 1995b:90-1); the learner's place is a place where "he or she *creates meaning*" (Kramsch, 1993a:236). Kramsch argues that "teaching members of one community how to talk and how to behave in the context of another discourse community potentially changes the social and cultural equation of both communities, by subtly diversifying mainstream communities" (1995b:85). Changing the words in which an experience is expressed changes the meaning of that experience (Kramsch, 1993a:171), and so "teachers of language as social semiotic are placed at the privilege[d] site of 'possible reinscription and relocation emerging out of cultural difference'...contributing to the construction, perpetuation or subversion of particular cultural contexts" (Kramsch, 1995b:90, citing Bhabha).

(ii) The role of the teacher

Given these goals, the teacher is primarily neither a carrier of information nor an agent of socialization into the dominant patterns of the base or the target community (Kramsch, 1993a:45). New competencies are required - a dialogic, relational pedagogy is needed in which the teacher's voice engages rather than affirms or ignores the voices of the learners (Kramsch, 1993a:131,187,225). Teachers are at present not equipped to listen to the silences and miscommunications which indicate the presence of implicit cultural assumptions in their learners' discourse (Kramsch, 1993a:239,245), and so tend to treat deviating utterances in terms of linguistic error rather than of a clash of contexts of production. Teachers need to learn to critically examine learner utterances in terms of their ideological content so that they can

23) cf. Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:6: "Learners themselves are to weave together texts and contexts to make meanings and to give power to words: they can no longer passively recognize a transcendental realm of pre-made units of meaning associated with pre-built texts but must begin actively to engage in discursive practices that create spoken and written texts and endow them with meanings."

bring this to the students' attention (Kramsch, 1993a:43-4). This implies the conscientization of the teacher: "As we encourage teachers to make the context of culture and the intertextual aspects of the discourse of their students more explicit, they have to be aware themselves of the extent to which their own discourse shapes and is shaped by their environment" (Kramsch, 1993a:92). They must not only have sufficient familiarity with the patterns of the target culture to model native speaker discourse in the classroom, they must also become sufficiently distanced from both the native and the target culture to have a critical understanding of the worldviews espoused in each (Kramsch, 1987c:112). Such conscientized teachers can become agents of social change in the classroom, for "with every turn-at-talk, teachers either perpetuate or subvert the traditional social culture of the classroom... Thus teachers themselves become instrumental in creating alternative contexts of culture" (Kramsch, 1993a:48-9).

This, together with the non-transparency of learner experience, implies an interventionist stance on the part of the teacher, in order to counter the tendency for learners to assume the universality of their own discourse framework and to interpret otherness in its terms (cf. Kramsch and von Hoene, 1995:344). Teachers cannot stand back from learners' construction of meaning and present differences as an innocent plurality - they must intervene to "help their students interpret and construct their own social reality in the light of the other" (Kramsch, 1993a:228), problematizing learner utterances in order to provoke critical reflection.

Kramsch cites an example of an incident in one of her classes when one of her students offered the sentence: "Ich mag Herausforderungen, aber diese Klasse ist lächerlich!" (intended meaning: I like challenges, but this class is ridiculous) (1993a:16). She homes in on the errors made in this sentence. The German word "lächerlich", she points out, suggests a ridiculously small rather than a burdensome task; more significantly, the noun "Herausforderungen" would not be a natural choice for a German speaker discussing education, and seems to reflect an attempt to use German vocabulary to express a notion of challenge which is rooted in certain American cultural assumptions. This American notion of challenge is related to the entrepreneurial spirit, to obstacles to be overcome by effort and initiative; it is far from being a value-free concept - it may even be used to mask responsibility, as when environmental

catastrophes are described as "challenges" by their perpetrators. Here it has been imported into a German word which has different connotations, and so it reveals a clash of voices or worldviews in a single learner sentence.

The reality is, of course, more complex than a simple opposition of German and American ideas - neither American nor German culture are homogeneous, and there will be differences of usage within each, particularly as American usages become more acceptable to younger generations of German speakers (Kramsch, 1993a:31,n.2). The point is, however, to recognise that there is more at stake than making an appropriate choice among neutral lexical items from the dictionary, for words carry powerful cultural connotations rooted in particular communities.

The focus of much communicative language teaching has been on the degree to which a message has successfully been sent, a meaning effectively transferred, even in spite of formal grammatical errors. The evaluative focus is on whether information has been transferred in a way acceptable to a "sympathetic native speaker" and errors are downplayed where they do not impede information transfer. The conversation continues until both participants have the same meaning, one having passed it to the other. For the mainstream communicative approach, then, the tendency is to focus on the glass as half full, on what made it across the information gap. Kramsch insists on the educational merit of interrupting the process to point out that the glass is half empty. The teacher should grasp a learner utterance such as this one as an opportunity to openly highlight divergence in cultural assumptions, to make learners aware of the extent of their own cultural locatedness and the otherness of the target culture. Instead of viewing such an utterance as an inadequate emulation of a native speaker sentence, the teacher should develop an ear for the located personal meaning being expressed by the learner and step in to problematize that meaning (1993a:239). In contrast to more traditional pedagogies, it is the moments of breakdown and discrepancy which are seen as the most authentically educational moments and which should be highlighted by the teacher (1993a:128,172).

(iii) Reorienting communicative tasks

In order to achieve the goals described above, the pedagogy adopted must be contrastive,

cognitively oriented and focused on difference (Kramsch, 1993a:92,131). Merely teaching the foreign linguistic code will not suffice, for "experiencing difference does not automatically come with learning a foreign code" (Kramsch, 1993c:357). Providing experience of the foreign culture is not adequate, for that experience is not self-explanatory, but must be interpreted within some framework; merely "experiencing ...different discourse forms does not make them meaningful without conscious cross-cultural reflection" (Kramsch, 1991:234; cf. 1995b:88).²⁴ Teaching appropriate behaviors in the target culture will not do either, for adopting a behavior is no evidence of having understood the differences in worldview which give rise to that behavior (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:10); "it is not because people behave in the same way...that the reasons for their behaviour are the same, nor that they view the world in the same way" (Kramsch, 1993c:354).

In order to emphasize the arbitrariness and contestability of cultural meanings, Kramsch suggests a range of activities which take the same linguistic task but systematically vary the parameters, allowing learners to investigate the effects of manipulating the context on the meaning of utterances. For instance, a student can be asked to tell the same story to the same person repeatedly with variations in spatial setting (face-to-face or back-to-back, at a simulated party or interview) or temporal setting (increasing or decreasing the amount of time available). Speakers can be asked to vary their adopted social role or their mode of delivery, either whispering, interrupting or even shouting each other down "in an attempt to impose their story on one another" (Kramsch, 1993a:95). The setting may be left constant but the recipient varied or writing substituted for speaking. These shifts are not just intended to introduce variety in order to make learning interesting, but are to be accompanied by conscious reflection on the ways in which text and context construct one another:

if communicative activities are not only to meet the needs of social maintenance, but potentially to bring about educational and social change, then we have to search for ways of explicitly varying all parameters of the interactional context"

24) Kramsch wonders, "how do learners gain cultural insights from sentence-to-sentence translations or grammatical pattern drills or even from exquisite exegeses of literary texts?" (1993b:5).

(Kramsch, 1993a:94).²⁵

Written texts are also to be approached with a view to placing difference to the fore, with the purpose of fostering a "new type of literacy" focused on gaps in meaning and an "oppositional" reading stance (Kramsch and Nolden, 1994:28,34). An example here of a learning activity designed to foreground difference is the use of reader's theater, which involves taking a short narrative text and asking a group of learners to script it for a reading performance, assigning the different voices which can be discerned in the text to different readers - not only the voices of individual characters, but the evaluative voices present in the narrative itself. The main goal of this activity is "a group reading of the text that highlights its different voices while maintaining absolute fidelity to its wording," thus revealing difference within an apparent sameness (Kramsch, 1993a:98). Similarly, a collection of several published translations of a German poem can be approached as different rewritings of the poem which bring to the fore different fault-lines within the original (Kramsch, 1993a:168), rather than in terms of their faithfulness in reproducing the original.

The emphasis on difference also affects the content chosen. The texts chosen for use in the classroom should be capable of challenging learners' existing frames of interpretation, and not only of developing their linguistic skills. This stands in clear contrast with choices of material made on the basis of appeal to existing learner interests and intellectual styles, as Kramsch indicates by citing and rejecting Richardson and Scinicariello's recommendation that "the television materials used for comprehension activities in the classroom in the classroom should be entertaining and challenging, but the intellectual content cannot be radically different from the students' view of life" (cited in Kramsch, 1993a:189).

In all of these pedagogical suggestions, what is distinctive is not so much the activity itself taken in isolation, but the context within which the activity is given meaning as a part of the learning process. This is in keeping with the discussion of design and technique in chapter

25) For this reason Kramsch praises the potential of multimedia technology which gives to students "multiple points of access to the same material and multiple potential paths through the material", highlighting the arbitrariness of choice as "no decision by the student is wrong, it only leads down a different path to a different ending" (1993a:197-8). This provides opportunities for "autonomous, exploratory learning (1993a:201).

one above. Activities are to be set up in such a way that rather than the main focus being on testing linguistic skills, attention is drawn to the disruption of assumed harmonies. Students are to be directed to consider not only whether the words they used were correct or appropriate, but why they chose those words rather than others and what effects alternatives might have had (Kramsch, 1993a:110).

Conclusion

As with Curran, so here also with Kramsch, I have sought to make clear the connections between the basic philosophical orientation, in particular in its implications for the way in which the human person is understood, and the patterns of teaching techniques advocated. Kramsch's emphasis on particularity and conflict as opposed to universality and consensus, on the interdependence of language and culture and of social and individual voices, and on critical consciousness and social change as orienting goals leads to a variety of departures from what she calls "the traditional, positivistic conceptions of quantitative, normative, linear language learning" (1991:226). Evaluative norms such as emulation of the native speaker of the foreign language or correct understanding of the foreign culture are placed into question. Learning materials are to create dissonance for, rather than appeal to, learners' intellectual styles. Errors are to be highlighted and confronted, but not as transgressions against linguistic correctness, rather as eruptions of difference. Having described Kramsch's approach and some of its pedagogical outworkings, I shall now turn to a critique of that approach, exploring whether it has moved us on beyond the difficulties found in Curran's work.

Chapter 5

Power and Confrontation in Kramsch

Kramsch's work raises a number of insightful and significant questions for foreign language educators. In my view her reflections on and suggestions for overcoming the dilemma between the retention of native identity and assimilation to foreign identity, her analyses of the intertwining of language and culture and her awareness of the exclusions perpetrated by an assumed sameness or a non-committal pluralism all deserve to be taken seriously. It is therefore from a position of sympathy with many of her concerns that I will argue in this chapter that the theoretical framework which Kramsch adopts is problematic when viewed from the Christian anthropological standpoint advanced as the basis for this study.

Unlike Community Language Learning, Kramsch's proposal for a critical foreign language pedagogy has not (or at least not yet) given rise to an extensive secondary literature. In general, the response has been positive. I have mentioned above that her book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993) was awarded the MLA Kenneth Mildenberger Award.

