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SUMMERHILL SCHOOL
IS IT POSSIBLE IN
AOTEAROA
??????? NEW ZEALAND ???????
CHALLENGING THE NEO-LIBERAL IDEOLOGIES
IN OUR HEGEMONIC SCHOOLING SYSTEM



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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A four paper thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

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by

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Abstract

The original purpose of this thesis is to explore the possibility of setting up a school in Aotearoa (New Zealand) that operates according to the principles and philosophies of Summerhill School in Suffolk, England. An examination of Summerhill School is therefore the purpose of this study, particularly because of its commitment to *self-regulation* and *direct democracy* for children. My argument within this study is that Summerhill presents precisely the type of model Maori as Tangata Whenua (Indigenous people of Aotearoa) need in our design of an alternative schooling programme, given that self-regulation and direct democracy are traits conducive to achieving Tino Rangitiratanga (Self-government, autonomy and control). In claiming this however, not only would Tangata Whenua benefit from this model of schooling; indeed it has the potential to serve the purpose of all people regardless of age race or gender. At present, no school in Aotearoa has replicated Summerhill's principles and philosophies in their entirety.

Given the constraints of a Master's thesis, this piece of work is therefore only intended as a theoretical background study for a much larger kaupapa (purpose). It is my intention to produce a further and more comprehensive study in the future using Summerhill as a vehicle to initiate a model school in Aotearoa that is completely antithetical to the dominant neo-liberal philosophy of our age. To this end, my study intends to demonstrate how neo-liberal schooling is universally dictated by global money market trends, and how it is an ideology fueled by the indifferent acceptance of the general population. In other words, neo-liberal theory is a theory of capitalist colonisation.

In order to address the long term vision, this project will be comprised of two major components. The first will be a study of the principal philosophies that govern Summerhill School. As I will argue, Summerhill creates an environment that is uniquely successful and fulfilling for the children who attend. At the same time, it will also be shown how it is a philosophy that is entirely contrary to a neo-liberal

mindset; an antidote, to a certain extent, to the ills of contemporary schooling. The second component will address the historical movement of schooling in Aotearoa since the Labour Party's landslide victory in 1984, and how the New Zealand Curriculum has been affected by these changes. I intend to trace the importation of neo-liberal methodologies into Aotearoa such as the 'Picot Taskforce,' 'Tomorrows Schools' and 'Bulk Funding,' to name but a few. The neo-liberal ideologies that have swept through this country in the last two decades have relentlessly metamorphosised departments into businesses and forced ministries into the marketplace, hence causing the 'ideological reduction of education' and confining it to the parameters of schooling.

The purpose of this research project is to act as a catalyst for the ultimate materialization of an original vision; the implementation of a school like Summerhill in Aotearoa. A study of the neo-liberal ideologies that currently dominate this country is imperative in order to understand the current schooling situation in Aotearoa and create an informed comparison between the 'learning for freedom' style of Summerhill and the 'learning to earn' style of our status quo schools. It is my hope to strengthen the argument in favour of Summerhill philosophy by offering an understanding of the difference between the two completely opposing methods of learning.

**IN
MEMORY
OF
A. S. NEILL
WITH
LOVE**

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E ai ki te korero; ‘Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi, me tuohu koe he maunga teitei’.

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INTRODUCTION: Research Design and Rationale

*Waikato taniwharau
He piko he taniwha
He piko he taniwha*

I was born into a family of two cultures. My mother is Maori and my father was Pakeha (white). My mother is of Tainui descent, our iwi (tribe) here in Aotearoa is known as Waikato. Our tupuna (ancestors) were a ‘bird totem people’ who traveled to this land aboard the waka (canoe) Tainui, 700 – 1000 (circa) years ago. The waka Tainui came here from distant shores, from a place we know of as Rangiatea – Hawaiki nui, Hawaiki roa, Hawaiki pamamao. The tupuna who guided Tainui¹ were very astute in both the art of navigation through astronomy and the spiritual connection with animal guides through the power of karakia (prayer and chant). This made them courageous seafarers. Before they left Rangiatea our tupuna knew that Aotearoa was here; they knew exactly where they were going and how to get there. The Pacific Ocean was their highway and the sky was their map. When the sky map was closed, the birds and sea guardians were their guide. Those tupuna aboard the waka were courageous, intelligent and highly spiritual. How else could they have traveled so far across the ocean to this isolated land without the aid of machinery?

Aotearoa is a long way away from the original birthplace of humankind; and our tupuna had evolved and survived thousands and thousands of years before finally coming to this land. They became the tangata whenua of Aotearoa. In contemporary times the tangata whenua of Aotearoa from every tribe and waka are collectively known as the Maori people. We are the descendants, the remnants of those brave and intelligent tupuna.

¹ There were many waka that traveled to Aotearoa, Tainui was not the only one.

I have another side; my father was Pakeha. His great great grandparents came to Aotearoa from Marden, Kent, England in 1841 aboard the barque 'Catherine Steward Forbes'. Our family name 'Peck' was a locality name derived originally from the Normans for the people who lived 'at the peck'; or the people who lived on top of the hill. Daniel and Elizabeth Peck, like many other emigrants from England at the time, sort to come to this English colony they knew of as New Zealand in search of a better life. They were typical hard working people of who make up the base ancestral stock of the white kiwi culture we know of today. They came here in hope of a better life in this land that they believed would be a 'classless society' where everyone would have a fair chance and get a fair piece of the pie. They knew nothing of the tangata whenua that already inhabited the land. They were led to believe that this land was their land; it was awaiting their arrival and their inhabitation.

150 – 200 (circa) years of white inhabitation changed the face of Aotearoa and altered the lifestyle of the tangata whenua tribes. Land wars involving Maori and Pakeha occurred, and racial tensions abounded. The country became known as New Zealand to many people and it was in a sense an *almost* classless society compared to that of England. Maori and Pakeha learned to live together. By the mid to late 1900's the Pakeha thought that the colonising process was ticking along well and that Maori and Pakeha were living in acceptable harmony. To the Maori however there was still underlying racial disharmony and a deep seated resentment, although outside appearances may have shown a different picture.

I was born in 1964 and as a result of colonisation, grew up in an early schooling environment where Maori were looked upon as being 'dumb'. When the teacher asked questions, the Maori 'kids' in the class would always put their heads down, they would rarely put their hands up to answer questions and it was almost expected that they did not know the answers anyway. I remember going to a small three classroom school when I was in standard three and four, and there were only three or four of us Maori families with tamariki (children) attending the school. Us

Maori 'kids' were the only ones at the school who did not wear the correct school uniform, in fact we didn't wear the uniform at all. My mother used to say that it was a waste of money to buy a school uniform for 'kids', and quite frankly I agree with her. There were much more important things in life; we never had an empty puku (stomach) no matter how many tamariki were around and our whare (home) was always warm.

As a child the term 'dumb Maori' was a common sound to my ears and both white and brown people seemed to believe it. I never could fathom that term and never believed it myself. I saw myself as being Maori but could not believe that I was dumb. At the same time I saw many Maori around me believing it to be true as their self-esteem withered before my eyes. European knowledge served to marginalise traditional Maori knowledge and cultural values through the process of assimilation. They said that the Pakeha way was the only way forward in this world and there was no future for us by learning Te reo Maori me ona tikanga (Maori language and cultural values). A lot of Maori parents of my parents' generation believed that too; they were brainwashed themselves. As I got older I realized that this mindset had become embedded in the peoples' consciousness as a direct result of colonisation.

It took years for me to work through the whole process of bitterness toward Pakeha and their 'ignorant' ramblings. They seemed to me to be a race of people who thought that they knew what was best and that Maori knew nothing. I could not agree with that whakaaro (way of thinking). It saddened me to see a race of beautiful Maori people become more and more displaced by the dominant hegemonic discourse that surrounded us and our tupuna before. Eventually however the bitterness subsided as I began to look at life from a dialectical perspective and attempted to resolve contradictions at a higher level of truth. How could I justify the bitter whakaaro toward Pakeha when a whole half of my breeding stemmed from that very culture itself? It was from there that I learned (and continue to learn) about my Pakeha culture and I learned about my Maori culture

with a deeper level of understanding for both. I recognised a simple concept; that *we all belong to the family of humankind; we all have just as much right as each other to be here on this earth.* It was a simple concept that I had already known as a small child, but had eventually lost sight of it as I surrounded myself with adult barriers of hatred. It was now time to break through those barriers and let go.

Somewhere in this time span of enlightenment I decided to become a kaiako (teacher) and perhaps be able to make some kind of sense out of the mess that had been created by the whole colonisation process. In all of my enthusiasm, I thought that I could make a positive difference. To my surprise the years in the classroom showed me a classical mess that just got messier. Contradictions and ironies were rife and we as kaiako were expected to be the deliverers of these very same contradictions and ironies. By delivering market influenced ideologies we perpetuated the mess that our schooling system was in; and Maori were at the bottom of the heap.

While enduring the hard labour of delivering and imposing false values of ‘conformity’ and ‘non-thinking’ upon children, I realised that these were in fact ideologies of colonisation that were deliberately in place for specific reasons. But the biggest surprise was yet to come; ‘conformity’ and ‘non-thinking’ were not directed specifically at Maori, they were directed toward *all* children in the schooling system. There was a bigger picture, a global picture because the children all grow up and eventually become the ‘working majority’. Therefore conformity and non-thinking were necessities in order to create the ‘wage slaves’ that will keep the system of ‘capitalism’ alive.

If capitalism is to thrive, then freedom and true democracy must be held in check at all costs, and it must be done willingly by the people. Schools espouse freedom and democracy; at school the children may talk about it, read about it, listen about it and write about it, but they don’t actually live it. While this assault on my integrity continued I would often read about a school in England I had heard of called

‘Summerhill’. For fifteen years now, I have been periodically reading and learning about Summerhill. In my mind it was a glimpse of a vision; a dream that danced on the periphery. I would imagine all schools in Aotearoa functioning as Summerhill does. I would see a population of people living in harmony with each other and their environment who possess the power of autonomous and interdependent thinking. There would be no more dictatorship by global market forces or any other kind of external force because the people would possess the power of their own thoughts and would no longer be bullied or fooled.

A combination study that both supports Summerhill School and opposes the way that the market forces operate is therefore the kaupapa (purpose) of this thesis. It is a theoretical thesis based on theoretical evidence and research. I felt that it was unsuitable to interview people and conduct surveys in response to the idea of Summerhill, as Aotearoa is still such a young country in regard to westernised schooling, and Summerhill is still almost unheard of by the general population. Maori and indigenous peoples especially may find the philosophies of Summerhill to be in harmony with their natural ways of thinking. Summerhill is a place where children are cherished and more importantly where they are allowed to *think* for themselves in every aspect of their lives. This study will attempt to show an alternative way of learning for our children that is quite possible if we can only change the ways we have been ‘schooled’ to think.

CHAPTER 1: DEMOCRACY AT SUMMERHILL

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself
They come through you but not from you
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you

You may give them your love but not your thoughts
For they have their own thoughts
You may house their bodies but not their souls
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow
Which you cannot visit
Not even in your dreams

You may strive to be like them
But seek not to make them like you
For life goes not backward
Nor tarries with yesterday

(From *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran)

1. Introduction: Direct democracy in action

This chapter will involve an examination of the concept of democracy in relation to the Summerhill school community. Summerhill's schooling alternative is an example which could be applied and adapted within a Kiwi² context to suit the people of Aotearoa because of the similarities between the two countries. England is a country riddled with neo-liberal ideologies and Aotearoa is rapidly following suit. Summerhill philosophies emerge from a paradigm of freedom and are a way of counteracting the impositions of the neo-liberal bureaucratic system. The comparison using Summerhill as a model offers hope and enlightenment toward the possibility of creating a similar school that is based in Aotearoa.