A review of this book in the Modern Language Journal describes it as "a compelling and enlightening weaving of theory and practice...a provocative and eloquent contribution to a field sorely in need of interdisciplinary vision" (Knowles, 1995:565-6). As with Curran, there has been a tendency for some more critical responses to Kramsch's work to oppose it by reasserting the divisions which it seeks to contest and transcend, in particular the setting of practical action over against intellectual reflection (see Byrnes, 1995; Bernhardt, 1995; Kramsch, 1995d). I shall seek to take an approach which not only reflects the particular interests of the present study, but also raises questions of the kind which Kramsch herself considers central, namely questions concerning the metaphorical dimension of applied linguistic theories as reflective of their ideological commitments (cf. Kramsch, 1995a). My criticisms will be targeted at the point at which the interests of this study and the major emphases of Kramsch's thought converge, namely the nature of interpersonal connection and conflict and the light in which the metaphorical emphases of Kramsch's discourse cause these

to appear. I shall focus in particular on three themes: the subjugation and powerlessness of the individual, growth as a seizure of power in order to overcome subordination, and conflict as liberation from a disempowering uniformity.

Subjugation and Powerlessness

The human person is not presented in Kramsch's writings as an isolated individual in search of connection; she or he is intrinsically intertwined in a complex social fabric. Our very thoughts are shaped by the thoughts and discourses of others. Our language, which is for Kramsch the medium in which our identity is constituted, is full of the words of others. The individual consciousness is understood as being fundamentally social, deeply connected and interwoven with a particular community. Thus far Kramsch seems to me to be quite correct; I am appreciative of her anti-individualism and awareness of intersubjective connection, which represent a step forward compared with Curran's neglect of wider communal connections.

However, the language which Kramsch uses to describe this interconnection is not generally positive; rather than being, for instance, the language of nurture and support, it tends to be a language of constriction and subjugation. It is a characteristic emphasis of critical pedagogy to insist that all educational processes should be analyzed within the context of unequal relationships of power, and this emphasis is reflected in Kramsch's descriptions of the individual's relationship to social reality. Our relationship to the social networks which mould our identity is described in terms of their power over us, and our subordination to them. In this way, interconnection with social reality is associated with the powerlessness of the individual.

This can be seen first of all in the individual's relationship to the patterns of meaning and value which characterize the culture into which he or she has been socialized. This relationship is one of being constrained by meanings which others have established without my participation, of being conditioned by the cultural environment, of thinking with patterns of thought which have been socially determined (Kramsch, 1991:226). Such constraint is justified to the individual by society in terms of normative notions such as good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, but these notions have been established by the exercise of others' cultural power. Kramsch writes that "culture, in order to be legitimate, has always had to

justify itself and cloak its laws in the mantle of what is 'right and just' rather than appear in the naked power of its arbitrariness" (Kramsch, 1995b:85). It is this arbitrary power, not the good and the true, to which the individual is subordinated through socialization into established social and cultural patterns.

When the individual becomes a learner in an educational setting, this subordination to others' cultural power is intensified. Learners are subjected to norms of knowledge and interaction which not only reflect broader cultural ideologies, but are actively imposed by a teacher within the culture of an institution. Yet another level of subordination is added in the foreign language classroom. When the learning is focused on a foreign language and culture, the learner is further confronted with and expected to conform to another linguistic and cultural system which she or he had no hand in constructing. Kramsch therefore asserts that:

Constrained by the linguistic rules of the foreign language and its rules of use, constrained also by their own socialization patterns in their own culture, language learners are indeed in a position of uncommon subordination and powerlessness (Kramsch, 1993a:238; cf. Kramsch and von Hoene, 1995:335).

In view of this compounded subjugation of the learner, a critical pedagogy must focus on the empowerment and emancipation of the learner in an educational system "that by its nature reminds them how powerless they really are" (Kramsch, 1993a:243).

There are certain similarities here to more rationalistic liberal visions of education, which have also tended to see cultural localization as a disablement to be overcome. Hawkins, for instance, argues that

the person who has never ventured outside his [sic] own language is incapable even of realising how parochial he [sic] is - just as the earthbound traveller who has never journeyed into space takes the pull of gravity for granted as an unalterable part of the scheme of things (1989:32).

Foreign language education, on this view, is to help learners to overcome the limitations of their draw in "the great parental lottery" and to escape from their "monolingual prison" (Hawkins, 1989:30,29). For the liberal educator, "the concept of the autonomy of the individual is crucial" (Hawkins, 1989:29), and the achievement of authentic agency therefore involves disentanglement from the particular cultural fabric into which the self has been

woven.

The difference between this kind of approach and that of Kramsch is that for Kramsch the learner is more inexorably earth-bound and reason does not offer a smooth road out of the slough of parochialism to the celestial city of cosmopolitan maturity. Emancipation may only be achieved in momentary and unpredictable bursts, "like startled pheasants taking off" (Kramsch, 1993a:232, citing Attinasi and Friedrich), and requires a struggle for control. It calls for an attempt to seize that power which has subordinated the individual, a power spliced with discourse. This struggle for power and its attendant conflicts will be discussed in more detail below. For now the important point to note is that while individual autonomy seems less achievable in a world in which "the voice of the self is enmeshed with and regulated by the voice of the other" (Kramsch, 1993a:28, citing Sheldon), the very use of such metaphors of unwelcome external restraint on individual agency seems to suggest that it remains at some level as an ideal. When connection with the social fabric is associated with subordination to the extent that even the linguistic structure of the language being learnt is interpreted as disempowering the individual, this suggests a correlative association of authenticity with the assertion of individual autonomy. This association is echoed in Kramsch's portrayals of learner growth as an appropriation of power.

Growth as the Seizure of Power

As was emphasized in the last chapter, this characterization of the learner's situation as one of powerlessness does not imply a fatalistic outlook on Kramsch's part. Such initial powerlessness is a state of inauthenticity from which the individual can emerge, and this emergence is a central goal of critical pedagogy. The way in which such emergence comes about is through a grasping of power by the disempowered individual, who takes advantage of the multiple and shifting nature of cultural meanings in order to insert his or her own meanings, manipulating existing discourse for his or her own ends:

Taking advantage of the multiple levels of meaning is one way for them to counteract the fundamental powerlessness brought about by what Harder...has called the 'reduced personality' of the language learner and gain control over the norms of interaction and interpretation established by the teacher (Kramsch,

1993a:52).

Rather than acquiesce to the norms and meanings offered by the teacher, Kramsch argues, the learners should appropriate the new language for their own purposes. As this happens, personal pleasure and the achievement of personal power come together to motivate learning:

Learners have to construct their personal meanings at the boundaries between the native speaker's meanings and their own everyday life. The personal pleasures they can derive from producing these meanings come from their *power* to produce them (Kramsch, 1993a:238-9).

Teachers should affirm learner pleasure and acknowledge that pleasure comes from the achievement of power through personal control of discourse.¹ Learners grow as they "discover the range of their power to assign new values to a seemingly stable and predetermined universe of existing meanings" (Kramsch, 1993a:104). This means that learner resistance to the norms of interaction established by the teacher is to be reinterpreted. Traditionally, such resistance has been viewed as undesirable; instead, Kramsch suggests, it should be fostered. Learners are to be encouraged towards "a sense of conversational power and control that the system traditionally withholds from them as non-legitimate for non-native speakers" (Kramsch, 1993a:242-3).

Here the argument develops beyond what might be taken simply as a description of the enjoyment which comes with exploring new abilities and possibilities. It appears that the power which provides the pleasure in learning is power over another. Conversational satisfaction has to do, we are told, with "the ability to impose one's own norms" (Kramsch, 1993a:53), and teachers would be well advised to encourage learners to "play power games with the teacher and with one another" (1993a:30). Empowerment seems to be associated in such statements with the desire for a taste of dominance.

In the emancipatory movement from subordination to control, the notion of ownership emerges as significant, and is deployed in a way which places self and other in fundamental

1) Elsewhere Kramsch writes that "learning a foreign language offers the opportunity for personal meanings, pleasures and power" (1993a:238), and that "much of the learners' pleasure in speaking a foreign language can come from the power and license it gives them to play with various footings" (1993a:49; cf. also Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:13).

opposition. Existing patterns and structures are disempowering for the reason that they are not *mine* but rather someone else's:

There is little pleasure in accepting ready-made meanings, however pertinent. The pleasure derives both from the power and process of making meanings out of *their* resources and from the sense that these meanings are *ours* as opposed to *theirs* (Kramsch, 1993a:238, citing Fiske).

If I had no control over the construction of a meaning, then accepting it means suffering disempowerment. Gaining control over existing meanings consists of "constructing *our* space within and against *their* place, of speaking *our* meanings with *their* language" (1993a:237, citing de Certeau).² In order to achieve personal power, the self is set over against the other. The original disempowering acceptance of meaning from the other is turned into an empowering opposition in which the space for agency, the ownership of discourse, is stolen from the other:

Learners of a foreign language, challenged to learn a linguistic code they have not helped to shape, in social contexts they have not helped to define, are indeed poaching on the territory of others - a kind of oppositional practice, that both positions them and places them in opposition to the current practices of the discourse community that speaks that language (Kramsch, 1995b:90).

If learning in Curran's approach could be characterized as a struggle over property rights (see chapter three), that struggle seems to rise to a new level of intensity in the metaphors for learning which are adopted here.

These metaphors of ownership and control suggest again an underlying ideal of individual autonomy. The learner's active creation of meaning is placed in opposition to a passive reception of existing meanings,³ and the "third place" which is offered as the legitimate goal of learning is a place where ownership is associated with the individual

2) Compare the concluding sentence of Kramsch's book, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*: "In and through these dialogues, they [students] may find for themselves this third place that they can name their own" (1993a:257).

3) Kramsch opposes a view of learners as makers of meaning engaged in oppositional struggle to one of learners as "passive recipients of cultural knowledge" (1993a:24). Cf. Giroux, 1997c [1986]:137: "such an analysis posits the reader, not as a passive consumer, but as an active producer of meanings." The point of questioning this dichotomy is not to affirm a position of passivity, but precisely to point out the rhetorical effect of associating the achievement of personal power over discourse with activity and binding alternative perspectives to a notion of passivity which is unlikely to be affirmed by any reader.

construction of meaning.⁴ The location or nature of the third place cannot be indicated by anyone else, Kramsch claims, only experienced by the individual learner - "for each learner it will be differently located", a "place they can name their own" (1993a:257). While Kramsch's account frequently emphasizes the dialectic between the construction of the individual by the context and the (re)construction of the context by individuals, it seems that authenticity is associated squarely with the latter.

The key point, however, has to do with the rhetoric of control and ownership. It is undoubtedly the case that subjugation and powerlessness are experienced by many students daily, and Kramsch and others are surely right to make this a pedagogical concern, but what is interesting here is how such powerlessness is identified. If subjugation exists by virtue of the fact that a meaning which is operative in my discourse was received from another as opposed to being constructed by me, then it is hard to escape the conclusion that the ideal against which subjugation is defined is one of individual autonomy. Despite Kramsch's reservations concerning the concept,⁵ some kind of individual autonomy does therefore seem to be implicitly associated with the individual construction of the "third place".⁶

Conflict as Liberation

The importance of conflict for Kramsch's approach follows in various ways from the

4) Some formulations of the role of the reader give a sense more of reader autonomy than of a genuine dialogue with a text which has its own integrity. Kramsch writes, for instance, that "the kind of readers teacher and students decide to be will determine the extent of their involvement with the text and the nature of the meanings their dialogue with the text will generate" (1993a:137); cf. 1985b:357: learners must "be shown how to preserve their freedom to flout the writer's intentions and make their own meaning out of the text."

5) Kramsch writes that the discourse of much second language acquisition research fits "nicely into a certain dominant democratic discourse that values learner autonomy and self-reliance, and views with distrust any artificial manipulation of a learner's interlanguage by social or political forces. This distrust of political manipulation can be interpreted as evidence of the pluralistic belief that everyone should be taught according to his/her particular needs and be expected to perform according to his/her ability. One could argue that this is the old nature versus nurture debate or the free market ideology at work in language education" (1995a:7). I have noted in the previous chapter that Kramsch favours teacher intervention in order to raise critical awareness, and I share her suspicion of the autonomy ideal; the point here is that even though Kramsch rejects a laissez-faire view of learner autonomy, the achievement of autonomous power seems to remain an implicit ideal for the learner in her account.

6) This tension between individual and community is picked up by Byrnes in her suggestion that Kramsch's proposal for a core guiding question, namely "What do I believe is in the best interests of my students in my school, community or state, knowing what I know about how my students got to be the way they are?" (Kramsch, 1995c:11), should be replaced by a question more focused on the interests of the community (Byrnes, 1995:15).

discussion thus far. If it is the very nature of the existing system to subordinate the individual, then the empowerment of that individual involves an oppositional stance towards that system. If the achievement of authenticity involves gaining power over the construction of meaning in discourse, and there is more than one agent seeking authenticity, then a struggle for control over social meanings will ensue. Conflict thus takes on a positive role in Kramsch's approach: like Freire's revolutionary action, it signals resistance to existing oppression.

Kramsch notes that "the discourse of various pedagogical "methods" or "approaches" is determined to a large degree by the previous discourses they are trying to counteract" (1995c:9). This is certainly the case in relation to Kramsch's use of conflictual language to describe the educational process. I shall therefore consider in a little more detail the assumed background of "consensus" approaches which was outlined in the previous chapter, in order to place Kramsch's metaphors of conflict more firmly in their intended context before going on to explore their scope.

(i) Conflict as the rejection of consensus

As noted in chapter four, Kramsch seeks to counteract certain aspects of the notion of communicative competence as developed by sociolinguists such as Hymes and adopted by mainstream communicative language teaching. This notion included a clear interest in cultural variation between speech communities, but Kramsch is not alone in arguing that the diversity envisaged is too innocent, assuming too much underlying harmony. Williams, for instance, has argued that although the sociolinguistic work of Hymes and others does emphasize that "cross-cultural differences can and do produce conflicts or inhibit communication" (1992:179), the sociological assumptions underlying this direction in sociolinguistics nevertheless subsume difference to a presumed overarching consensus. A speech community is still understood as "a system of organised diversity held together by common norms and aspirations" (1992:180, citing Gumperz). Society is regarded as diverse, but the diversity is integrated by communicative cooperation according to shared norms; communicative competence is mastery of these interactional norms, offering to diverse individuals access to the speech community (Williams, 1992:181). Since the focus is on shared rules for sociolinguistic behaviour, and the

ways in which speakers cooperate to negotiate meaning, there is an implied view of the speech community as a consensual if diverse whole and of communication as linked to the peaceful negotiation of social roles. As Cazden puts it,

From the beginning, Hymes has argued against the Chomskyan notion of a homogeneous speech community, and for recognition of diverse ways of speaking any single language. But in his portrayal of a "community as an organization of diversity", the images of co-existence seem peaceful, and individual shifting among language varieties seems painless unless access to the conditions necessary for their acquisition has been denied (Cazden, 1989:122).

For Kramsch, as much as for Williams or Cazden, this seems to gloss over the misunderstanding and conflict which are an everyday part of any real speech community. From the perspective of a Left-oriented sociologist such as Williams it assumes common goals where there is in fact conflict and struggle between various social groups. From the perspective of Kramsch as a foreign language specialist, it assumes too many shared norms of interaction not only within but also between culturally diverse speech communities. Cultural belonging is made a matter of competence, a competence which can be learned by an outsider without a radical shift in that outsider's thought patterns, rather than a matter of being shaped in one's very ways of thinking by the guiding metaphors of a given community. For Kramsch, language is not a set of capabilities by means of which difference can be bridged in communicative interaction.⁷ It is rather the very place where irreducible difference is inscribed.

This sociolinguistic view of difference as painless and bridgeable through access to the requisite skills is related to a broader liberal pluralism which Kramsch also resists. According to this "noncommittal pluralism of opinions" in which various interpretations of reality are taken to be equally legitimate, difference is to be understood in terms of peaceful co-existence (1993a:137,168). Kramsch describes an example of this approach in action in the classroom. A culturally diverse group of students is reading a short story in German by a Swiss author, and students respond to the content of the story in various ways, some of them clearly reflecting

7) Cf. Hymes: "I subscribe to the view that what is distinctively cultural, as an aspect of behaviour or of things, is a question of capabilities acquired or elicited in social life" (cited in Williams, 1992:182).¹

differing perceptions rooted in divergent cultural assumptions. In the discussion which takes place, "the teacher accepts all interpretations as equally valid, calling them *interessant*. Thus ends the lesson" (Kramsch, 1993a:133). This approach gives the appearance of making space for difference - rather than imposing a single interpretation on the material studied, it accepts non-judgmentally a diversity of viewpoints. Kramsch points out, however, that neither the particularity of these viewpoints nor the reasons for them is addressed (1993a:83). She argues that

such a non-committal attitude undermines the search for and the negotiation of meaning that form the core of a communicative approach. It risks perpetuating the belief that beyond communication what really counts is only one's own way of life and system of thought (1993a:228).

The difference of the other is never really confronted, and the assumption that my partial perspective makes sense to everyone is encouraged.

This approach is objectionable from the perspective of a critical pedagogy for both political and pedagogical reasons. Politically, it obscures the relations of power, of dominance and subordination, in which differences actually dwell and are forged, crying "peace, peace" when all is not in fact at peace in the world, and assuming that for all their differences everyone is part of the same communal project. As McLaren puts it, "too often liberal and conservative positions on diversity constitute an attempt to view culture as a soothing balm - the aftermath of historical disagreement - some mythical present where the irrationalities of historical conflict have been smoothed out" (1994:201). Kramsch concurs:

Cultural characteristics are embedded within historical relations of power and authority which secure social, professional, political, pedagogical status through the way of speaking of particular speakers in a particular time and from a particular space. Multicultural relativism or democratic pluralism do not automatically reverse these relations of power and authority, they only make them more invisible (1995b:89).

This invisibility reduces the likelihood of social change by rendering the present distribution of differences innocent and by subsuming them to an assumed common purpose.

Viewed more from a pedagogical perspective, an assumption of consensus discourages a

critical awareness of the differences which exist. The more I speak with the assumption that my meanings are universally acceptable (provided they are presented using the appropriate linguistic code and communicative skills), the less likely it becomes that I will truly hear the difference in the other's meanings. As was noted in the previous chapter, Kramsch believes that a consensus perspective leaves students "blind to their own social and cultural identity, implicitly assuming a consensus between their world and the other" (1993a:24; cf. 1993b:8). Moreover, a consensus perspective leads to the socialization of the learner, whether into the native or the target culture, as the implicit or overt end of the educational process, resulting again in a submersion of differences and the subjugation of the individual.⁸ Consensus fails to do justice to the fact that we are "irreducibly unique and different", and so does violence to our particularity (Kramsch, 1995b:85; 1995b:87). This is so whether the point at issue is the difference within or between cultures (Kramsch, 1993a:49; 1993b:5).

The idea of consensus is, then, associated in Kramsch's work with sameness, universality and fixity, and with the assumption of a universal ground on which difference can be peaceably arrayed. Believing that difference is inadequately recognized by a consensus approach, and that the "universal" ground reflects a very particular agenda, Kramsch rejects consensus and looks to its opposites to promote the emergence of difference. This is the necessary background against which her use of the language of opposition, resistance, struggle, confrontation and conflict should be understood; these terms point to cracks in a grey sameness through which greenery might emerge. If consensus represents acquiescence to pre-established meanings and the assumption of their universality, then the disruption of that consensus through confrontation and conflict becomes a liberatory process.

(ii) Conflict between self and society

8) Discussing the concept of authenticity, Kramsch writes that students "can know the conventions and either simulate native speaker behavior, or choose not to abide by native speaker conventions and, instead, act as the learners and foreigners that they really are. Both types of behaviors are authentic, but the question is: authentic for whom?" (1993a:179). This challenges the idea of authentic behavior as tied to socialization into the foreign culture, an approach which Kramsch finds too conservative: "By teaching learners how to do things with words, how to function appropriately within a foreign society, language education was easing them into a social order and facilitating their integration into that order...An educational philosophy that stresses only doing things with words runs the risk of helping maintain the status quo" (1993a:240).

At its broadest level, this conflict emerges as a conflict between self and society. Kramsch emphasizes the ways in which "the particular voices of the individual mingle with the voices of the social communities from which they draw" (1993a:19), but this is not the amicable mingling of a garden party. As the self contests the meanings which society seeks to impose, self and society come into opposition. Drawing on Fiske's work, Kramsch refers to the process through which the social order and the individual constantly trick each other, outdo each other in a fight not only over commodities and facts, but over who will impose their meanings on those facts (1993a:237).

The voices of the community and the voices of individuals vie for control over discourse as the individual seeks to achieve a balance between comprehensibility and uniqueness (Kramsch, 1993a:24,27). If the individual loses, the voice of the individual forfeits its authenticity: "particular voices risk being recycled into the voices of the community, potential meanings are liable to be subordinated to existing, ordinary meanings" (Kramsch, 1993a:106). The language of risk evokes a sense of communal meanings as a threat.

In education, Kramsch argues, "the constant struggle between individual and social meanings in discourse needs to be accepted and exploited, rather than ignored" (1993a:240). The embedding of this struggle in discourse makes it a struggle which is internal as much as external, a struggle between the personal and social dimensions of consciousness. Learners should have opportunities to "dissociate their response as a member of their speech community and their response as an individual with a unique life experience" (Kramsch, 1993a:175). Poetry writing, for instance, allows a "healthy" dissociation between "the student as narrative voice and the student as social individual" (Kramsch, 1993a:171). In all of these instances it would seem that learning to speak authentically is learning to speak with a voice other than the voice of the community.

(iii) Conflict between teacher and learner

Within the classroom setting, this conflict is further specified as a "struggle for control between the individual and social voices present in the popular culture of the classroom" (Kramsch, 1993a:49), voices represented by learners, teachers and educational institutions.