A variety of literature has been consulted for this overview, particularly those works written by the founder of Summerhill himself—A.S. Neill (1970, 1971, 1975). In

² Slang for New Zealand people

addition to this material, literature written by people who have had close or intimate contact with either Neill or Summerhill over a period of time has been included. Matthew Appleton (2000), for example, was a popular house parent at Summerhill for a number of years and was privy to many intimate details about the school. Ray Hemmings (1972) likewise was a lecturer in education at the University of Leicester and completed a concentrated piece of research about A.S. Neill. This covered many decades of Neill's life, from childhood to student—and later to student-teacher—and later to headmaster.

In addition, many influenced Neill beyond Summerhill. Wilhelm Reich (1962, 1971) was an Austrian psychoanalyst whom Neill had an intimate intellectual and emotional friendship with for many years. Reich's ideas influenced Neill's heavily with regard to child rearing, self-regulation, and the invasion of 'sex morality'. Many of Reich's views, especially of 'class consciousness,' were so far outside the normative boundaries of thinking for his time. To this end, he was classed in a notoriously rebellious light by the fascist regime of Europe, with many of his books being withdrawn and impounded by the Gestapo during the 1930s and 40s for fear of soliciting an uprising among the people.

Henrik Ibsen (1995) was a Norwegian playwright, another upstream swimmer whose work Neill admired and quoted often throughout his life. Bjarne Segefjord (1971) was a Danish educator who was provided with a grant from his country's tax revenue to visit Summerhill for two months in the late 1960's and observe its methodologies. And of course there is also the influence of Zoë Neill Readhead—A.S. Neill's only child—who spent her entire life growing up Summerhill style (Vaughan, 2006). Neill pioneered his ideas on child rearing, self-regulation, and freedom by using Zoë as a real life example. Zoë is the current Principal of Summerhill School.

The purpose of this chapter then is to examine why A.S. Neill chose to operate a school with such a radical philosophy for the time. As we will see, his thinking was very much predicated on his views about democracy; of what we should expect in

an upbringing to allow people to be capable of free thinking in a so-called democratic society.

2. A. S. Neill: What motivated the creation of Summerhill?

Alexander Sutherland Neill was born in Forfar, Scotland on October 18, 1883. He grew up in a strict Calvinist³ home. He attended school where his father was the school master in a one room, five class village school. He was considered a failure at school because of his “inability to progress very far in education” and he was the only child in his family who did not attend Forfar Academy (Bookrags, 2008). At 14 years of age Neill went to work in an Edinburgh factory, but he became so lonely that he was allowed to return home. After a failed attempt at being a shop assistant, his father took him on as a student-teacher where he remained for four years. “Neill's experiences as a young educator were colored by traditional educational expectations: strict discipline, teacher-centered learning practices, and excessive control” (Education State University, 2008).

He spent a few miserable years in teaching positions and gained his teaching certification. By his mid 20's he enrolled as an agriculture student at Edinburgh University and passed his first year, although he claimed that he understood very little of the lectures (Bookrags, 2008). He then changed his major to English and received his master's degree in 1912.

At the beginning of World War I Neill became the headmaster of a school in Scotland which trained its students for domestic service and farm work. He began to realize that conventional schooling was oppressive, authoritarian and a waste of time. He left the school and had an attempt as an artillery cadet. This is where he met Homer Lane who advocated “progressive education” and argued in favour of allowing children to govern themselves. Homer Lane opened Neill's eyes to a new way of seeing things. When the War ended Neill got a job as a teacher at King Alfred School in Hampstead. He experimented in his class with this new concept of

³ Calvinism was developed by John Calvin (1509 – 64).

freedom and self-government. Unfortunately not everyone agreed and he was forced to resign in 1920.

In 1921 he and a group of other people founded the original Summerhill in Dresden, Germany. Political disorder caused him to move the school to the highlands in Austria where the local inhabitants and the government disagreed with his unorthodox teaching methods. In less than a year he was once again forced to move. In 1924 he moved Summerhill to England near a small town called Leiston in Suffolk where it remains today. During World War II they had to temporarily move the school to another part of England so the military could use it as a headquarters. Upon their return to the school at the end of the war they found the buildings and amenities in disarray and in dire need of repair.

Over the years A. S. Neill has become a well known educator and has authored many books which have gained international acclaim. It is through his published writings on Summerhill and self-regulation that the school has become world renowned (Bookrags, 2008). But why did Neill choose freedom and self-regulation? Why did he choose an alternative pathway instead of staying with the status quo method of schooling?

It must be remembered that around the 18th century, England was the original birth place of the Industrial Revolution which eventually spread to every other continent. England and Europe were to experience the most “far-reaching influential transformation of human culture” since the arrival of agriculture circa 5,000-10,000 years ago. It was more than technological change; it was an extreme social change. Europe shifted from an agricultural and rural economy to a feudal > capitalist and urban economy; from a household, family based economy to an industry based economy (Hooker, 2008).

Social and personal obligations were restructured and the family economy began to disintegrate. The demand for handcrafted goods made by family units which were

passed down through generations of labour and knowledge saw a rapid decline. The Industrial Revolution with its technological breakthroughs brought with it the ability to mass produce without thought for personal and social repercussions. It was the birth of the ‘machine’. While the 18th and 19th centuries progressed, family clans were abandoned as the peasantries were forced to move from their villages to the big urban centres of mass production. In the late 19th century and early 20th century “the concentration of capital led to the formation of giant enterprises managed by hierarchically organized bureaucracies. Large conglomerations of workers and clerks work together, each individual a part of a vast organized production machine” (Fromm, 1960). Each individual worker becomes a part of this production machine and must be organized and manipulated in order for production to run smoothly.

At first it was easy to control the masses because they were naïve peasants coming in from the back blocks and desperate to survive. Over time however, progressive thinkers began to pick holes in the production system. The once overt authority where authority was exercised openly had to change and became an anonymous authority, where minds had to be manipulated in a more covert manner. Education and schooling were to become a major vehicle for social and economic manipulation on a grand scale to ensure that production continued to run smoothly. Schools were used as social experiments to create and push out the malleable workers⁴ needed to keep the production machine in operation. Fromm (1960) explained it clearly;

Our economic system must create [men] who fit its needs; [men] who cooperate smoothly; [men] who *want* to consume more and more. Our system must create [men] whose tastes are standardized, [men] who can be easily influenced, [men] whose needs can be anticipated. Our system needs [men] who *feel* free and independent but who are nevertheless willing to do what is expected of them, [men] who will fit into the social machine without friction, who can be guided without force, who can be led without leaders, and who can be directed without any aim except the one to “make good”.

⁴ The wage slaves.

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, progressive thinkers were simultaneously fighting back by proclaiming ideas of freedom, democracy and self-determination. The idea was to replace authority with freedom. Schools with alternative philosophies were to become known as “progressive schools”. By this time A. S. Neill had formulated anti-authoritarian ideals and could see through the robotic conditioning that the schooling system had adopted in the form of an anonymous authority i.e. through the indoctrination or the manipulative programming of the mind. Neill reacted to the authoritarian times by creating a school that did not support or agree with those ideologies; he did not want to create non-thinking robots that would continue to perpetuate the economic system. He wanted his students to be able to think about and see clearly the world around them and the only way that could be achieved was through freedom and democracy.

Summerhill was first founded by A.S. Neill in 1921⁵ and has been successfully standing true to the same principles of freedom for the last 87 years. Summerhill is often referred to as the “Oldest Children’s Democracy in the World” (Vaughan, 2006, p.ix). When one observes the aims of Summerhill and how these have remained constant and unaltered for so many years, one realizes the truth of this statement. Summerhill’s longevity and success in allowing children the ontological freedom to be autonomous, self-regulated beings, ultimately sings its own praises. Summerhill’s inception was due to a need at the time to release the children that were to attend from the impending force of mind control. A force strengthened by the growing economic industry and if allowed to be perpetuated would place the children at a disadvantage and would deny them the right, or more correctly the *ability* to disengage from that dictatorial capitalist force. The key aims of Summerhill are designed to specifically address this problem. The key aims of Summerhill are well known to many educators but are described in one of the most recent books as follows (Vaughan, 2006, p.viii):

⁵ A.S. Neill was named as one of the twelve most influential educators of the twentieth century by the *Times Educational Supplement* in their millennium edition. See ‘On Giant’s Shoulders’ (TES, 31 December 1999, p.xx)

- to allow children freedom to grow emotionally
- to give children power over their own lives
- to give children the time to develop naturally
- to create a happier childhood by removing fear and coercion by adults

These key aims are designed to allow children the freedom to become autonomous thinkers. Autonomous thinking children will turn into autonomous thinking adults and it was intended to lessen the chance of external manipulation that without Summerhill would otherwise have been an almost predictable part of their future.

A special feature of Summerhill to allow the achievement of these aims has undoubtedly been the school's commitment to democracy. Neill saw that democracy was only authentic if it was lived. This children's 'democracy' indicates a 'direct democracy' or a democracy that is governed directly by its community members—minus any proportional representatives or bureaucratic administrators. This is undoubtedly the reason why Summerhill has become renowned for being such a rich and meaningful environment for children (Vaughan, 2006).

3. Direct democracy: Majority rule versus minority rule

Summerhill's famous 'meetings' are the vehicle by which direct democracy is brought to life. Rules are created and monitored in these meetings by all members⁶ of the school, otherwise known as the 'community'. Neill's description (cited in Vaughan, 2006, p.9) was that the General School Meeting was the venue where "all school rules were voted by the entire school, each pupil and each staff member having one vote". Through this process, children and adults were considered equal in status to each other, regardless of age, race, or gender. It was by means of the General School Meetings that everyone living in the community was thus allowed to have an equal voice through the exercise of their vote.

⁶ Members of the Summerhill community include all children and adolescent students as well as the adult staff members e.g. teachers, house parents etc.

In addition to voting equity, all members of the community were seen to share equal rights in initiating proposals for new policies to be voted upon. For example, a six year old's vote holds the same weight as that of a 17 year old's vote—or even the principal. If a new rule or a modification of a rule was to be proposed by a six year old, then that proposal is recognized as being just as valid, if aptly justified and supported, as a teenager's or adult's proposal. Appleton (2000) said;

You are then able to challenge the validity of any law, and propose it is dropped or replaced by a more relevant one. Likewise you may want to draw up a new law to cover something you think needs to be defined more clearly. There is usually some discussion, and then further proposals may be taken. These are then voted on and whichever one is passed becomes law until someone chooses to challenge it. So the school laws are forever in a state of evolution, reflecting the needs of the community at any given time (p.104).

Incredibly, this democratic process can produce in excess of 200 rules that govern the Summerhill community. These 200 plus rules are aside from the Health and Safety rules set in place by the Government. The compulsory Health and Safety rules cover such areas as swimming pool safety, food hygiene and fire regulations (Vaughan 2006). These rules are set in concrete by the Ministry of Education and therefore remain static and non-negotiable.

Summerhill's democracy differs from the pseudo-democracy that we are accustomed to which is the dictatorship of the majority with little or no chance of appeal by the minority. The distinction with Summerhill's democracy is that while it *is* based on decision making by the majority, the needs of the minority are nonetheless taken into account with the door always left open for justifiable appeal (Neill, 1970; Segefjord, 1971). For example, a rule or law may be established one week, but may be repealed and reconstructed the following week. More frequently, the majority would establish a certain law, only to find that as time passes, this law proves unenforceable or harmful in its consequences, so that in the end, the minority's choice is subsequently adopted. Appleton (2000) says; "...In a few days the air has cleared and everyone is seeing things from a calmer perspective. The appeal is carried... At Summerhill, everyone's feelings are taken seriously. Such is

the way of self-government” (pp.104, 105). As those at Summerhill learn, the most sensible code of behaviour is that which stands the practical test of time—creating the most loving and harmonious atmosphere that, as a result, generates a genuinely happy community. Neill understands this clearly when he sees the outcome of this system and confesses that “Summerhill is possibly the happiest school in the world” (Vaughan, 2006, p.9).

This healthy democratic model ensures that nothing is set in stone, therefore guaranteeing openness and flexibility for all of the evolving participants. In this way, the decision-making process remains fluid and alive and continues to be a true reflection of the community. Regardless of this explanation, it has been argued that democracy at Summerhill is a contradiction in terms; that it is just a pseudo-democracy because the rules are made by the command of a majority vote. In other words, what appears on the surface may not necessarily be the underlying reality. Therefore closer attention must now be paid to the idea of a ‘majority vote’ and the motives behind such practice.

Neill recognized that he had a dilemma with the idea of the majority vote rule and was known to quote what Ibsen had Stockman say in *An enemy of the people*; that is, “The majority is never right” (Ibsen, 1995, p.184). Stockman had become disillusioned with the townspeople who were the majority, believing them to have succumbed to a herd mentality where they simply did not think. The problem was, however, that the unthinking majority was nonetheless able to overpower the intelligent minority. As Ibsen wrote, the “minority is always in the right” and thus the majority *may* have the power but do *not* necessarily possess the right (1995).
Furthermore

I say that the majority is never right! That’s just one of those shibboleths that any free man capable of thinking must rebel against. Take any country—who makes up this majority? The intelligent people or the stupid ones? I think we can all agree that the stupid people are a terrifying, overwhelming majority anywhere in the world. But damn it, it can’t be right that the stupid should hold power over the intelligent (p.184).

In examining this notion of the “tyranny of the majority”, one can begin to understand why Neill had some kind of internal conflict with the idea of a democratic majority rule. For that reason, rather ironically, he used his authoritative power and *dictated* that a healthy, direct democracy *would* prevail at Summerhill, with the voice of the minority always taken into account. In doing so, Neill recognized that to have a healthy democracy, the minority must be valued rather than crushed and stamped out.

Segefjord (1971)—a Danish educator who visited Summerhill for two months in 1966—supported Neill’s beliefs. He argued; “If the majority were right, there would be no need for a minority to exist, and our development would have halted thousands of years ago” (p.15). This belief may explain one reason why Neill was so resolute in his yearning for a school that appreciated the honesty and intelligence of a minority. And because he was a forward thinker whose educational philosophies lay within a marginalized paradigm, he was forced to dictate a democracy that could cross the hegemonic barriers of England’s schooling system of the day. Hemmings (1972) speaks of Neill among his educational peers, and the courage he showed as a minority force;

The isolation in which Neill was left perhaps helped to throw his image into sharper relief, and he began to be regarded as something of an authority, particularly in the treatment of difficult children and many people on the fringe of education saw him as a man of courage and talent pursuing answers to questions that others chose to ignore. The sixteen years of Summerhill experience that Neill could now claim marked him as a seasoned practitioner, no passing cheapjack, and his evidence could not be so easily shrugged off (p.100).

The hegemonic barriers wreaked havoc in Neill’s mind. He felt alienated from the vast majority of people at the time, especially in the schooling system. This alienation gave Neill an understanding of how it felt to exist in a misunderstood minority. Evidence of his alienation is shown in his personal correspondence with the iconoclastic Austrian psychoanalyst, Wilhelm Reich. Because their relationship spanned over a period of two decades—from 1936 to 1956 (Placzek, 1981)—Reich became an intimate friend and confidante of Neill. His theories and beliefs undoubtedly had a major influence in Neill’s life and practice with the young

people at Summerhill. In some of his letters to Reich, Neill makes comments such as “Just been to Oxford University lecturing to a Teachers Conference. How dull they were, how divorced from all that matters” (p.367), or “From now until the end of July, my life will be one long miserable interviewing of visitors, most of them dull teachers and problem parents” (p.192). To Neill, schools had all become small prisons for children which he despised. To him, they took away the self-regulatory rights and freedom of children, operating in such a way that the majority would succumb to the herd mentality (Neill, 1971; Reimer, 1971). Thus Neill remained firm in his belief in self-regulation for children. This was the reason why he had to implement a type of democracy for Summerhill that he knew would allow self-regulation and freedom for children.

Neill was not the only individual in life to ever step out of his comfort zone and take risks for a higher cause. Although Summerhill’s situation may seem relatively small compared to other events that have occurred on the world stage, Neill believed that his concepts of freedom and self-regulation were ground-breaking and could possibly show a whole new way of life for the future. His daughter Zoe was one of the few truly self-regulated children. In many respects, it was his observations of her that convinced him of the “correctness of his method of child-rearing and of its far-reaching effects” when he announced; “The observed results so far suggest the beginnings of a new civilization” (Hemmings, 1972, p.132).

History has shown that it takes the courage of a few individuals (such as Neill) to instigate new ideas and make demands on behalf of the majority in order to create change. Examples readily come to mind; Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and Rosa Parkes. In human history as we know it, democratic power has always been directed by either individuals or a small handful of people; it has never emerged from large groups of people or social classes. This is partially explained by the fact that, in order for democratic power to be established, the idea must first be identified and initiated by revolutionary thinkers who have, as Reich (1971) states, the “knowledge and skill in saying on behalf of the masses what they are unable to express themselves” (p.69). This radical process has only ever been executed by

individuals or minorities because the majorities are incapable *in their own minds* of possessing the requisite mindset. Often we may look at the world around us and disagree with events that are happening such as wars, violence, interest rates rising, deforestation, pollution etc and feel inadequate as an individual and unable to effect a change. We may feel like a small drop of water in a huge ocean and may give up hope of being effective to the larger cause. We need only look around us and talk to the people in our lives to understand how ineffectual the majority of people feel. The majority have been programmed to not possess the prerequisite life or cultural experience possessed by more counter-cultural individuals. Therefore, they are essentially unable to create the reality from their own conceptualizations because they lack the environmental knowledge, desire, or skill to create a plan of action and then to implement that plan for the higher good of humanity. And so Neill spoke on behalf of the children who would come into his care. They were his small majority. They were the ones who would experience freedom through self-regulation because of the democratic rules that Neill insisted operate at Summerhill.

It is interesting to note that dictatorships are created in the same way. The difference between democracy and dictatorship is how power is exercised. Democratic power shows general tolerance whilst dictatorship refuses compromise. Democratic power shows a sense of responsibility to the people as a whole, while dictatorship cares nothing for the people and seeks only to advance its own means which belong to a few depraved individuals; for example Hitler, Mussolini, Hussein, and Mao to name a few.

Neill abhorred dictatorships and bureaucratic authoritarian structures and therefore demanded a democracy for his school that would be directly regulated by the people within that school community. He believed in self-government and a direct democracy because he had a belief and faith in children and their innate ability to be autonomous, thinking beings in their own right, without the need for influence from adults with their biased store of life experiences (Neill, 1970; Neill, 1971; Neill, 1975).

It may be true that he chose to influence the democratic process in such a way that neither he, nor any adult, had any authoritative power in the actual decision making procedure; adults may have their say or try to influence the forum in favour of their choice of rule, but their word is *not* gospel and all members of the community clearly understand this principle. As mentioned earlier, age, race, or gender have no prejudice in the Summerhill community. In the democratic voting process it could be argued that the younger children are persuaded by the arguments of the older children, thus undermining the purity of the democratic process. Although this argument is quite valid, one would need to observe how Summerhill operates as a whole and not take the meeting and the vote as an isolated incident.

For example the older students basically run the school; over the years they gain the confidence to voice their concerns. As they mature they understand how their actions affect those around them, including the Summerhill community as a whole. They are also not so far removed that they remember what it was like when they were younger. The younger children on the other hand tend to be more self-interested; in the immediate activities around them. Visitors to the school are often impressed at how well the children get along regardless of age (Neill 1971). It was noted in Segefjord's (1971) *Summerhill Diary* that visitors often had to be accepted by the younger children before the older ones would even talk to them; like an unspoken test in a sense. If the visitor wasn't accepted by the younger children then he/she had even less chance of getting close to the older ones. There is an acceptance and a nurturing of the older children toward the younger ones. In Maori we call this nurturing process "tuakana / teina". Tuakana are the older ones and teina are the younger. At Summerhill tuakana / teina is a natural way of life for them, it is not a contrived system where the older ones are forced to look after the younger ones. Because there are no bureaucratic and authoritative systems in place, the tuakana are not as heavily influenced by the idea of individual profit gained at the expense of others demise.

The tuakana running the school is the ideal and lifts the burden from the adults as well. This can only work successfully if the tuakana have been at the school for a

number of years and the roll remains stable so there will always be a sufficient number of tuakana. In the latest book by Vaughan (2006), Zoe Neill Readhead explained how once they had a whole group of tuakana leave at the same time and the new lots of tuakana were quite young, approximately 12 to 14 years of age. The community went crazy as the children implemented all sorts of extreme rules such as banning bedtimes etc (rules that younger children thought were great at the time). Eventually of course, and it did take a while, they all figured out that they didn't like their foolish rules after all. At that time the teina had only themselves to rely on; they didn't have the experience of wise tuakana to guide and protect them. The beauty of this form of democracy and self-regulation was that they were still able to figure out what worked best for the community as a whole, although it was a much longer and more painful process than usual.

A lot can be said for democracy and self-regulation as the above paragraphs point out. Hemmings (1972), a lecturer in education at the University of Leicester who critiqued fifty years of A.S. Neill's work, said "The personal freedom of each child included its right to a self-determined value system" (p.109). This value system would be created by the children themselves within their own social environment. The children were protected from an externally biased, morally based, authoritative value system. The only way that Neill could confidently maintain this style of direct, democratic freedom was to relinquish all form of compromise with external forces. Hemmings goes on to say "...he was determined to protect his school and to run it according to his own ideas with as little compromise as possible" (p.134).

4. Decision making by consensus versus. Direct democracy

As discussed above, an interesting, outward paradox of the policy-making infrastructure of Summerhill is that the majority's vote rules rather than decision-making by consensus. Summerhill's concept of democracy differs from the cumbersome process of collaborative consensus in which you debate and discuss and go on debating and discussing until everyone is agreed. Summerhill's

democratic policy-making practices could likewise prove to be a rather drawn-out process (Appleton, 2000), comparable in its weightiness but not the same as that of decision-making by consensus. The difference is that the direct democratic community members are free to make wrong decisions and then change their minds later, rather than all having to collaborate and agree before making the final decision which is then set in stone. There is a subtle difference between the two modes of practice and Neill's concept of the students as self-regulated beings would be seriously undermined if consensual decision-making were to be incorporated.