Kramsch emphasizes that "teachers and learners in educational systems are subjected to the ideology of the institution, which itself responds to national and international imperatives" (1993a:23). Both teachers and students, however, "use the system but resist it for their own purposes" (Kramsch, 1993a:15; cf. 1993a:67), carving out places of resistance against the hegemonic tendencies of institutional structures (Kramsch, 1993a:247).

Teachers stand in an ambivalent position, responsible both to society's demand for socialization and to the needs of their learners. They represent an authority outside the learning self, and therefore a further possibility of subordination. Accordingly, there will be struggle between teachers and students, as "many learners resist the self-evident and invisible culture teachers try to impose" (Kramsch, 1993a:48). Kramsch defines this struggle as a struggle between "autonomy and control":

The struggle between the desire of students to appropriate the foreign language for their own purposes, and the responsibility of the teacher for socializing them into a linguistically and socioculturally appropriate behavior lie at the core of the educational enterprise. Both are necessary for pleasurable and effective language learning. The good teacher fosters both compliance and rebellion (1993a:246).

Here the struggle does not appear to be a shared struggle to learn, but rather a struggle which opposes learners and teachers to one another, rendering the full exercise of their respective agency mutually exclusive. This struggle is not presented as a breakdown of educational relationships, but rather as being built into the very nature of education itself:

There will always be a struggle between the teacher whose charge it is to make the students understand and eventually adopt foreign verbal behaviors and mindsets, and the learners who will continue to use transmitted knowledge for their own purposes, who will insist on making their own meanings and finding their own relevances. This struggle is the educational enterprise *per se* (1993a:239).

Since this struggle is so basic to education, Kramsch argues that it is to be fostered rather than discouraged. Education is presented as an inherently conflictual process.

(iv) Conflict between cultures

As has already been noted above, Kramsch argues that when a learner comes into contact with a foreign language and culture, a fresh threat of subordination and a fresh experience of

powerlessness appear. The learner, who is seeking to establish his or her meanings and thereby to gain power, faces the fresh blow of having to do so in a language which is already suffused with the meanings of another community. The alternatives of rejecting the foreign culture through identification with base culture meanings on the one hand, and being socialized into the foreign culture through adoption of its meanings on the other are equally threatening to the quest for authentic personal meaning as portrayed by Kramsch. Kramsch's alternative to distance and fusion is confrontation. Therefore, not only does the classroom become a place of conflict between the base culture values of the educational institution and the target culture values which are the focus of learning, but culture itself becomes "a place of struggle between the learners' meanings and those of native speakers" (Kramsch, 1993a:24). Learners are engaged in creating a "culture of the third kind" in the "interstices of the native and target cultures" while seeking to avoid being "bound by either one" (Kramsch, 1993a:23,257). Nevertheless, the learner's subordination to the existing foreign language and culture will always remain a locus of struggle: "this position of subordination can be made somewhat less painful as the learners become more proficient in the language, but it can never disappear" (Kramsch, 1993a:238).

More positively, it is this conflict which creates the space for learning as it makes otherness palpable. "The realisation of cross-cultural conflict and incommensurability of values offers the opportunity to pause and muster the effort necessary to speak, quite literally, in terms of the other" (Kramsch, 1995b:90). The clash of cultural voices jolts the learner out of her or his culturally centered comfort, forcing an encounter with difference.

In all of these various aspects of self-other conflict, such conflict undergirds the possibilities open to the individual for authentic agency. Insofar as Kramsch's account is pointing not to the overcoming of temporary social evils (as in Freire) but to what seem to be regarded as inevitable aspects of the structure of education, language, society and culture, conflict seems to become the permanent ground of the emergence of personhood. Individuality is impossible without difference, and difference is conceptualized as conflict. In the face of the threat of perpetual submersion in sameness, conflict opens up a fracture in which the

individual can stand, and in which he or she can achieve a measure of freedom, a freedom which seems bound up with the achievement, at least momentarily and partially, of autonomy over against communal patterns.

Conflict and Mutual Understanding in Paradox

The account of Kramsch's treatment of connection and conflict given thus far in this chapter remains one-sided. Alongside the conflictual metaphors, Kramsch retains an ideal of co-operation and transforming connection (1993a:23). She emphasizes the importance of dialogue, which

is motivated by ambivalent feelings of both empathy and antipathy. Like all human relations, any dialogue is always, potentially, headed toward harmony or order, or toward disorder or chaos. It draws its intensity from the delicate balance it maintains between the two (1993a:29).

In this dialogue, speakers of different languages "struggle to keep the channels of communication open in spite of or because of the ideological differences they recognize and maintain between them," exercising "an act of faith in the willingness and ability of people to bring about change through dialogue" (Kramsch, 1993a:23 cf. 1995b:90-1). Foreign language learning is to contribute to "international peace and understanding" (1987c:116), which should be approached on the basis of "the negotiation and joint construction of a reality that is agreed upon as a safeguard against communicative intolerance" (1991:226). How is this emphasis on the realization of peace between cultures and co-operation between individuals to be reconciled with the emphasis on the freeing role of conflict described above?

If one looks at particular verbal formulations in Kramsch's work of the status of conflict, considerable ambiguity emerges. At times she writes as if it is contingent and avoidable. She writes of the "*sometimes* irreducible differences between people's values and attitudes", and of multiple forms of discourse which "*potentially* overlap or enter into conflict with one another" (1995b:90, 1993a:241, emphases added). She emphasizes the importance of dialogue (1995c:11), of group learning (1993a:157), and (sounding almost like Curran) of the "intimacy and deep cooperativeness" which is "essential for cognitive and emotional growth" (1993a:104). At other times she writes of "a *permanent* confrontation of divergent value

systems" (1993a:23, emphasis added), of differences which "cannot be resolved through talk" and are "*irreducible* to any common ground, because they are born of incommensurable historical experiences and social conditions" (1995c:9,11), and of the voices which inhabit discourse as being "*by nature* in conflict with one another" (1993a:27, emphases added).

The analysis offered above of Kramsch's views on the relation of conflict to the nature of education, the nature of relationships between the individual and society, and the nature of language and culture seems to support the latter set of statements. Rather than seeking to hold Kramsch to the wording of any one formulation, I would argue on the basis of the evidence adduced in this chapter that there is a general metaphorical drift towards identifying conflict with difference and thus regarding it as inherent in reality. Talk of dialogue signifies that the both teacher and learner are actively engaged as subjects, but the form which this interaction seems to take is a power struggle. Conflict seems to be that by which the individual overcomes rather than that which is to be overcome.

This sense of the normality of conflict is strengthened rather than weakened by the language of paradox which is used to describe the achievement of connection implied in the more harmony-oriented statements. This language presents good connection as a paradoxical transcending of natural possibilities. In view of the scale of the obstacles to cross-cultural understanding, Kramsch suggests that successful communication across cultures should by rights be all but impossible. However, by an exercise of faith learners can act *as if* it were possible and in the process be graced with moments of connection:

In order to experience the failure of communication, one has to take up the challenge of communication. By doing "as if" it were possible to step out of one's usual frame of reference, to take on a different perspective, to enter into dialogue with a foreign speaker in a foreign language, by doing "as if" one could actually find answers to questions one wouldn't have even known could be asked, learners and teachers undergo an experience that does eventually change them and makes them see things differently (Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:21).

This experience of change comes from a liminal "life-changing dialogue" (Kramsch, 1993a, citing Attinasi and Friedrich) which, in its unexpected arrival, "creates a special space and time

at the boundaries between two views of the world" (Kramsch, 1993a:30). Kramsch writes that her approach is based on the conviction "that understanding and shared meaning, when it occurs, is a small miracle, brought about by the leap of faith that we call 'communication across cultures'" (1993a:2). Respecting the contradictory nature of the irreducible perspectives engaged in the dialogue, we should nonetheless hope that understanding will emerge (Kramsch, 1993a:226), that the confrontation of different perspectives will itself "provide a conceptual framework for a critical assessment of both systems of thought on a higher level than the merely experiential" (1993a:223).

Connection and disconnection are, then, held in paradox. Dialogue is made up of compliance and rebellion, empathy and antipathy, co-operation and conflict, the former of each pair emerging unexpectedly in spite of the latter. Why the interplay of different perceptions should yield a conceptual framework which is on a higher level than those perceptions, or why the conflictual struggle for personal meaning should yield transforming connection is not really explored. Good connection seems to require a transcending of the natural order with its inherent conflicts in a sudden burst of transcendence, an epiphany (Kramsch, 1995e:x). A dualism seems to be implied in which the harmony of a higher order of things flashes unaccountably forth as we engage in the conflictual struggle for meaning which marks our everyday world. I am reminded of an eccentric record collector interviewed on television some years ago, one of whose hobbies was playing five or six different records simultaneously. He conceded that the result for most of the time was cacophony, but described with enthusiasm the fleeting moments of beautiful harmony which would emerge unpredictably and unrepeatably from time to time. This seems to be something like the sense in which conflict is contingent and connection possible in Kramsch's approach: good connections emerge paradoxically from the conflicts.

Kramsch and her Sources

It is interesting in relation to this issue to consider Kramsch's use of those sources which have been emphasized in the present study. The emphasis on conflict as basic and liberatory closely reflects Giroux's approach. In his essay 'Radical Pedagogy and the Politics of Student

'Voice' (1997c [1986]), for instance, Giroux emphasizes the centrality of a concept of power which "signifies a level of conflict and struggle that plays itself out around the exchange of discourse and the lived experiences that such discourse produces, mediates, and legitimates" (1997c [1986]:121). This means that the task of developing and applying an "emancipatory theory of human agency" requires "a theory of schooling that offers the possibility for counterhegemonic struggle and ideological battle" - a theory which views schools as "sites of contestation and conflict" (1997c [1986]:120). Conservative educational theory is attacked for its "attempt to subsume the notion of difference within a discourse and set of practices that promote harmony, equality and respect within and between diverse cultural groups"; such an approach ignores "the autonomy of different cultural logics" (1997c [1986]:125). By contrast, an emancipatory pedagogy must focus on struggle, student voice and critical dialogue (1997c [1986]:132). The similarity between Giroux's account and the themes from Kramsch which have been discussed in this chapter will be obvious.

When Freire and Bakhtin are drawn into the picture, a more ambiguous situation results. I have indicated above the importance for Kramsch's work of the notion of conscientization and the paradoxical struggle of the oppressed to overcome the contradiction which informs their very consciousness. These are key themes in Freire's work. Likewise, Bakhtinian notions of the ideological nature of the sign and the idea of double-voiced discourse are important to Kramsch's approach. What is interesting in the context of the present critique is to note that there are themes in Freire and Bakhtin, both of whose writings were informed by Christian sensibilities, which are not taken up in Kramsch's work.

While Freire has an important place for revolutionary conflict with the goal of overturning (but not inverting) the hegemony of the oppressors, he construes this conflict as necessarily grounded in love if it is to be authentic (1996 [1970]:38). Rather than being liberatory in and of itself, conflict is an "initiation of love" which is to lead to relationships in which the dynamic of hegemony/subordination is overcome. Conflict is only essential when it is between antagonists; where the antagonism is overcome, it is replaced by a dialogue grounded in humility and love, a dialogue which "cannot exist...in the absence of a profound

love for the world and for people" (Freire, 1996 [1970]:70). This dialogue is not a reassertion of power over others: "human beings in communion liberate each other" (Freire, 1996 [1970]:110,114).⁹

This emphasis on communion can be found also in the writings of Bakhtin. While Bakhtin is acutely sensitive to the conflicting voices which inhabit language, and to the presence of tensions and differences where most have tended to see sameness, he also stresses the basicity of connection in positive terms:

Nonself-sufficiency, the impossibility of the existence of a single consciousness. I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a *thou*). Separation, dissociation, and enclosure within the self as the main reason for the loss of one's self...The very being of man (both external and internal) is the *deepest communion*. To *be* means to *communicate*...To *be* means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary: looking inside himself he looks *into the eyes of another* or *with the eyes of another*...I cannot manage without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance) (Bakhtin, 1984:287).

The polyphony¹⁰ of different voices which speak in language can sing in harmony without being submerged; polyphony does not necessarily represent struggle (contra Giroux, 1997c [1986]:132).¹¹ We not only contest the words of others but also affirm and build with them (Bakhtin, 1986:91).

This very brief consideration of neglected themes in Freire and Bakhtin is not intended to suggest that their work is unproblematic as compared with that of Kramsch; it is intended rather to point to what Kramsch has passed over silently in order to say what she has said (cf.

9) cf. Freire, 1996 [1970]:152: "In dialogical theory, at no stage can revolutionary action forgo communion with the people. Communion in turn elicits cooperation, which brings leaders and people to the fusion described by Guevara. This fusion can exist only if revolutionary action is really human, empathetic, loving, communicative, and humble, in order to be liberating." Leaving aside the questionable emphasis on fusion as the goal, it is worth noting that this foregrounding of love and humility as the preconditions of liberation is missing from the discourse of both Kramsch and Giroux.

10) Another Bakhtinian term drawing attention to the interaction of diverse voices in discourse.

11) cf. Bakhtin, 1984:21: "The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a higher order than in homophony."

Becker, 1992). Kramsch refers to Freire's conscientization as a goal, and stresses the importance of dialogue. However, while she refers to good connections in the language of both faith (1993a:23) and hope (1993a:226), I can find no mention of love as a ground or norm for such relationships. The term "dialogic" still (as in Freire) describes a pedagogy in which the agencies of both teacher and learner are brought into interaction, but the mode of this interaction is conflict rather than communion.¹² The passage cited above from Bakhtin likewise contains a number of themes which are important to Kramsch, in particular the social nature of consciousness, the difference within and the idea of existence on the boundary rather than in a centered essence, but there are also themes which are not highlighted as clearly in Kramsch's work: communion, being *for* the other, mutual acceptance. It is worth noting in the present context that the themes which have been left undeveloped are those where the Christian element in Freire's and Bakhtin's work emerges more clearly.¹³

These Freirean/Bakhtinian counterthemes point to questions which might suggest an alternative direction for Kramsch's work. If we are inherently social, deeply implicated in the discourses of our communities, then why should this state of affairs be associated mainly with disempowerment? Why not focus as well (not instead) on the constructive role which is played in the formation of identity by communal belonging? To take the example discussed earlier of the structures of the foreign (or for that matter, the native) language, granting that language is as in need of redemption as any other part of reality, it remains the case that if it were not for the existing structures which have been built up by the community without our participation it would not be possible to begin to speak at all, whether that speech be understood as maintaining or transforming what came before. I agree with Kramsch that our communities and our languages are not innocent, that they do contain deformations which should be resisted,

12) The term "dialogic" thus turns out to be less than univocal; its use by Kramsch seems to me to show significant differences from its meaning not only in Freire, but also in Bakhtin.

13) Freire's appeal to notions of love, humility, faith, conversion and rebirth clearly draw from Christian discourse. The extent of the Christian element in Bakhtin's work is disputed, though it is surely evident in the themes of being as communion and of the keeping and loss of the self in the passage cited above (see e.g. Emerson, 1986:33; 1990; Clark and Holquist, 1984:120-145). Holquist suggests that this emphasis in Bakhtin's work reflects a translation of "the Orthodox fascination with the soul's relation to God into a concern for the self's relation to others" (1986:7n.16).

and that assumptions of sameness are used to exclude. I am therefore sympathetic to her critique of an optimistic liberal pluralism which envisages an endless array of innocent differences. What I am missing in her account is an equally firm acknowledgement that we need to be nurtured by a community, even an imperfect one, for healthy personhood. Communal connections are not just something to be mastered and overcome, and they need not inevitably be insensitive to difference.

This returns us to the metaphorical drift identified above. Does Kramsch only intend us to conclude that education and language are suffused with conflicts in a society such as that which we now have, reflecting domination as a particular epochal theme (Freire, 1996 [1970]:84), or does she, as several of her formulations cited above seem to suggest, wish to go further and make conflict constitutive of the very nature of personhood, education and language? Are conflicts between cultures a sign of things not being the way they should be, or is difference itself to be construed as conflict in contrast with harmony as sameness? Is it authentic to accept, respect and build upon the words of others, or is true agency bound up with opposition? If the latter, then the exercise of power over subordinated others has been endowed with inevitability, conflict has been made to inhere in the nature of things, and only by transcending the given nature of reality will good connections occur.

Moreover, if difference is construed as conflict, then the grounds are removed for distinguishing differences which are rooted in fundamental conflicts in orientation from those which might represent potentially mutually enriching particularities. Differences are not all the same, but Kramsch's account does not distinguish clearly between, for instance differences of cultural style and differences of ultimate commitment. While these certainly are interconnected, they are not identical and exhibit varying degrees of incommensurability (cf. Kanpol, 1990; Mouw and Griffioen, 1993). This suggests a more contingent relationship between difference and conflict.

Pedagogical Issues

These questions may also be raised at the level of pedagogy. What might be the pedagogical results of an approach based on a philosophy of conflict? Kramsch herself points

to a possible negative effect of a relentless emphasis on irreducible difference: (1993a:69)

Learners of a foreign language may reach a stage of acculturation and empathy for the foreign language and culture, in which perceptions and counterperceptions seem to reflect each other ad infinitum, and where every interpretation seems so relative to any other that there is a real fear of losing oneself in the process (1993a:69n.5)

She goes on to point out that:

The realization of difference, not only between oneself and others, but between one's personal and one's social self, indeed between different perceptions of oneself can be at once an elating and deeply troubling experience (1993a:234)

This experience is compared to that of cultural migrants, who suffer from "feelings of being forever "betwixt and between", no longer at home in their original culture, nor really belonging to the host culture" (1993a:234). Such an experience displays clearly the loneliness of disconnection.

In response to this difficulty, Kramsch states that she will suggest "ways to break the cycle of relativity and to 'find a home' both in one's native and in the foreign language" (1993a:69n.5). However, when the "third place" which is to be the goal of learning is described, it is unclear whether this has been achieved to any significant degree. The "third place" toward which the learner is to be propelled by the unsettling foregrounding of difference is "between and beyond the social order of their native culture and that of the target culture" (Kramsch, 1993a:238), that is, it is a direct analogue of the experience of dislocation experienced by the cultural migrant. It is a shifting, undefinable place:

Nobody, least of all the teacher, can tell them where that very personal place is; for each learner it will be differently located, and will make different sense at different times (1993a:257).

It may be a "third place that they can name their own" (Kramsch, 1993a:257), but it seems to be a place which precludes being at home in either the native or the target culture, a place of homelessness poised at the intersection between multiple possibilities but afraid to belong too

firmly to any of them (1993a:234).¹⁴ Given this emphasis on the third place as an individual construct inaccessible to others, it is interesting to compare Kramsch's concerns here regarding the fear of losing oneself with Bakhtin's identification of separation and dissociation as the main reason for the loss of one's self (see above).

A further pedagogical question which must be raised concerns the possible effects of a consistent rhetoric of conflict and confrontation. Kramsch emphasizes repeatedly that classroom reality is constructed through the discourse of teachers and learners. What kind of classroom reality will result from a discourse of opposition and confrontation?

In her 1991 essay on views of culture in language learning in the United States, Kramsch questions how understanding across differences can emerge from various existing approaches:

How can intercultural understanding arise from a skill-oriented, behaviorally conceived foreign language proficiency? Do global understanding, cross-cultural awareness automatically grow out of being able to master the present tense, order a meal in a restaurant or handle social situations...? ...How can world peace, effective participation in an interdependent global society result from the adversarial view of the world suggested by the President's commission? (1991:223).

These are pertinent and telling questions, but it is surely equally pertinent to ask: how are peace and understanding to emerge from an approach predicated on the normality and liberatory value of conflict? Is the view of the world proposed by Kramsch not equally adversarial? What is it, then, which makes it more innocent? Does it offer liberation or an alternative hegemony of meanings engendered by a critical pedagogical perspective?¹⁵

14) Kramsch does at one point suggest a communal dimension to the experience of the "third place", describing tales of transformations or "conversions" through encounters with difference which "attempt to create a third culture, made of a common memory beyond time and place among people with similar experiences" (1993a:235). This is where learners are to "try to make themselves at home" (1993a:235). This raises as many questions as it answers: how does the emphasis on commonality in this third culture relate to the emphasis on difference in the first two? Is membership in this culture subject to the necessity of further displacement, or is it a place of rest? Is the commonality more than the shared experience of homelessness - in other words, if this culture is "beyond time and place", where is it?

15) cf. Ellsworth, 1989:301 and Gale, 1996:46-56, who suggest that critical pedagogy often cloaks the imposition of a specific political agenda in the language of critical reflection and dialogic pedagogy. Giroux calls for a "politics of representation which is open to contingency, difference, and self-reflexivity but still able to engage in a hegemonic project that reconstructs public life through a politics of democratic solidarity" (1994:35; cf. McLaren, 1994:207).

Finally, as with Curran, the affirmation of the learner's autonomous will to power creates difficulties for understanding the teacher's role in the learning process. Kramsch's understanding of the individual's relationship to social meanings implies that learner autonomy will not emerge from allowing maximum freedom from interference - teacher intervention is required to elicit critical consciousness. Kramsch describes in one place a lesson in which a teacher allowed learners considerable freedom in controlling their classroom conversation, imposing no linguistic restrictions. The result is a "context of communication in which what one says is not really of any consequence" as students raise and drop topics randomly and do not focus consciously on the implications of their choice of language (Kramsch, 1993a:81). Kramsch observes that:

by exercising as little control as possible, the teacher has constrained the discourse choices of the students rather than broadening them. Whenever a topic was dropped for lack of vocabulary, whenever the same opening gambit was used for lack of an alternative, or a superficial answer was given for lack of reflection, there was an opportunity to enable students to go beyond their current knowledge and stretch their cultural and linguistic resources. Several suggestions have been made to create such enabling conditions. For example, by tightening up the group task through a shorter time limit, and by setting clear objectives that make negotiation necessary...students are encouraged to clarify their utterances and make demands on their listeners (1993a:81).