In consensual decision-making, everyone would have to compromise from the beginning in order to reach a decision. The spirit of risk taking would be dampened because unimaginative participants would likely back down in order to reach a consensus. Thus, the risk with consensual decision-making is always that extreme ideas might be neglected or overlooked. And although sometimes the final outcome or rule created by a consensus may appear the same as a rule created by a direct democracy, the difference lies in the process in which the rule has been decided. The *mindset* of the two different groups of people importantly would be different; the direct democratic group would be used to the mechanism of free thinking whilst the consensual group would be used to being 'good will' agents, continuously riding the wave of least resistance and pre-arranged harmony. They're possibly not even aware of their own possibilities and potentialities, which have ultimately been dumbed down because of their unconscious lack of consciousness.

If consensual decision making were the accepted Summerhill practice, there would be no room for mistakes. Zoë Neill Readhead is a true living source of self-regulation throughout an entire lifetime. She commented on the idea of taking risks and making mistakes (Vaughan, 2006);

Neill's ability to leave me and the kids at Summerhill alone was one of the strongest foundations upon which the Summerhill philosophy is based. It is part of the freedom to do whatever you want to do with your own life. It is not conditional, you don't have to be answerable to your parents or any adult—you can just get on with your life and learn or make mistakes. You can be lonely, you can be bored, you can take risks, you can be really nice or you can be quite horrible. So long as what you do doesn't upset or hurt anybody else, you can be completely yourself. How many

people get that chance in life, even as adults? ...This feeling that you don't need to respond and can take your own direction is very empowering. (p.70)

The empowerment that Zoë was talking about is achieved through the process of self-regulation. Consensus, however, would negate self-regulation because opportunities to learn by experience or endure difficult situations and differences of opinions would be taken away from the children and be replaced with a collective uniformity full of logical compromises for every situation in a relatively sterile environment. Neill was adamant that self-regulation was the only possible manner of existence for a school that he was to establish. Compromise did not fit into that category and he was unafraid to assert himself clearly in this regard; “The school that has no self-government should not be called a progressive school at all. It is a compromise school” (Hemmings, 1972, p.99). Neill disliked schools that charaded as progressive schools, when all the while the leadership continued to maintain many child-conforming and restrictive practices through the compromises they made.

At Summerhill, everyone has to learn to live with each other's differences, although people were still free to oppose and express their ‘oppositional imaginations’ as well (Rapp, 2002). Matthew Appleton (2000), who was a popular house parent at Summerhill for many years, explains this whole idea well by saying;

At one time I favored the concept of consensus, whereby differences are talked through until a solution agreeable to everyone is reached. Having watched and been part of Summerhill self-government at work, I have changed my mind on this... a world in which everyone agrees is not one that appeals to me. Ironing out differences also irons out individuality... One day a case goes in my favor, another day it does not. It is something we all learn to live with, and living with other peoples' points of view can often prove, in reality, just as valid, if not better, than the original opinion that was fought for so passionately in the meeting (p.106).

Once again we see the idea of nurturing the minority coming through. Where else on earth is the minority treated with such fairness and adaptability twenty-four-seven? Fairness and honesty underpin the whole Summerhill consciousness.

So, while Neill's direct democracy was contrary to consensual decision-making, it was supportive of the minority voice being respected. Another positive aspect of Summerhill's legacy of direct democracy is that it does not condone authoritarian bureaucratic power.

5. Conclusion

Summerhill is more like a healthy community than a school as we perceive schools to be. There is no external, institutional, authoritarian hierarchy controlling the lives of the children within. More accurately, the authority is distributed without favouritism amongst the members of the community in a highly interactive and justifiable way; supported and authenticated by a value system that the members of the community as a whole all help put into place. The concept of a *distributed leadership* is evident here and the absence of bureaucratic and hegemonic obstructions.

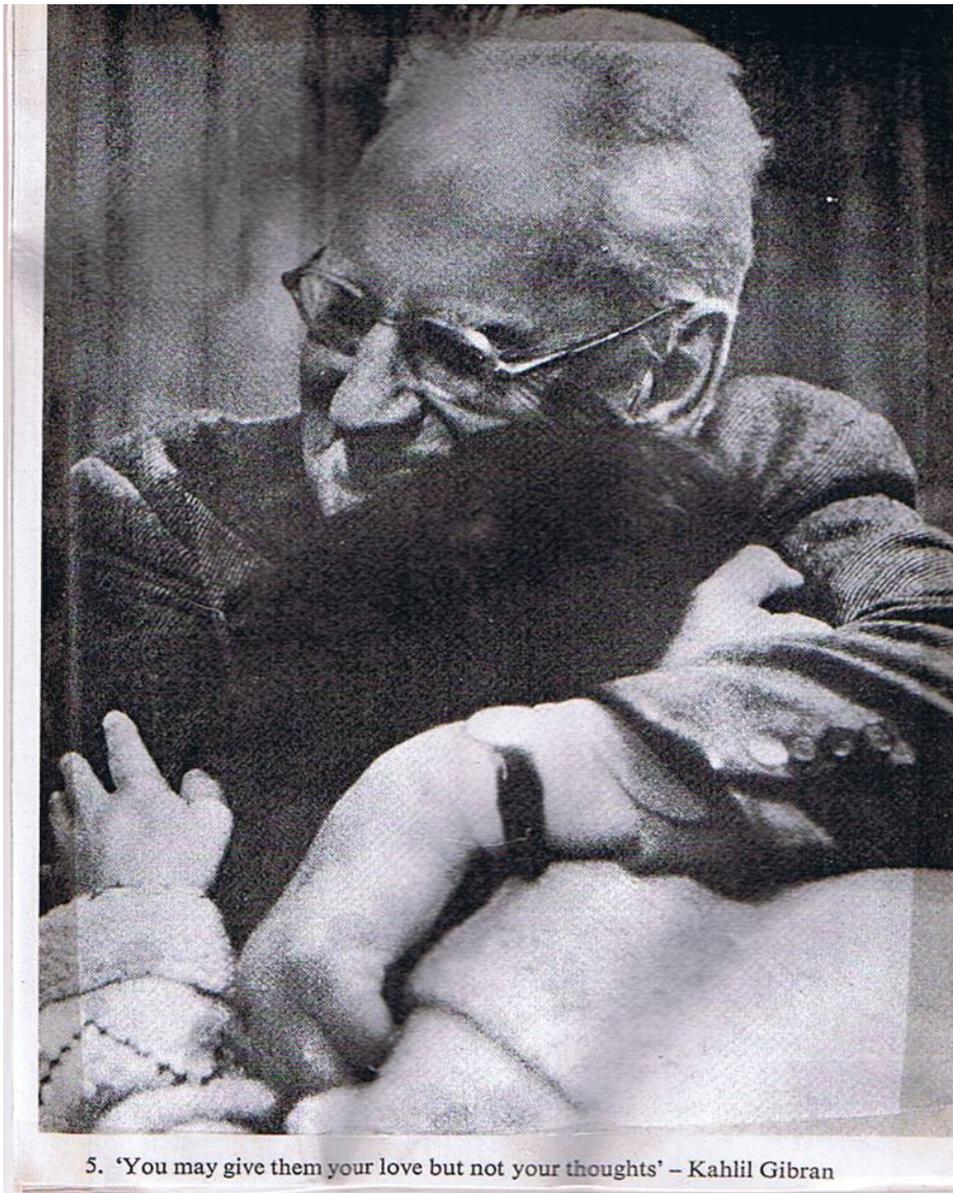
In the most recent volume dedicated to Summerhill, Vaughan notes that "Summerhill self-government has no bureaucracy" (Vaughan, 2006, p.35). An important way in which power is dispersed throughout the school is by having a different chairperson at each meeting, with voluntary secretarial assistance for each meeting. What both of these measures ensure is that the actions of the administration remain largely unimpeded by unnecessary official procedures. It is in this way that Neill found a simple solution for the age old dilemma of 'pseudo-democracy'.

When one observes a pseudo-democracy which is governed by a bureaucracy or hierarchical authority and compares it to a system of authentic democratic practice, which excludes the bureaucratic administrations, an understanding of the huge conceptual difference between the two paradigms emerge.

Neill's nonconformist attitude was a natural way of life for him; he wanted to live the type of life he believed in and apply this thinking to his own educational practice. Neill wrote to Reich on this point; "I don't run my school because I think of the misery of millions of moulded and beaten children; I simply do it because I think it right and fascinating" (Placzek, 1981, p.362). He allowed innocence to take its natural course and gave the idea of a true democracy a fighting chance. Hence, Summerhill is known as the "Oldest Children's Democracy in the World"—and intends to remain so. The criticism here may be that this aim is one of self-interest, but it could be counter-argued by asking whose self-interest is it serving? It is certainly serving the self-interests of the children who attend and their right to a meaningful life; which in the end if everyone participated would be in the interests of the public as a whole because people would not allow themselves to be dictated by the market forces. A very different answer however would be revealed if we were to ask the same question of the status quo schools. The status quo schools are not delivering the right for the child to live a meaningful life; instead the child is seen as a commodity to be used as a future component in the mass production line (Grace, 1988).

The following chapter will address the way in which direct democracy is instituted at Summerhill through the process of self-regulation. In Neill's view, it is only through the process of "freedom without license" that a child can learn to govern themselves and therefore create a life full of meaning (Neill, 1970, 1971). It is a life where they are in total control and therefore unafraid to take total responsibility for their own thoughts and actions. Only when a person is able to take responsibility and control of themselves, are they then able to extend the concept to their family, their village and thus further a field to their global family of humankind.

CHAPTER 2: SELF-REGULATION AT SUMMERHILL



A. S. Neill

1. Introduction: Not Just a School

The last chapter looked at how the mechanism of direct democracy was established at Summerhill how the idea of direct democracy was instigated by A. S. Neill to enable the children at Summerhill to evolve into self-regulating beings in a natural and instinctive way. This chapter will examine the notion of self-regulation in greater detail by focusing on freedom at the grassroots and how it manifests itself in the lives of the children at Summerhill. Concepts such as empathy and holism underpin the community way of life and offer a model of “personal growth” more sophisticated than that recognized in our schooling system today.

As noted in Chapter One, the ability of the children to make informed decisions for themselves—both individually and collectively—without the influence of external forces was a key aim of Summerhill. In fact, all of Summerhill’s aims were interwoven to support this goal (Vaughan, 2006, p.viii);

- to allow children freedom to grow emotionally
- to give children power over their own lives
- to give children the time to develop naturally
- to create a happier childhood by removing fear and coercion by adults.

Freedom is given to the children to examine the entire context of the decision-making process, enabling them to make informed and conscious choices in all areas of their lives (Neill, 1970, 1971). This is self-regulation in action. In this regard, perhaps the most significant person to have influenced Neill’s philosophy of self-regulation was Homer Lane (1876-1925). Homer Lane had a hard working father who was never home and a very strict religious mother. In rebellion to her strictness he ran away from home at an early age and lived a hardened life on the streets. In time he decided to become a teacher.

In fact he became a philosopher and “teacher” of adolescents whom the courts and society had decided were “hardened delinquents” with no hope for their future. Once Neill visited Lane’s reform school he was hooked. Lane had a huge influence on Neill’s thrust towards creating a self-governing environment that one could

actually see in action. Neill himself admitted; “The most influential factor in my life, the man who inspired me most, was probably Homer Lane” (Neill, 1992, p.208).

This chapter will also examine some ideas from the Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire (1921-1994). Freire’s ideas help us to theorise self-regulation in practice. Although Neill preceded the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, in time, it is obvious that the synergies between these educators and their thoughts on human respect are significant. Freire’s contentions against the neo-liberal capitalist regime are especially well known internationally, and in many ways mirror the sentiments of Neill. In particular, Freire offers ways in which we can free ourselves from the oppressions of our own “non-thinking”. His theories offer rich advice in order for us to assert our mana (standing) and begin to take control and responsibility for our own thoughts and actions; which of course is what self-regulation is all about.

2. Self-Regulation – Freedom without License

Self-regulation—or the freedom to make one’s own choices without causing harm to others—is a fundamental philosophy that underpins the entire functioning of the Summerhill community. The children are allowed freedom, but not license. Freedom involves showing care and tolerance for themselves and others, whereas license is a “feral” type of freedom, with an absence of boundaries and concern for the consequences of how an action may affect the lives of other people. Freedom does not mean spoiling the child; it is quite the opposite.

Some people who liked the sound of Neill’s work have misinterpreted his philosophies and allowed their children to have freedom with careless abandon. Neill saw this as an injustice to the principles of freedom he advocated, considering this aberration embarrassing. As an example of an aberration of Neill’s philosophy, he recounted how a mother suggested to Neill that her child was a “Neillian child” (Neill, 1970). When he turned to look at how “free and natural” she was, he found her standing on top of his grand piano with her heavy shoes on. After that, she

proceeded to jump onto his sofa and nearly went through the spring. Neill rightly felt insulted by such misinterpretations. He had this to say on the subject of freedom and license:

It is this distinction between freedom and license that many parents cannot grasp. In the disciplined home, the children have *no* rights. In the spoiled home, they have *all* the rights. The proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. And the same applies to school.

It must be emphasized again and again that freedom does not involve spoiling the child. If a baby of three wants to walk over the dining table, you simply tell him he must not. He must obey, that's true. But on the other hand, you must obey him when necessary. I get out of small children's rooms if they tell me to get out (p.105).

Self-regulation involved a reciprocal agreement between everyone in the community. Neill mentioned how he would get out of a small child's room if he was told to leave, and vice versa. For this freedom epitomized the concept of equity and respect for one another's rights, regardless of age, race, or gender. To those of us more familiar with a traditional kind of upbringing, we would find the actions of a six year old ordering us from a room difficult to tolerate, given the innate concepts of hierarchy and authoritative power control within our background; where "little people"⁷ have minimal rights in so far as expressing their wishes are concerned. The reciprocity that self-regulation creates, ensures that the children of Summerhill gain essential life skills. These include living harmoniously in a community by working interdependently with one another in a highly informed and cognisant state. They are able to reason well above the level of their "unfree" peers in order to find solutions to problems that would otherwise have been left to adults to sort out.⁸

The term "interdependent" is one of a family of terms which includes "dependence," "independence" and "interdependence." Dependent thinking is said to evolve into independent thinking, which then needs to evolve further into

⁷ "Little people" in this context are not only children but also the adult "working classes".

⁸ Refer to the section on 'sex and religion' about adolescent 'pregnancy' for another example of this trust in a child's reasoning process.

interdependent thinking. Covey (2004) points out that “Dependent thinkers need others to get what they want. Independent thinkers can get what they want through their own efforts. Interdependent thinkers combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success” (p.49). This process is a development from “You” to “I” and then into “We”. The ability to think autonomously allows the individual to develop their interdependent relationships with others to a more sustainable level because the motivation comes from within. Through the process of working toward a self-governing mindset among the people, the realization of an egalitarian and socially just society may evolve. Summerhill is in effect a microcosm of this ideal. As Neill knew, it was waiting for the rest of the world to catch up.

In relation to this recognition of interdependence, Neill believed that adults needed to make certain sacrifices in order for children to be able to exercise their ability to make informed decisions. The abolition of physical force by adults on children was a nonnegotiable necessity for example. To this effect, Neill refused to allow any form of physical abuse by adults towards children from the time he first set up Summerhill in 1921. This was a brave move on Neill’s part. Because of the harshness of the times just after World War 1—the Great Depression and the influence of Christian dogma such as “Spare the rod and spoil the child”⁹—it was perfectly normal for adults to discipline children, by whatever means it took. Nonetheless, this rule applies today. There is no corporal punishment in Summerhill (Neill, 1992).

⁹ The following quotations come from the King James Version (KJV) of the *Bible*: (Notice how all of the verses are gender specific). **Prov 13:24**: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (diligently)." **Prov 19:18**: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." **Prov 22:15**: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." **Prov 23:13**: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die." **Prov 23:14**: "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Shoel)." **Prov 29:15**: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

Another sacrifice that Neill saw adults needing to make involved children no longer being treated as little slaves or gophers. He believed that parents should not exploit their children by making them do things because they (the parents) were too lazy to do it for themselves. The same applied to teachers—or anyone, in fact. Both adults and children had to have equitable rights.

It could be understood why the majority might find some of Neill's ideas 'over the top,' unnecessary, or even quite ridiculous. Western society has bred into its citizens the notion that children should be 'seen and not heard' and do not have the same status as adults. Likewise, with regard to schooling, there has been the unwritten rule that children need to learn what adults decide should be taught; that children are in no position to set the curriculum. It is a natural way of thinking for most people because it is a way of thinking that has become embedded in our consciousness. The whole schooling ethos, it can be argued, has become an unquestionable assumption; and once something becomes 'unquestionable', people stop thinking. By this very 'non-thinking', we keep ourselves enslaved by the obedience and blind allegiance we give to powers whose true motivation we do not always understand (Zinn, 1997). The idea of Summerhill is to allow children to be self-governing and totally aware of the political stage which is the world around them. They are brought up never to be dependent thinkers.

3. Supporting ideas of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire was a renowned Brazilian educator whose chief concern lay with social justice and human freedom. He is well known for his concepts of domestication and indoctrination, which basically defines the "dumbing down" of the critical thinking process.

Freire believed that, rather than liberate students minds, the schooling system was designed instead to reproduce the status quo; to domesticate and indoctrinate its

subjects (Freire, 1998). This domesticating and indoctrinating process caused its subjects to become oppressed by a mechanism that they do not fully understand. Despite the fact that the system outwardly professed an intention to develop their intellectual and emotional capacities towards independent being; Freire saw instead that it was a system that consolidated certain myths. These myths acted to emasculate people and render them powerless to oppose this faceless mechanism. As a result, they continued to feed their support into it because of the absence of alternative educational options that people could visualise.

Freire talked about how oppressed peoples could liberate themselves by fighting to “destroy the causes” that nourished oppression; the oppression that domesticated us. Behind Freire’s ideas lies the belief that the vast majority of people—regardless of race, age, or gender—are actually oppressed themselves without realizing it. He laid out his views in his 1970 book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. For example the schooling system maintains a form of oppression upon its subjects by creating individuals who are content to learn the necessary skills required to enter the economy and earn money (learning to earn); without necessarily thinking about or challenging these skills. Freire refers to this form of learning as the banking model of education where the teacher is the depositor and the students are the depositories. The teacher deposits the information and the students patiently “receive, memorise and repeat” (p.72). The banking model of education is a weapon that the oppressors use to organize the oppressed so they accept and become accustomed to their position instead of challenging it. Freire compares the banking metaphor for education with his recommended problem-posing education (Duncan-Andrade, 2008).

Problem-posing education is critical pedagogy, it is learning for freedom. The teacher and the students both see themselves in a reciprocal partnership where they learn off one another. The teacher must accept that the student possesses knowledge and ideas that they can share together. Freire (1970) called this the

“pedagogy of the oppressed, which is the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation” (p.53).

In a sense the philosophies of Summerhill are immersed in critical pedagogy. Neill also believed that the unthinking, robot-like mentality of the general population caused people to follow ideas that they do not totally understand. Hence the importance he placed on self-regulation, a process where the oppressed begin to deconstruct their consciousness and learn to rebuild their way of thinking by interrogating the myths that enslave them (Freire, 1970). A significant idea in Freire’s thinking is that this process not only liberates those who are oppressed, but also liberates their oppressors as well. In the longer term, the desire to oppress has itself been extinguished.

There are many myths in our lives that we can interrogate. We may look at certain cultural (racial, ethnic, religious, or secular) traditions that have become normalized over time; in which a sense of duty and obligation creates forms of subservience. Such cultural traditions do not necessarily have to be ethnically based either. There are many types of cultures in the world. Neill, in fact, preferred a “do-it-yourself culture”. He was not afraid to challenge myths, as his practices betray. For example, he did not adhere to the notion of a fixed curriculum unless a child wanted to learn something from it. This belief was in keeping with his views on the nature of self-regulation or the freedom to choose for oneself. He even went so far as to suggest that “the average age of the curriculum-makers should be about seventeen” (Hemmings, 1972, p.109). The New Zealand Curriculum Framework itself and the idea of challenging the curriculum myth will be addressed in more detail in a separate chapter of this thesis.

Self-regulation allows the child to challenge and critique with confidence because he/she can operate with informed and transparent vision. It is hard to hide ulterior motives from self-regulated beings because they are not blinded to the ulterior motives by the practice of non-thinking. It allows one to move through life with

one's eyes clearly open. In this respect, the ability to challenge myths and ideas is an important element of the self-regulated person's life. They don't see it as anything extraordinary because they live it so naturally. In contrast, the herd majority can easily succumb to blindly following methods or practices without even thinking about the nature of their thinking; of why they are following these practices so trustingly. Obedience to the school curriculum is a classic example.

For some of us who have worked in the schooling system as so-called "educators", we see the analogies of this herd instinct in our "unfree" schools¹⁰. Not only are the children denied self-regulation by the teachers; the teachers are denied self-regulation by the school management; school management is denied self-regulation by the government; and the government is denied self-regulation by the global money market. More detail of this will be given in the neo-liberal section of this thesis.

The oppressed not only exist at all levels of the schooling system, but they exist at all levels of society. As Freire argued, even the very rich are oppressed by their need to oppress others in order to remain in their station. Therefore any attempt by the oppressed to free themselves must be a genuine rather than a false attempt. And here, it is not enough for the oppressed to aspire to be an oppressor, just as it is not enough for the oppressor to offer short-term solutions to alleviate their own guilty conscience. Freire calls this latter action "false generosity" (Freire, 1970, p.29).

Summerhill would have to have been a dictatorship or a hierarchical, pseudo-democracy in order to be privy to "false generosity"; that is, the beneficiary of monetary handouts from the government if certain criteria are adhered to. This would only perpetuate the oppressor versus oppressed situation because false generosity continues to keep the oppressed perpetually grateful to the oppressor, who acts out the role of gate keeper and minder. It was these "strings attached" terms and conditions that Neill was keen to avoid. In saying that, however, the

¹⁰ Neill often referred to standard schools as unfree schools.

government needs to be seen themselves as pseudo-gatekeepers because they, in turn, are merely responsive to the global market, which in turn exerts control over the curriculum content under the umbrella of neo-liberal capitalism.

Freire talked about creating a “true generosity” as opposed to a “false generosity” that only the oppressed can understand how and why:

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued...to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands – whether of individuals or entire peoples – need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world (p.29).