This description and evaluation of a concrete teaching situation appears to point in a different direction from the above discussion. The agency of the teacher is exercised in shaping the parameters of interaction not in order to disempower the students, but rather in order to *enhance* their agency. The question here is whether this example coheres better with a theoretical perspective in which agency is identified with the gaining of power over another in an oppositional struggle, or one in which power can operate in a relationship of mutuality? If the teacher's control of the parameters of communication represents an "enabling condition" (Kramsch, 1993a:81), have learners necessarily gained if they resist and contest those parameters, or might they not also have lost?

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed Kramsch's work in a way which picks up on her emphasis on the significant role played by the metaphors which inform our discourse. Kramsch writes that "we have to commit ourselves to a set of metaphors" and calls for "increased irony and ethical judgment in discourse, as the currently prevalent metaphors might not be the only ones we wish to live by" (1993a:184; 1995a:13). I have argued that Kramsch's metaphors of contestation tend towards a devaluing of communal belonging through an affirmation of autonomy and power over others as more authentic forms of selfhood. These themes are developed in ways which suggest that relationships between self and society, teacher and student, native and foreigner are inherently conflictual, as difference becomes metaphorically associated with conflict. I have suggested that this causes tensions in Kramsch's account - her affirmation of goals such as peace and mutual understanding seems to run counter to some basic thrusts in her critical pedagogical framework; good connections with others seem to require a transcending of naturally given possibilities. This leaves the question of whether there are any other alternatives to a non-committal liberal pluralism, and of whether Kramsch's conflictual metaphors are the ones we wish to live by.

The discussion in this chapter has also sought to show the relevance to Kramsch's work of the themes of connection and autonomy raised in the first chapter. While there is much in Kramsch's account of the exclusionary potential of a dominant center and the conflicts which arise within our very speech which resonates positively with a Christian emphasis on the pervasiveness of broken connections, the suggestion that the brokenness is itself a part of the conditions of speech sits uncomfortably with the Christian belief that love is fundamental to reality. An account which takes its stand in a Christian understanding of personhood will find this aspect of Kramsch's work difficult to accept. Christian beliefs about the person do, then, offer a relevant standpoint from which it is possible to critique Kramsch's approach, even though Kramsch, unlike Curran, does not relate her work to the Christian tradition. As I hope this chapter has illustrated, such a critique need not be a matter of externally imposed concerns, alien to Kramsch's own interests. Assessment against a Christian view of the person

can suggest critical questions which are fully pertinent to the work of a theorist who claims no Christian motivation. I will return to this point in the final chapter, where I will draw together the criticisms which have been made of Curran and Kramsch, assess in more detail their implications for the question under discussion in this study, and make some suggestions towards an alternative approach.

Chapter 6

The Pertinence of a Christian Approach: Mutuality and Hospitality

Back to the Question

Having considered in some detail the approaches to foreign language education proposed by Charles A. Curran and Claire Kramsch, it is time to return to the questions raised in the first chapter and to assess what can be concluded from this study. The question posed at the outset was whether a Christian understanding of the human person might have any significance for the theory and practice of modern foreign language education. This broad question was narrowed for the purposes of the present study to particular selective themes of Christian anthropological reflection, which were exemplified from the work of Olthuis. These themes were the fundamental place given to loving connection as constitutive of the nature and calling of the human person, and the pervasive yet contingent presence of broken connections as that which should not be, that which deforms what is and calls out for healing. Being-with, not power-over, is understood as the condition of authentic personhood; power is authentically exercised in interpersonal relationships not in self-assertion and domination, but in mutuality and care for the other. These themes were understood as being worked out through all the facets of a multidimensional human existence which is distorted if these facets are reduced one to another.

The last four chapters have pursued these themes through the foreign language pedagogies of Curran and Kramsch, seeking their trace in both theoretical assumptions and pedagogical actions. In this concluding discussion I shall reverse the order followed in the introduction, first considering what has emerged from my examination of the more specific question, and then exploring the implications of this for the broader question.

Curran and Kramsch: A Concluding Assessment

(i) Power-over and Mutuality

The work of Curran and Kramsch exhibits a considerable amount of divergence, to the point of mutual incompatibility. Curran and the tradition of humanist psychology to which he belongs regard affective factors as fundamental and the person as basically individual and free.

Social and political factors are given little attention, being regarded as outworkings of affective dynamics. Language is a largely innocent medium of self-expression and interpersonal communication. Curran's pedagogy seeks to minimize teacher intervention in order to maximize the individual freedom of the learner. Nevertheless, the stated goal is loving community based on an underlying shared humanity and the universality of affective experience. The modern liberal tendency to deal with difference by bracketing it out in communal contexts is reflected in the evacuation of agency which is to accompany the meeting of self and other. Unconditional acceptance is seen as crucial to realizing community as the central goal.

Kramsch's adopted discourse of critical pedagogy regards dynamics of power as central and the political as primary. The person is constituted in language, a language which is riven by ideological conflict. The basic condition of the self is one of subjugation and struggle for emancipation. Student experience, affective or otherwise, is ideologically colored and compromised, and must be both affirmed and challenged. The authentic subject emerges not from an underlying sameness, but from the conflictual interplay of irreducible difference. Kramsch reflects a more postmodern emphasis on the upsurge of unbridgable differences and the oppressive nature of assumed consensus. Pedagogically, a high level of teacher intervention is required in order to raise critical consciousness of the ideological patterns which seek to dominate the self. The goal is emancipation, freedom for the individual construction of meaning. Opposition and conflict are seen as crucial to realizing critical consciousness as the central goal.

The differences are, then, profound. One has only to try to imagine one of Curran's CLL counselors interrupting a learner to point out that her last utterance was rooted in an American cultural ideology and thus represented a failure of communication, or a follower of Kramsch's approach observing without comment from outside the circle as a group of learners praise the American way of life, to realize that the theoretical differences are bound up with observable and significant differences in classroom practice. Despite these differences, however, there are also some commonalities which emerge from the struggle of both theorists with the relation of

self and other, individual and community. Themes of (threatened) ownership of personal territory, of activity versus passivity, of the will to power and an aggressive stance toward the other as bound up with authentic agency, of my agency and that of the other standing in conflict - each of these themes can be traced both in Curran's writings and in those of Kramsch. Both portray the learning process as consisting of an initial undesirable dependence, understood as sickness (Curran) or subjugation (Kramsch), which is to be overcome through the assertion of power over others. Both regard the teacher-learner conflict which arises from this scenario as something to be affirmed. Both retain an ideal of mutual understanding, yet both adopt a theoretical framework in which it is difficult to conceptualize the achievement of good connections between self and other; once power over the other is affirmed as normative for personal being, the agency of the self is conceived as being in basic opposition to that of the other. For both the modern self in its universal sameness and the postmodern self in its incommensurable differences the possibility of mutuality seems very uncertain.

(ii) Gift versus Call

Olthuis refers to life as a gift of love and a call to love (1989:31), expressing a Christian conviction that the ravages of evil stand illegitimately between loving connection as basic to the given nature of what is and loving connection as an undiminished call to that which should be. Ethics is, in this view, not a set of standards imposed from without on a reality the basic nature of which runs counter to them, but rather a calling of life to its authenticity (Olthuis, 1997:132-138). The common acceptance in Curran and Kramsch of power over others as necessary to agency runs counter to this view, but with somewhat different emphases. Put somewhat schematically, Curran's existentialist approach suggests that the basic nature of the person embraces a strong urge towards autonomy (individual self-assertion, freedom from the demands of the other, power-over), but that the call is to community (loving community, the move beyond self, the urge to connect). This is suggested by the way in which the other appears on the horizon initially as an unwelcome limitation on the self, as a boundary for the will to power. Even though the will to power and the will to community are both offered as part of what it means to be a person, and the call to community is there from the beginning, it

is presented as a call or an urge to go beyond the self; the self, then, seems to be fundamentally linked with the will to power.

Kramsch's work, on the other hand, seems to imply that it is the nature of the self to be deeply interwoven in a community through the medium of language, but that the call is to autonomy (resistance, freedom to make one's own meanings, power-over), an autonomy which will be paradoxically graced with moments of connection. The person in Kramsch's account is to move beyond an initial subjugation into a struggle for control over discourse. In the work of both Curran and Kramsch, conflict is made basic to human being, and mutuality seems to require the suspension of some aspect of humanness. Gift and call seem to be set over against one another; good connections are the contradiction or the suspension rather than the fulfilment of what is.

(iii) Facets of connection

Olthuis contends that the gift of and calling to connection is worked out through all the irreducible dimensions of human existence.¹ This contention goes hand in hand with a rejection of perspectives which seek to reduce certain dimensions to others or which locate good or evil exclusively in certain dimensions. I have suggested that both Curran's account and Kramsch's would benefit from greater differentiation. For Curran, the affective dimension of learning is taken to be that on the basis of which all else is to be explained. I have argued that this leads to an account of the whole person which is reductive. Ethical, social, cultural and fiduciary dimensions of personhood and community are underplayed as community is reduced to the feeling of community. In relation to Kramsch's work, I have suggested that an overriding focus on power relations in discourse leads, ironically, to an insufficiently differentiated understanding of difference in which difference is identified with conflict. The relationship between cultural and confessional differences, or between conflicts of ultimate commitment and the mutually enriching differences which can emerge from human

1) The reformational philosophical tradition to which Olthuis adheres offers various slight variations on the following list of irreducible yet interlaced aspects of reality: numerical, spatial, kinematic, physical, biotic, psychic, logical, techno-formative, lingual, social, aesthetic, economic, juridical, ethical, fiduciary.

individuality and creativity, is submerged in a rhetoric which presents difference as confrontation in a struggle for power over language. I suggest, therefore, that on this count also the approaches studied are lacking from the viewpoint of an affirmation of connection and brokenness as multidimensionally expressed.

Are Christian Beliefs Relevant?

I submit, then, that both of these approaches are, taken as wholes, incompatible with the Christian anthropological perspective exemplified in Olthuis' work, and that Christian anthropological convictions have therefore been shown to be a relevant vantage point from which it is meaningful to examine them as approaches. Insofar as other alternative approaches to foreign language education must incorporate some view of interpersonal interaction, and will implicitly or explicitly either share or contest the basic assumptions of the particular approaches discussed here, they are in principle open to similar examination. A case has therefore been made not only for the narrower contention that Christian anthropological beliefs are relevant to discussion of Curran and Kramsch, but also (*prima facie*) for the broader contention that they are relevant to discussion of language teaching approaches in general. The following points will amplify and further justify this conclusion.