Summerhill needs to be understood as a microcosm of something larger; of a positive ideal in which the transformation of our world is made possible by people being alive in their “awareness” and ability to work together. This is a counter-hegemonic idea in so far as allowing the children to evolve into fully cognisant humanized beings as opposed to dehumanized, domesticated vessels of existence. This whole process should not be an individual task, but rather, a community responsibility. Communicating with each other in a genuinely reciprocal manner characterizes this transformation. By communicating with one another in this authentic way, we can learn to reconnect and stay in touch with our humanness as beings able to “transform” our world—rather than having to adapt to its circumstances (Freire, 1998; Hill, 2002, Roberts, 2000, 2003).

Neill shared a vision of transformation for the world by standing by his belief in the intrinsic goodness of each child, regardless of how their various and differing childhood suppressions manifested themselves in certain dysfunctional behaviours. A significant part of the success of self-regulation arose from his absolute belief in the inner goodness of each child. When children feel that they are trusted, believed in and loved, they grow more confident in themselves and the decisions they make.

Summerhillian children and ex-Summerhillians cannot be accused of being people who do not know the motives of their own actions, nor can they be accused of the mob mentality of moving unthinkingly with a cause they do not understand or in which they do not believe. Hierarchical authority does not have the same power over people who can think critically for themselves; that is, “the intelligent minority”. It only has power over those who have become “comfortably numb” in their non-thinking processes—“the stupid majority” (Gray, 1977; Ibsen, 1995). Although Neill preceded Freire in time, and was therefore unaware of his ideas, Neill showed how Freire’s theory of the oppressed freeing themselves can work with children. By allowing children the freedom of self-regulation, they were able to think more critically about their world and its moral code. Members of the Summerhill community all had different levels of suppression dependent upon their upbringing, their pre-Summerhill schooling, and their entire social mirror. The lifestyle of Summerhill allowed them to lift themselves out of their oppression through their continuing experience of self-government and autonomous thinking. This was the means to nurture new and objective understandings of the world, to which their minds would otherwise have been closed. Summerhill has always and continues to place self-regulation as one of its principal philosophies.

The current Principal of Summerhill Zoë Neill Readhead, who is also the daughter of the late A.S. Neill, stated the following in relation to the School’s principles on freedom and self-regulation (as cited in Vaughan, 2006, p.72);

...Fundamentally it hasn’t changed at all. I always think of Summerhill as being a bit like the sea—the tides come in and go out but the sea remains the same... How can you change the simple philosophy that kids should be free to make choices about their own lives and that we all live as equal members of a community? It is simple, practical, truthful and real. The principles upon which the school runs are profound and are beyond “fashion” or educational trends. These principles disallow the many neurotics and inappropriate “rules” that parents, teachers and others ‘in authority’ use to control children and young people in family life and in schools.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Zoë was a child who lived a self-regulated life because of the beliefs of her parents. Neill allowed Zoë complete freedom

without license, simply because he believed it to be the best way for his daughter to live. At the same time, he was able to experiment with his various philosophical beliefs with the result that he could provide evidence as the years progressed to support his unorthodox way of thinking. He was unable to offer all of the children at Summerhill the same degree of freedom that Zoë had, however. This was because they were still under the influence of their parents during the holidays, and not all parents had the same set of values as Neill.

He *was*, however, able to offer the children empathy and support in their time at Summerhill and a way of taking control of their own lives. Neill would always remain without hesitation on the side of the child. He often argued; “There are no problem children, only problem parents, and problem teachers” (Croall, 1983, p.xi). Because self-regulation at Summerhill allowed the children to think and move autonomously, the teachers did not have the power to become a problem to the children by issuing punishments for difficult behaviours the teachers themselves may not have understood. This is in complete opposition to the “unfree” schools where the teachers had complete authority to reward or punish as they chose. In that type of unfree environment, the teacher is not always on the side of the pupil, and it can sometimes be an acceptable practice for the teacher to work in opposition to the pupil—especially if the child is challenging the teacher’s ego or pride. In this instance, the teacher’s desire to make the child conform (which is sometimes a punishment for challenging their authority) is greater than the natural need of the child at the time.

I have seen this power play or fight for power on a regular basis in my dealings with schools. It is a phenomena that cannot be pinned down to any one individual as we are all unintentionally forced into it ourselves because of the way the schooling system operates and condones such behaviours. Teachers can feel obliged to engage in behaviours that have been imposed upon them by an external force. For example, if a child “misbehaves” (which means they’re not doing their work), the teacher reacts because the child is not following the curriculum; and the curriculum

is of the utmost importance in the neo-liberal schooling environment. Children must conform so they will become malleable beings. Once they are malleable beings, they can be moulded in all areas of their life.

Let me give you an example of my own experience this year with respect to this conforming practice. I was relieving a class of seven and eight year olds and we were all seated in the auditorium for a whole school assembly; the school comprising of approximately 200—300 children. The auditorium was similar to the university type lecture theatre where the audience seats are layered downward toward the front podium. I had my class of little ones all seated in their perfect little row just like all the other classes of children who were seated perfectly in their perfect little rows. And then there was complete silence while the ‘perfect’ Deputy Principal stood at the front and quietly demanded everyone’s attention. You could tell by the sparkle in her eye that she knew that she was a “great” teacher because she had complete control of the whole assembly; not one child dared to make a sound. Her authority was real and unchallenged. Is this what makes a great teacher? Why is power always manifest as “control” in the schooling situation? Why is the link made among schooling domesticators which says, I am a good teacher if I have control (of my subjects)? What exactly are our children being subjected to?

Meanwhile back in the school assembly I had a highly spirited young boy, whom I could see was full of dysfunctional suppressions who decided he did not want to conform to this assembly. He promptly decided that he wanted to sit across the stair from where our class was sitting in their perfect little row. If he was successful in his attempt to remove himself from our company, it would mean that our perfect uniformity would be disrupted and all eyes would be on him. He would be the only child out of ‘sync’. How was I to act as his teacher/baby-sitter for the day? I did not know this child. I did not know his history or his home life. All that I could surmise was that he felt caged for whatever reasons he had and he felt the need to rebel. Because I have been schooled myself, I felt a need to make him conform. I

would be an embarrassment if he did not. I allowed myself to be controlled by the idea that I was a minority in such a large assembly of people, and so I forced him to conform. While this was happening, I was thinking to myself how wrong my intervention felt. I did not like the way that I was acting and treating this child, thinking all the time that if we were in a self-regulated environment, the boy could stand on his head in the corner for all anyone cared; as long as he didn't disrupt the discourse, he would be left alone. I offer this simple example in order to illustrate how teachers in this schooling system not only force children to behave in a certain manner—thus taking away their self-regulatory rights—but have force exerted on them that allows *their* rights to slip away from them as well.

Currently, in my position as a reliever teacher in the New Zealand schooling system for primary, intermediate, and secondary schools, my eyes have been opened to the fact that all schools are basically the same. The power source is top down. Most schools that allude to having power shared between the children and hierarchy are illusory and tokenistic. Although in saying this, to be fair, there are pockets of humanistic alliances out there in the schooling systems that are trying to break down these barriers.

The power of hierarchical control has led to the growth of intimidation practices disguised as “education”. The intimidation tactics are usually presented in a clear and precise manner, although they are sometimes subtle or hidden. Sometimes, when no outsiders¹¹ are present, they openly revert to direct forms of intimidation. Teachers collude and support one another because they know no other way of controlling the ‘problem child’. Regardless of the way in which the bullying tactics are presented, they are real—and the children know it. Would the teacher who glared threateningly at the two six-year-old boys talking in junior assembly have done the same thing if their parents were present? I very much doubt it. The power of

¹¹ Outsiders refer to anyone not directly present or involved with the everyday operations within the classroom, this can also include parents and Board of Trustee members.

intimidation in the schooling institution wears a very cunning mask, and only those being bullied and their peers can see through the mask.¹² But where is the voice of the ones being bullied?

In Summerhill's equitable self-regulatory environment, which is in direct contrast, the power is shared amongst all members of the community. No one has bullying rights over another. Neill could see the impediments of the schooling system, and his ideas on self-regulation were indicative of his foresight to sidestep this threat. Many of his ideas about dealing with non-conformity can be attributed to his broader philosophy about the merits of self-regulation, an area in which he was himself influenced greatly by the views of Homer Lane. It is to Lane's views to which I now turn.

4. The influence of Homer Lane

Neill came to the conclusion that self-regulation was the only way for children to receive an education in order to live a meaningful life. In his time a handful of people influenced his ideas on self-regulation and Homer Lane was one of these forward thinking people whose work Neill greatly admired. Lane believed in self-government, not punishment. He believed in the innate goodness of every human being and he believed in '*love*'.

Homer Lane was born in America on September 22, 1876. His father was a busy man who worked in the railway; his mother was a very strict Baptist. Such an austere religious background caused him to rebel against his mother's influence, and he became the leader of a gang of delinquent boys. As a result, he ran away from home at the age of about fourteen. He eventually married and had children and decided to take up teaching. Although his teaching path led him to work in some of the more challenging areas of society (with delinquents and in prisons), his students were people he understood and with whom empathized. In 1912, Lane

¹²Although the bully tactics may vary, they are present and alive through the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

went to England and became the superintendent of the Little Commonwealth; a self-governing reformatory school that had been set up in Dorset (Lane, 1928).

Throughout his life, Lane studied the behaviours of human beings in great detail. This research led him to believe that the negative behaviours are formed within individuals from a very young age, and that the root cause is the loss of freedom from infancy in to adulthood. Hemmings (1972) summarizes Lane's findings as follows:

He thus arrived at the thesis that the perversion of young children was the result of their loss of freedom, of the training given to them from infancy onwards, and that the perversion might take the form either of a loss of power or of delinquency (p.26).

Lane came to an understanding that people basically just wanted to love and be loved; that every human being possesses an inborn goodness that is 'Love'. Love is a natural part of our ontological makeup, our human 'being-ness'. Lane also understood clearly that it is through the loss of freedom that people will begin to manifest certain perverted or dysfunctional behaviours; it is not because a person does not want to love or be loved. Perverted and dysfunctional behaviours are an effect of a loss of freedom. That is why he believed adamantly in the innate goodness of each individual child, and firmly believed in the power of 'love' as opposed to 'hate'. Lane (1928) expressed his philosophies on love as follows:

[Man] is the embodiment of the master-wish for perfection of the universe, and is therefore essentially good. The motive-power of goodness is love, and love is compulsory. If a [man] does not love [mankind] and the universe, [he] is not true to [his] nature. [Man] does not choose to love; [he] must love.

If [he] hates, [his] behaviour is untrue to [himself], to [mankind] and to the universe, but the energy is still love, for [his] act of hatred is love perverted... It is wholly unnatural.

The loving act is hopeful behaviour; the hateful act is fearful behaviour... Love is not a virtue; it is natural to [mankind].

The only true authority is love, and the only true discipline is founded upon hope. The authority that is based upon force will transform love into hatred and hope into fear (p.177).