(i) The Role of Anthropological Beliefs

First, beliefs about the nature of the human person affect the whole process of foreign language education. I suggested in the opening chapter that the beliefs which make up an approach to foreign language education are not only beliefs about the nature of language and of language learning, at least if these are narrowly conceived. They also include anthropological beliefs. If, as Raymond Williams claims, "a definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world" (cited in Becker, 1984:217), it is surely all the more the case that a definition of language education, of how human beings help other human beings to engage educationally with language and with each other, implies an understanding of human beings in the world. Chapters two and four of this thesis illustrate this claim from the work of Curran and Kramsch. In each case I have sought to show how basic assumptions concerning the nature and calling of the person are not only matters for theoretical

concern, but are interrelated with patterns of pedagogical practice.² As was emphasized in the discussion of the relationship between approach, design and technique in chapter one, the connections are not rigidly deterministic, as if teaching techniques somehow leap unbidden and whole from anthropological beliefs. There are options, alternative ways of incarnating convictions. Nevertheless, the connections can be traced, consistencies or inconsistencies can be noted and discussed, and comparison of Curran and Kramsch shows that different beliefs are interrelated with different patterns of practice. It is this interrelation which makes a consideration of anthropological beliefs an important part of the discussion of language teaching; the beliefs adopted play a role in shaping what is done with and to students in our classrooms. If we do not wish to be randomly at the mercy of unrecognized anthropological assumptions, then there is a need for critical awareness and examination of the beliefs which are at work or at play in our approaches.

(ii) The Role of Christian Beliefs

Second, it follows from this point and from the preceding study of Curran and Kramsch, that Christian anthropological beliefs could inform a Christian approach to foreign language education in terms both of evaluating existing options and of developing alternatives. I have argued that anthropological beliefs are an operative ingredient in an approach, playing a role in the shaping of designs and techniques, and that particular Christian anthropological beliefs can be shown to be incompatible with those which have informed particular approaches. If these two points are accepted, it follows both that approaches to language teaching can be assessed for their degree of compatibility with Christian belief and that an approach to language teaching which is consistent with Christian belief will differ in some patterned way from those

2) It is therefore worth reiterating in the light of current suspicion of the traditional claims of theorists to the center that the anthropological beliefs in question may be held by teachers just as much as by theorists (see chapter 1).

approaches which are informed by incompatible beliefs.³

This conclusion does not depend upon the existence of beliefs which can be shown to be shared by all Christians and by no others. I have in this study sought to work with beliefs which would be shared by Christians of a broad range of theological orientations. Nevertheless, if a significantly different set of beliefs is proposed and defended as Christian it is not necessary to the present argument to adjudicate the rival claims. Divergent formulations within the Christian tradition might lead to divergent approaches, the relative faithfulness of which to the Christian scriptures can be a matter of discussion. Similarly, if the beliefs in question are shared in part or in whole by some who would reject the label ‘Christian’, this would seem to have little bearing on the claim that these beliefs can inform an approach to language teaching, and that those who espouse these beliefs on the grounds of confessed Christian faith will from the standpoint of that faith regard such an approach as desirable. The central point, and the one which is of the most practical relevance both to attempts by Christian schools of various theological backgrounds to develop Christian educational practices and to discussions of education in a confessionally plural society, is that confessionally held Christian beliefs can have significance for an approach to language teaching, contributing legitimately to the process by which certain practices are rejected and others adopted.

(iii) Orientation and Implementation

Third, the contribution of Christian beliefs will be one which offers orientation but does not tightly predetermine implementation. To reiterate what has been said already regarding approaches, designs and techniques, techniques are not usually exclusive to one particular design or approach; what is significant is how they are patterned and prioritized. The criticisms

3) It may help to achieve maximum clarity if the argument is presented slightly more formally:

1. Anthropological beliefs play a role in shaping design and technique when they are part of an approach.
2. Approach a can be shown to be influenced by anthropological belief x.
3. Belief x is incompatible with Christian belief y.

Therefore:

4. An approach to language teaching can be assessed for compatibility with Christian belief (from 2 and 3).
5. An approach which is consistent with Christian belief y will, other factors being equal, differ in some way in its patterning of design and technique from an approach shaped by an incompatible belief (from 1 and 3).

1-3 are asserted as conclusions of the discussion in chapters 2-5 of this study.

which have been made of Kramsch and Curran in this study do not therefore imply the need for a wholesale rejection by Christian educators of the teaching and learning activities which they have proposed. On the other hand, the conclusions reached in chapter three regarding the ways in which Curran's existentialist framework undermines his Christian intentions signal the inadequacy of relying simply on a Christian mission statement or confessional context as a sign that educational practices are Christian. If a foreign language teaching program seeks to be Christian, then it is necessary to explore both the coherence of confessional Christian beliefs with other beliefs at the level of approach, and ways of patterning design and technique which fruitfully reflect the approach adopted.

Furthermore, given the creativity which intervenes between approach, design and technique, good beliefs do not automatically lead to fruitful practices. It is possible to design language learning activities which seek to comport with impeccable beliefs and which turn out to be ineffective. This does not invalidate the beliefs which make up the approach unless it can be shown that no fruitful designs for learning can be found which comport well with those beliefs. The point of underlining this is to note that having concluded that Christian beliefs can shape an approach to language teaching, it does not follow that holding one's Christian beliefs to be true entails holding one's practices as a Christian educator to be automatically superior to any alternatives. Christian educators, like any others, work fallibly in the light of guiding convictions. If those convictions are life-giving, that should help, but the results in terms of designs for learning do not follow mechanically. This is where our responsibility as creative historical agents, as those called to image God, comes to the fore (cf. Smith, 1995).

(iv) Relevance to Wider Discussions

Fourth, the relevance of Christian anthropological beliefs is not of a parochial kind, of significance only to Christian educators. The idea of a Christian critique of approaches to foreign language education might easily be construed as the imposition of an alien discourse, somewhat like asking a panel of boxing referees to adjudicate an ice-skating competition. The results might be satisfactory to the community providing the judges, but they are unlikely to be seen as deserving much credence among the skaters. In chapters three and five I sought to

show that an evaluation of Curran's and Kramsch's approaches in terms of Christian beliefs regarding power and mutuality did not entail judging them by a standard which was foreign to their theoretical concerns. It entailed rather examining themes which are important and integral to their approaches in the light of an alternative construal. By exploring Curran's work in terms of his concern for the "whole person" and for the achievement of community, and Kramsch's work in terms of the metaphors which give her theory a particular orientation, I sought to approach and critique each theorist in a way which worked with rather than against some of their central concerns. By doing so I have hoped to show that Christian beliefs can guide a critique which both raises critical questions within the context of each theorist's existing concerns, whether or not the theorist in question confesses Christian belief, and points to an alternative direction which those concerns could take. If the Christian beliefs which are brought to the discussion reveal weaknesses in existing approaches and point constructively in alternative directions, then discussion of a Christian approach is pertinent not only to the Christian community but also to more general attempts to discern how we should teach foreign languages. Christian faith offers beliefs which have consequences for the discussion, beliefs which can lead to alternative construals, beliefs which I commend as potentially life-giving for foreign language education. If the above argument is sound, then any exclusion of them from the discussion would seem to rest on prejudice; it would not exclude beliefs from the formation of teaching designs, but rather exclude Christian beliefs from the permitted range of beliefs.

Ways Forward

The object of this thesis was to show through detailed case studies that Christian anthropological beliefs could, if consistently adopted and worked into practice, make a difference to the theory and practice of foreign language education. I have not undertaken the more daunting task of actually developing an approach consistent with the beliefs which I have commended. This task goes well beyond the present study in ways other than limitations of time, space and imagination.

First, it goes beyond the author of this study; in keeping with what has been suggested regarding personhood, I regard it as a communal rather than an individual task. Here a

beginning has already been made by groups of Christian language teachers such as the North American Christian Foreign Language Association, which has to date held and published proceedings from seven annual conferences, as well as more modest networks in Australia and the United Kingdom. These developments are still in their early stages.

Second, it goes beyond the themes of this study. Beliefs about the person may not be the only Christian beliefs which turn out to be relevant, Christian anthropological reflection is not exhausted by the specific themes engaged here, and foreign language education is not exhausted by consideration of teaching designs. The task of developing a Christian approach will therefore include not only the questions discussed above, but also issues such as the difference which a view of human beings as rooted in core spiritual commitments might make to the way in which members of the target culture are presented in foreign language textbooks. Can we move beyond the shallow consumers of many existing materials without rendering the linguistic content inaccessible? Here again, beginnings have been made, for instance in the French and German teaching materials developed by the Charis Project in the United Kingdom (Charis Modern Foreign Languages Writing Team, 1996a,b).

Third, the development of a Christian approach goes beyond the writing of theses. It is a matter not only of analysing theoretical issues, but of experimenting with responses to concrete classroom situations and problems. As I indicated in chapter one, the traffic does not all flow from approach to technique, from theory to the classroom. A Christian foreign language education must grow not only from Christian reflection, but also from creative Christian responses to concrete situations.

With these reservations in mind, I shall rest content here with indicating in outline some of the alternative directions which this study has suggested. I shall draw these from the counterthemes which have been discussed in Curran and Kramsch, from those elements of their discussions which their theoretical frameworks rendered problematic.

(i) Communication and the Call to Love

I noted at the end of chapter three my approval of Curran's emphasis on faith, hope, love and trust in foreign language learning, and also drew attention to a similar emphasis on

humility and love in Freire. These qualities point to a dimension of interpersonal relationships in the classroom which goes beyond technique, but which could be allowed to inform technique. I have, for instance, discussed elsewhere the possible methodological implications of linking the call to love the other with a concern for the truthfulness, or trustworthiness, of target language utterances (Smith, 1997a; cf. Myhren, 1991). I have argued that this requires responding to the communication of personal information in the target language by learners in terms primarily of its content rather than its form, discouraging the frequent learner impression that any utterance will do provided the linguistic form (whether structural or functional) is acceptable. This runs directly counter to suggestions such as that by Johnstone (1989:69) that learners should be encouraged to "distort reality. In other words tell lies!...present a false account of reality using language that is totally known."

This concern for an ethics of communication which would be somewhat differently oriented from those implicit in Curran's and Kramsch's accounts may also be applied to the ways in which classroom relationships are maintained and repaired. Curran, it will be recalled, advocates the open expression of hostility towards others in the classroom without the need to apologize. It seems to me more compatible with a Christian perspective to suggest that the need to apologize is only the beginning; while most teachers teach the language needed to apologize, facilitating target language utterances such as "I'm sorry I'm late", or "I'm sorry I didn't do my homework", it is far less common for the language of forgiveness to be either taught or practised.

In this respect I concur with Curran and Kramsch that mainstream communicative language teaching is often inadequate - there *is* more at stake in our speaking to each other than the transfer of items of frequently trivial information. Going beyond Curran and Kramsch, I am suggesting that this "more" needs to be understood not only in affective or ideological terms, but also in terms of an ethical call to love. The possible implications of this for language teaching practice are under-explored at present.

(ii) Bakhtin and Intersubjectivity

I believe that Kramsch is right to point to the importance of Bakhtin's writings for

language teachers, and I find helpful her use of Bakhtinian ideas to seek to overcome the dichotomy between an identity sealed in for freshness and a total assimilation to the other which is reflected in contemporary discussions of language learning. I have, however, suggested that Kramsch's reading of Bakhtin (a reading common to others in the critical pedagogical tradition)⁴ is at least one-sided. Kramsch focuses on the struggle between different voices within apparently single utterances which is revealed in a Bakhtinian analysis of heteroglossia and double-voiced discourse. In Bakhtin, however, such struggle does not seem to be inevitable; a polyphonic harmony remains a possibility, and different cultures can meet in such a way that "each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched." (Bakhtin, 1986:7). Here I shall consider briefly Bakhtin's treatment of two themes which have been discussed in both Curran and Kramsch, namely ownership and activity versus passivity.