One can see how Neill became heavily influenced by Lane's thoughts and beliefs. Although many of these ideas on love and self-regulation were already forming in Neill's mind prior to meeting Lane, it was through Lane's work and the 'Little Commonwealth' that Neill saw what an environment supportive of these values could physically look like. This idea of self-regulation extended far beyond the individual person; it could never be just about one's self. Being in control and responsible for one's thoughts and actions, the wider 'whole' must be taken into account because one's actions may affect others. If there is this aware of 'other' in one's consciousness, then knowing how to manage the way one's actions will affect others will come naturally (Hemmings, 1972). Self-regulation would encompass all areas of one's life and acknowledge each aspect as a part of the 'whole' structure of our meaningful existence. Self-regulation is a holistic reality that the ancient matriarchal societies understood. Lane continued to speak of love and self-regulation in the wider context;

If a [man's] love be not extended to all [mankind] and all communities, [he] cannot be completely happy; for love is dynamic and universal. Any distrust or fear of another community than [his] own will infect [his] own community with hatred and destroy its harmony. For hatred makes a community sick, as it makes each human being sick. Every [man] must choose for [himself]. No [man] can be compelled to love, for love is itself the highest form of compulsion (p.177).

Although Neill was reluctant to use the term 'love'—because of the way people distorted its motivations, he nonetheless did use it. He had to use the term 'love' because there was no other way to explain the concept. Love was essentially the foundation that underpinned Homer Lane's wonderful works throughout his life. He took seriously the positions of the individuals with whose lives he had been entrusted, and he cared about each and every one of those individual lives. Summerhill's practices advocate the same primary philosophy.

The Little Commonwealth was a reform school in which Lane was entrusted with the well-being and the reforming of 'hardened' delinquents who stood trial in court and were sent to the Little Commonwealth to serve their sentence. When Neill visited Lane's 'Little Commonwealth' in 1917, he noted how captivated he was by

the extreme difference between this school and other schools of the day. Neill was impressed when he spoke of the pupils' demeanour: 'Most of them had been court cases at one time, but to me they seemed quiet, social, gentle young men and women who without the Commonwealth, I am sure, would have been in prison' (Neill, 1991, p.209). The self-regulation of the pupils enthralled him and touched a chord that resonated within him and he purposely maintained an intimate alliance and friendship with Homer Lane in their future. Unfortunately Lane's 'Little Commonwealth' ended up closing down because he did not have enough bureaucratic power to keep it in operation. But the seed had been sown in Neill's heart and mind, and he determined not to let it fall on fallow ground.

One of the questions that may be asked, is how was self-regulation incorporated into the everyday life of the Summerhill community? It is not so much incorporated as it is infused into the whole community; as Neill said, 'Summerhill isn't a school—it is a way of life' (Hemming, 1972, p.192). The children simply make their own choices. A lot of these choices may differ to what we, as unfree schooled people have been programmed to believe. Yet if we had the same choices ourselves as children, would we have made them any differently than the children at Summerhill? In order to offer the reader a more informed view of children's choice and radical democracy, the following sub-section will explain the community's preference for optional classes at Summerhill.

5. Optional Classes

An intriguing rule that Summerhill implements is that classes are optional. Children do not have to go to class if they do not want to. When I tell people this rule, their usual response is "Oh—but how do the children learn the curriculum?" My usual reply to them is; "Oh—but what is the curriculum?" Accompanying this question are other thoughts, such as, "Are you really so shallow that you are willing to let people prescribe information that you understand very little about to be programmed into your children's minds? This prescribed information comes in the

form of the curriculum. Do you understand its origins or motivations and the wider implications of its usage?” Sadly, the majority of people in this country have no idea. The curriculum has become a dogmatic icon that now requires no conscious thinking by the majority. How very odd that something as important as our minds and the minds of our children are taken so lightly in this society.

At Summerhill, minds are never treated so lightly with such indifference. This is why it is so important for children to be free to choose whatever it is that they wish to learn. How can another human being know everything that is going on in your mind? How can anyone but yourself know what your true desires are? Why therefore should another human being have the right to tell you what to learn? At Summerhill, the youth have the right to create their own destiny. They are allowed to gravitate toward their own true interests which are determined and controlled by their own efforts and not by some adults posing as educators forcing them to conform. As one can imagine, the youth initially spend a lot of time playing and learning in a way that suits them before approaching a formal lesson for specific knowledge. Neill believed that ‘childhood should be playhood’ (Croall, 1983, p.391) and he had no hesitation in standing aside and letting children play.

Jonathon Croall (1983) compiled a book called *All the Best Neill* and in his introduction, he explained Neill’s judgment of his fellow ‘educators’ in the schooling system by saying; ‘Neill feels free to undertake some spirited sniping at all the other educators who fall short of his ideals, at the ‘moulders’ and the ‘moralisers’ who insist on bringing ‘uplift’ into the lives of children’ (p. xii). The moulders and the moralisers would most likely be opposed to Summerhill’s optional classes as well as the fact that at Summerhill there are no compulsory tests and exams. This has caused continual friction between Summerhill and the government over the years (Cunningham, 1999; Ofsted, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000, 2002; Vaughan, 2006). Neill struggled relentlessly against the bureaucratic blindness that never seemed to let up. More recently, Zoë Neill Readhead— the current principal of Summerhill—has seen more than her fair share of contemporary

struggle with the governmental watchdogs’, even to the point of having to take the Ministry of Education to court.¹³

The teaching and learning at Summerhill is very effective because the youth choose to go to class themselves and are not forced to be there. The Summerhill philosophies appeal to many educators. For example, Zoë Neill Readhead has claimed ‘If you choose to go to class, you are usually ready to learn and don’t need the work to be sugar-coated to make it palatable’ (Vaughan, 2006, p.100). This is how learning happens, for the pure joy of learning new things which comes from an internal incentive and the absolute pleasure of sharing new knowledge with others that thirst for it and reciprocate in the sharing. The learning is for ‘freedom’—as Paulo Freire advocates—and is opposed to the ‘learning to earn’ model which is the ultimate goal of neo-liberal schooling (Freire, 1999; Giroux, 2000). At Summerhill, there is no such thing as learning to earn; or the idea of memorizing information and acquiring skills as prescribed in the curriculum for the purpose of receiving a credential or qualification. The Summerhill philosophy looks beyond the narrow-mindedness of acquiring skills by rote, and other means, in order to gain a qualification to reach the ultimate predetermined destination of a ‘wage slave’ in the neo-liberal user-pays money market.

Freire (1998) knew too well the idea of reciprocal learning that the student and teacher must share to create an effective learning environment; “Only insofar as learners become thinking subjects, and recognize that they are as much thinking subjects as are the teachers, is it possible for the learners to become productive subjects of the meaning or knowledge of the object” (pp.89–90). This is one of the many examples where Freire and Neill’s philosophies overlap and support one

¹³ The case of Summerhill verses the Government was heard on Monday 20 March 2000 at the Royal Courts of Justice in London; by that Wednesday the Government approached Summerhill and asked for a settlement. The judges retired and allowed the Summerhill community to have a meeting in the courtroom to decide whether they would settle or not. The meeting was chaired and recorded by the children in the usual Summerhill manner with the chairperson, the vice-chair and secretary all taking their positions on the judge’s panel. This particular meeting was a historic event as never before have children made a binding democratic decision in a Royal Court. The vote was cast and the decision made to settle (Vaughan, 2006, pp.110 – 115).

another. For example, the children at Summerhill are regarded as being on the same level as the teachers in their humanness and their desire to learn together and from one another. The children are not viewed as empty vessels to be filled with the all-knowing knowledge of the teacher. Through the power of self-regulation, the children enter into a world of learning that they are as much a part of as the teacher is. Although as an adult, the teacher will undoubtedly have more experience and knowledge in certain areas that they can share, but the difference is that the child is totally aware of this and will tap into the knowledge—if they so desire. The flip side is that if the teacher has extra knowledge that the child does not desire or require, then that knowledge will not be forced upon the child. Or if the teacher does *not* have the knowledge that the child desires or requires, then together they can source the information if needed. In support of this idea, ex-Summerhillian Joshua Popenoe (1970) spoke of optional classes:

All lessons are optional. The idea is that if a child is allowed to play as long as [he] likes, when [he] finally decides [he] wants to learn something, the motivation is entirely [his] own. [He will obviously learn more quickly and thoroughly this way than under force.] (p.28)

To the outsider, it may appear that Summerhill is all play and no work but that would be a grossly incorrect assumption. Joshua went on further to explain how, as the children get older and approach the higher classes, some end up having to take subjects in which they may not necessarily be that interested in. But for those who wanted to seek a career that involved acquiring formal qualifications, certain subjects were needed in order to prepare themselves for the college entrance examinations, and thus continue their schooling beyond Summerhill (p.81). There is, after all, a world outside of Summerhill. To its credit, Summerhill has produced—and continues to produce—its fair share of academics (e.g., doctors, lawyers, university professors, teachers, publishers/writers, etc). The list continues and is varied (Bernstein, 1968; Vaughan, 2006). Summerhill will by no means be left in the dark, should their alumni choose to enter into the formal world of academia.

6. Sex and Religion

Sex and religion are two topics that people are always interested in learning in relation to the Summerhill perspective. For unbeknown to some, sex and religion have become inseparably intertwined in a negative way since the advance of the patriarchal order into the world's political arena. If we go back far enough, we may get a glimpse of the picture.

Sexual humanization evolved almost exclusively through the female form because the mechanics of the male sexuality has fundamentally remained the same since primates first copulated. The sexual changes in the human female were attributed to a constellation of sexual evolutionary characteristics such as; the elimination of the estrus cycle¹⁴, the development of the clitoris¹⁵, the change from rear to frontal sex¹⁶ and the development of the breast¹⁷. As these changes evolved, they created more freedom and intimacy for the human female form (Sjoo & Mor, 1991). The female form became more alive in both her sexuality and her spiritual connections to the earth, and a highly evolved form of Mother Religion and matrilineal tradition came into being which lasted for thousands and thousands of years. Such ancient *forest*¹⁸ societies of the matriarchal order were said to have authored the peaceful nurturing of the tangible Earth Mother Goddess and the harmonious interweaving of both the feminine and the masculine.

¹⁴ With the elimination of the estrus cycle and the development of the menstrual cycle it meant that sexual activity was no longer solely for reproduction purposes and the female could partake in sexual activity at any time.

¹⁵ The development of the clitoris and evolution of the vagina meant a significantly superior sexuality and orgasmic ability.

¹⁶ The change from rear to frontal sex produced a colossal change in relations between the sexes; face-to-face intercourse that causes the stirring up of emotions and the development of 'human self-consciousness'.

¹⁷ The development of the breast added to woman's potential for sexual awakening; and the personal lover who now lay at her breast which was previously only for the use of suckling her infant (Sjoo & Mor, 1991).

¹⁸ Matriarchal societies were more prevalent in heavily forested areas where the earth was more noticeable than the sky e.g. Europe and Africa.

As the Bronze Age¹⁹ emerged, the *open landscape*²⁰ societies of the patriarchal order swept down from the north, bringing with them not only their aggressive warriors and hardened fighting weapons, but also their male hunting gods and their invisible male sky gods who ruled supreme. The woman was seen as a beast of burden, an object of sexual release and a mere chattel to the male dominators. This brought an end to the Neolithic Age of stone and with it also came a sharp decline in the open veneration of the Earth Mother Goddess and her various manifestations, and everything related to the feminine began to lose power. As the ancient patriarchal savageness intruded upon the matriarchal societies the force was too strong and matriarchy began to yield and go into hiding; the masculine and feminine began to spin out of balance (Barker-Woolger & Woolger, 1989).