Bakhtin emphasizes that any given speaker is not "the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe" (Bakhtin, 1986:69) - neither is he or she the last speaker, intoning the final word. Or speech is filled with and anticipates response from the words of others, and our linguistic agency is exercised in a re-accenting of words, building on them or polemicizing with them (Bakhtin, 1986:69). Through such assimilation, reworking or rejection existing language is rendered "internally persuasive" to the speaker (cf. Emerson, 1986:31). The desire to own the speech-deed in its totality is, however, characteristic of an inauthentic monologic discourse; in dialogue language always retains the trace of the other. I suggest that if this strand of Bakhtin's thought is understood in the light of his statement that the individual "has no internal sovereign territory" but is rather to be grounded in communion (1984:287), then what emerges is not an inevitable struggle for ownership of discourse, but rather an acceptance of an intersubjective realm of discourse which is equally open to conflict or connection. Bakhtin's account of language can then be read as undermining the ideal of individual autonomy, rather than constructing a fresh arena in which to struggle for its realization. Meanwhile, his emphasis on the ethical responsibility of speaking and on the spiritual orientation which positions the speaker's discourse prevents this emphasis on

⁴⁾ In addition to the works by Giroux and Cazden already cited, cf. Moraes, 1996.

connection from losing sight of personal agency or of the non-transparency of language.

This possibility of non-conflictual connection is supported by Bakhtin's emphasis on the co-presence of the speaker's agency with that of the hearer in the speech-deed. He criticizes the "fictions" of the active speaker and the corresponding passive listener which have dogged Western linguistics:

The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on. And the listener adopts this responsive attitude for the entire duration of the process of listening and understanding - sometimes literally from the speaker's first word (Bakhtin, 1986:68).⁵

Moreover, the speaker and hearer affect each other in their active involvement in the act of communication, responding in ongoing interaction to each other's orientation. This assertion of the simultaneous agency of speaker and hearer runs counter to certain themes discussed above in Curran and Kramsch, and undermines both an association of receiving from others with inauthentic passivity and, correspondingly, an association of agency with autonomous control. The passive listener of traditional linguistic accounts represents "only an abstract aspect of the real total act of actively responsive understanding" (1986:69) - in reality we live in connection with others, and this connection need not be expressed in alternating monologues. Once responsiveness to another's meanings - the willingness to receive a gift from another and to answer its call to loving response - is accepted as an authentic expression of agency, mutuality becomes conceivable.⁶

Could these themes help towards a view of foreign language learning which rejects a non-committal pluralism or a reduction of communication to swapping tidbits of information

5) For further discussion see Smith, 1996b.

6) cf. Taylor's description of what he calls dialogic agency, which resonates with some of Olthuis' concerns: "Think of two people sawing a log with a two-handed saw, or a couple dancing. A very important feature of human action is rhythming, cadence. Every apt, coordinated gesture has a certain flow. When one loses this flow, as occasionally happens, one falls into confusion; one's actions become inept and uncoordinated...Now in cases like the sawing of a log and ballroom dancing, it is crucial to their rhythming that it be shared" (1991:310). Taylor argues the importance of dialogical action in human relationships and suggests that "in order to follow up this line of thinking, we need...Bakhtin" (1991:314).

on the one hand and a capitulation to the war of all against all as the deeper commitments reflected in speech emerge on the other? Can we in an educational context address the differences between people, including differences of spiritual commitment, without either leaving them at the door, submerging them in assumed consensus or embracing perpetual conflict (cf. Smith, 1997b)? What might be the results of an exploration of Bakhtin's significance for foreign language education which explores his understanding of conflict and connection in a Christian and not only a Marxian context? These are questions which emerge from the present study as areas of possible further exploration.

(iii) Homes and Hospitality⁷

The shadow side of Curran's emphasis on community and the warm sense of belonging was the evocation of a community which seemed closed in on itself, concerned only with its internal affective dynamics and not clearly informed by a vital concern for the foreign other beyond the walls of the classroom. Kramsch, sensitive to precisely this dynamic and looking for de-centered subject positions to offset the exclusionary fixity of cultural identity, proposed a third place as the goal of learning which was compared to the place of cultural migrants, a place of homelessness and threatened loss of self. Do good connections exclude others, so that a healthy dose of conflict is the only hope for the intrusion of the other?⁸

Carvill (1991) has suggested an exploration of the biblical metaphor of hospitality to the alien in the context of foreign language education, an exploration in which I have more recently joined her (Smith, 1997c; Smith and Carvill, forthcoming). In a paper titled 'Teaching Culture as a Christian: Is it any Different?' Carvill wrote:

I suggest that one goal of FL education in the Christian schools is to form and prepare our students to become "good" foreigners in the target culture. That is to say to become foreigners who can be a blessing to the natives by being able to speak their tongue, by being able to hear their stories, by asking good questions, in short, by using the special freedom an educated foreigner has in the guest country and by being a loving presence...The other goal...is to educate the students to

7) The following discussion draws from Smith, 1997c.

8) cf. Derrida's comment: "If by community one implies, as is often the case, a harmonious group, consensus, and fundamental agreement beneath the phenomena of discord or war, then I don't believe in it very much and I sense in it as much threat as promise" (cited in Caputo, 1997:107).

become good hosts to the foreigner, the stranger, or the alien in their own land, to receive the representative of the target culture graciously and with love, and to practice a kind of hospitality which is a blessing both to the guest and to the host (Carvill, 1991:17-18).

This hospitality is to be understood not only literally but also more metaphorically as a welcoming of that which is foreign into our mental and cultural space and interacting with it lovingly.

The metaphor of hospitality to the stranger is rooted in the repeated insistence in the Pentateuch that Israel should be careful to respect and care for the stranger, the widow and the orphan (see Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:19; 24:17; 27:19). This suggests that it need not be regarded as a cosy image of innocence, forgetful of conflict and misunderstanding, for the biblical call to care for the stranger, the widow and the orphan is precisely a call to attend to the results of conflict and disconnection (cf. Spina, 1983), and to open up a community to those who are being excluded from it. Carvill's focus on the callings of both host and stranger signals awareness of the dangers of identifying only with the host; relating to the stranger involves embracing both callings (cf. Gittins, 1994). In a postmodern context, where the stranger is no longer resident somewhere overseas and the roles of host and stranger may alternate for the same person in the same geographical space as the apparent homogeneity of our communities dwindles, this awareness takes on added importance.

What is particularly relevant to the present discussion is the fact that hospitality implies having a home, and welcome takes place within a stable space. Giving notice that the house is standing vacant and available to any who care to use it is not hospitality. There is likewise only a minimum of hospitality...involved in inviting a large party of guests to your neighbour's house (especially if you do not let the neighbour in on what is going on), or in inviting others to make themselves at home, say, in Central Park, or the Grand Canyon (Caputo, 1997:110)

While the host is rooted in a home and has a right to maintain some standards, however, the host's home is not a castle. Hospitality is not a function of sovereign possession; it is rather

exercised in the awareness that a home is a gift which brings with it a call to care.⁹ It does not serve as an exclusive refuge from the foreign, but has an openness, a willingness to give space to, listen to and maybe be changed by the foreign. Having a home does not exclude openness to the stranger - it is the very fact of having a home which enables and brings some obligation to hospitality. Gift and call come intimately intertwined.

Hospitality also implies that the stranger will not only be greeted but given loving attention. The stranger will not only be fed and watered, his or her voice will be given space. Her discomforts will be met with concern, his stories will be heard and responded to (cf. Murray, 1990:18). The fact that those stories may be new and different enriches rather than threatens the host's task. The host is only obliged to listen, not to ape the stranger or agree with his or her every word - the host's calling is to let the stranger remain different while still offering acceptance and friendship (Murray, 1990:18). We have all experienced the difference between homes where we are merely greeted with carefully measured civility and ones in which we are genuinely welcomed and in which there is genuine give and take.

What of the stranger? Every host knows that there are good and bad guests. Some guests are tolerated with concealed but fervent hopes for their early departure. They leave the fabric of the home damaged, ruptured, having no eye for the potential frictions between their own ways of being and the tone of their temporary home. They exploit the benefits of the hospitality received, but leave little sense of blessing behind, except perhaps relief at their departure. Other strangers leave a sense of enrichment, of new life. They tread lightly around their borrowed home, showing sensitivity and care. They ask questions which allow the host to tell old stories to a fresh audience, and perhaps to see old realities in a fresh light. They bring

9) I do not think that Caputo(/Derrida) is right to view being at home as implying sovereignty, and therefore to conclude that making a guest feel at home implies a total relinquishing of the home which in turn negates hospitality (1997:111) - this line of argument seems to turn (again) on a struggle for ownership; perhaps, however, home too is not property so much as a gift/call. Walsh argues that "Grasping the gift will invariably result in its loss. Receiving the gift and heeding its call to a suffering service can provide us with a profound sense of home even in the midst of exile and animate our lives with a hope of a final restoration, a final and joyous homecoming. But that homecoming is only sustainable if it is manifest in a home-making community that is characterized by a praxis of hospitality" (1997:23). Here, home is regarded not as a sovereign possession but as a trust, suggesting that it is the call to homemaking, not sovereign ownership, which enables hospitality.

a new perspective on things and tell stories which the host has not heard before, and their difference is therefore a blessing. Such strangers, as they respond to their distinctive calling, bear gifts.

Might this metaphor, with its evocation of a relationship of mutuality in which wounds and conflicts are acknowledged and differences are met with loving attention, lead us in healthier directions than the dilemma between community and conflict? Might it even be timely in a culture in which hospitality is said to be in decline (Murray, 1990:47-8)? If cross-cultural communication is rooted in a concern for the well-being of the other, a desire to leave behind a blessing, then the other is no longer essentially a rival. If learning the other's culture and gaining skills and breadth of knowledge is oriented towards being able to hear the other's stories, giving the other space to be human, then power becomes a question of being with and for the other, rather than of domination or self-empowerment. I therefore submit that hospitality as a guiding metaphor for reflection on foreign language learning might go some way towards honoring self, other, and the call to loving connection to which both are accountable. Perhaps this is a metaphor we might want to live by.¹⁰

Conclusion

These suggested areas of further explanation have been touched upon very briefly, and remain very sketchy pointers. I have included them here in order to affirm that the relevance of a Christian approach to foreign language education is not restricted to critique, as if the main function of Christian belief were to show that others are wrong. Given the puzzlement with which the suggestion of the possibility of a Christian approach is often met even among Christian foreign language educators, let alone those for whom the relationship between faith and learning does not seem a personally relevant issue, I have focused this thesis on the question of whether such a suggestion is meaningful and legitimate. I believe that I have shown that it is. Accepting a Christian view of the person can orient one among the diversity of approaches which are commended to foreign language educators. If this leaves a sense of lack, pointing the way to a larger and as yet unfulfilled task of developing positive Christian

¹⁰) For further exploration, see Smith and Carvill, forthcoming.

contributions to the field, then I shall regard that not only as a limitation of this study, but as a sign of its success.

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