In this post-modern era Christianity is a euro-centric westernized remnant of that patriarchal order. By the time Christianity entered the world stage, the truths of ancient earth knowledge were becoming more and more shrouded in a hazy mist of patriarchic control. For unlike the matriarchal societies where the feminine and masculine worked together in harmony; the patriarchal societies grew strength and power through the dominating suppression of the feminine. The Olympian male was absolute and untouchable. Sjoo and Mor (1991) who have spent a lifetime studying and researching The Great Cosmic Mother religion explain the effect and cause clearly here:

If Father God religions are reactionary and anti-evolutionary, the reason is simple: They are built in reaction to the original Goddess religion, which dominated human thought and feeling for at least 300,000 years. By contrast, God has been conceptualized as a complete male for only about three to four thousand years. For this reason, patriarchal religions must begin by denying evolution; for, if that long stretch of human growth of time was acknowledged, it would have to be credited as the evolutionarily creative time of the Great Mother. To avoid this the Father Gods just somehow appear, as it were, by spontaneous generation, and human life just suddenly appears with them, fully formed, and sprung arbitrarily from the forehead of the He-God, sometime around 2000B.C (p.235).

¹⁹ Circa 4500 – 500BC.

²⁰ Patriarchal societies were more prevalent in the open landscapes where the sky was more noticeable than the earth i.e. the great open plains north of Europe.

Christianity as a remnant of patriarchal control brought with it all manner of savagery and cruelty toward women; and anything that advanced the feminine Goddess cause was to be eliminated and deemed evil. The witch hunts of Europe and further afield were a classic example where millions²¹ of women were persecuted or killed. ‘Town records from Germany and France reveal that whole villages were emptied of their female populations’ (Sjoo & Mor, 1991, p.298). Although it had been going on for much longer ‘In 1484²²...the war against women was officially launched by the Christian papacy, as a diversionary tactic to keep itself in power through the strategy of sheer terror’ (Sjoo & Mor, 1991, p.300). In those dark times any woman who showed intelligence, creativity, healing abilities, any form of connection with the Earth Mother Goddess or opposition to the patriarchal order were to be annihilated²³ (Behringer, 2004). Hideous torture practices were the norm and were used to force false accusations or confessions, even something as trivial as having a mole or a freckle would send a woman to the stake pyre. All of these gruesome actions occurred in the name of ‘Christ’ and ‘by the will of god’. In addition to the widespread persecutions was the deeming of anything evil that was once a close ally or a direct manifestation of the Mother such as the serpent, or spiritual practices that were held in high esteem such as astrology, crystal, magical abilities to transmute from one energy shape to another, interdimensional communication and travel, earthly evolution, runes, etc. By this time nothing was allowed to threaten or challenge the hegemonic hierarchical patriarchal authority.

In more recent centuries, Christianity’s dark manipulations subtly intruded upon many peoples of the world where sex outside of marriage became known as an evil act and the woman were accused of being the perpetrators of the act. Anything to do with a woman’s body was cloaked in darkness and all manner of evil. By now,

²¹ The estimate is between one million and nine million people of which 80% were women.

²² In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII pronounced a Papal Bull against the crime of witchcraft.

²³ Europe has a long history of witch-hunts from the first sorcery scares in the Roman Empire c.350-380AD to the darkest period of the endemic persecution of women in the c.1300 – 1700’s. And still persecutions continued and spread further afield than Europe right up to 2002 with the witch craze in Mozambique related to HIV infections, all of which women have borne the brunt of the blame.

the wheel of masculinity had taken over in endemic levels and was spinning out of control. The conquerors and dividers swept through lands and colonized indigenous people's minds with their moralistic, patriarchal warfare in the shape of pious, religious missionaries. They preached abstinence from sex before marriage, and then only for procreation, lest one be tainted by the evils of the woman whore. In effect, such patriarchal dominance managed to render 'irrelevant' and of 'no consequence' half of the human race. The West became closed off to the pleasure of natural, sensuous, instinctive human fulfillment, which had been held previously in natural esteem within the matriarchal world.

French philosopher Michel Foucault talked about this history of sexuality and stated; "Christianity...would pose a great prohibition on sexuality, which said 'no' to pleasure and, by the same token, to sex. This 'no', this prohibition, lead to a silence on sexuality, a silence on sexuality essentially founded on these moral prohibitions" (Carrette, 1999, p.120). With the dawning of the new age of feminism in recent times, Foucault explained how the West has begun a "little bit to liberate sexuality from the shackles in which it had been placed. We begin to permit speech about sexuality, when during so many centuries, we had consecrated it to silence" (p. 119).

Neill dismissed all such stringent, misogynous, religious doctrine, and believed that the first and last Christian died on the cross. He did not wish to be identified with religion, and saw to it that Summerhill had no place for religious control;

I personally have nothing against the [man] who believes in god – no matter what god. What I object to is the [man] who claims that [*his*] god is the authority for [his] imposing restrictions on human growth and happiness. The battle is not between believers in theology and non-believers in theology; it is between believers in human freedom and believers in the suppression of human freedom (Neill, 1992, p.121).

Children at Summerhill were therefore allowed to live life naturally as life was to unfold for them. Voyeurism or the perversion of sexual pleasure was of no consequence because fantasies were allowed to be lived out in a natural and

instinctive way. Neill obtained his ideas on sexuality from his friend Wilhelm Reich who specialized in the sexual functions and dysfunctions of the human race. Through his research on the matriarchal peoples of the Trobriand Islands,²⁴ Reich (1971) explained that ‘Self-regulation of the sexual life of the community is possible through instinctual gratification (in contrast to moral regulation)’ (p.11). The peoples whom Reich studied had no moral barriers to contend with because there was no dominant control of either sex. The man and woman’s role in sexual life were equal, and neither was inferior to the other (Malinowski, 1932). This allowed sexual self-regulation from early childhood to be a natural way of life, in stark contrast to the Western model. Foucault referred to this sexual freedom as ‘erotic art’,

In the West, we do not have an erotic art. Put differently, one does not learn how to make love, one does not learn to devote oneself to pleasure, one does not learn how to produce pleasure in others, one does not learn to maximize, to intensify one’s own pleasure through the pleasure of others. None of that is easy to learn in the West, and our only discourse on, and initiation to, this erotic art is covert and purely private (Carrette, 1999, p.119).

In terms of Summerhill’s attitude, how does the covert and private ideology that Foucault expressed come into play? Neill upheld the belief that freedom in childhood genital play was as natural as any other part of the body and should not be ostracized as dirty or evil, lest the child form perverted habits at a later stage in life. He spoke frankly when addressing this issue;

I wonder how much impotence and frigidity in adults date from the first interference in a sexual relationship of early childhood. Heterosexual play in childhood is the royal road, I believe, to a healthy, balanced, adult sex life. When children have no moralistic training in sex, they reach a healthy adolescence—not an adolescence of promiscuity (Neill, 1992, p.85).

And what of the attitude of the children at Summerhill as their hormones changed and they evolved into adolescents? Neill understood only too well the motivations of adolescents; he understood the difference between the unhealthy sexual attitudes of those who first arrived at Summerhill and the healthy attitudes of those who had

²⁴ The Trobriand Islands off Papua New Guinea, Melanesia.

been at Summerhill for a number of years. Self-regulation meant that he neither encouraged nor discouraged issues such as sexual liaisons and contraception. He was very aware however of the disastrous consequences that could befall Summerhill, should one of his pupils become pregnant while at Summerhill. When two teenagers would fall in love, as would happen at times, he would lay the consequences before them in a frank and honest way, minus any moral judgments. The following account is of two teenagers who were new arrivals into Summerhill and an example of how Neill dealt with the situation;

Some years ago, we had two pupils arrive at the same time: a boy of seventeen from a boys' private school and a girl of sixteen from a girls' private school. They fell in love with each other and were always together. I met them late one night and I stopped them. 'I don't know what you two are doing,' I said, 'and morally I don't care, for it isn't a moral question at all. But economically I do care. If you, Kate, have a baby, my school will be ruined.'

I went on to expand upon this theme. 'You see,' I said, 'you have just come to Summerhill. To you it means freedom to do what you like. Naturally, you have no special feeling for the school. If you had been here from the age of seven, I'd never have had to mention the matter. You would have such a strong attachment to the school that you *would* think of the consequences to Summerhill.' It was the only possible way to deal with the problem. Fortunately, I never had to speak to them again on the subject (Neill, 1992, p.88).

Self-regulation involves every aspect of the children's lives. Those who have been at Summerhill for a number of years have been allowed the freedom to live through their sexual aspirations in an accepting and loving environment, free of moral judgments—just as the peoples of the old matriarchal societies once lived (Malinowski, 1932; Reich, 1971). Nudity and childhood genital play are neither encouraged nor discouraged, they are simply accepted forms of instinctive human behaviour.

To the adolescent who had grown in this environment, the idea of the school closing down because of their sexual activities was one catalyst that took their thought to a higher plane. Their physical fantasies have already been lived through at a much younger age, and by the time they reach adolescence, when their physical anatomies have matured, they do not have the same curiosity and need to explore as their

unfree peers. Neill had no fears that the older pupils who had been at Summerhill for a number of years would participate in sexual license because he knew that he was not dealing with children who had a 'repressed and therefore unnatural, interest in sex' (Neill, 1992, p.88). By that stage, they were able to think outside of themselves, in an interdependent manner that allowed them to take into account what the consequences will mean for the community as a 'whole'.²⁵ Because they were used to regulating their own behaviour, their thinking processes had evolved beyond the negative and distorted attitudes toward sexual relationships that clouded the minds of their unfree peers. They were capable of operating on a cognitive level that was more insightful and meaningful, and able to transcend the shallowness of the physical act alone. There, the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional elements became relatively balanced to create a beautiful and loving 'whole'.

7. Conclusion

For the last 87 years Summerhill has *proven* that freedom to self-regulate allows children to grow up and live happy balanced and meaningful lives. Self-regulation is not some kind of unproven idea that has sprung from some idealised way of thinking. Neill lived by the philosophy that they do not preach their beliefs at Summerhill; they *live* them; they do not preach love at Summerhill, they *live* love. Summerhill is not a forced environment where people have to over-compensate their values because of a system of restriction they may be forced to endure. The key aims of Summerhill are the fundamental philosophies by which the school functions; which is primarily to allow children to have power over their own lives without coercion by adults.

²⁵ This is not to say that they do not have sexual relations but it is interesting to note that Summerhill has not had one known pregnancy in the 87 years since it opened.

Through the influence of Homer Lane, Neill learned a new path to follow in his teaching practice. His solutions to a healthy teaching practice are as follows (Neill, 1992, pp.208, 209);

- Always be on the side of the child
- Abolish all punishment, fear and external discipline
- Trust in children to grow in their own way without any pressure from outside - save that of communal self-government
- Put learning in its place – below living
- Knowledge is not a criterion for success
- Emotions are more powerful than intellect

Self-regulation is more than taking issues at face value; it is getting behind the veneer of traditional behaviour and superficial conduct. It is thinking critically about the world around us, the world that we occupy and are a complete part of; and leaving no room for the concept of non-thinking. It is the ability to interpret, disrupt and transform—not only our lives, but this world we share with others.

The following chapter will address the underlying tyranny of the neo-liberal schooling system that shrouds Aotearoa (New Zealand) and how the ideologies of neo-liberalism are designed to suppress all genuine forms of self-regulation. Should self-regulation ever become the status quo, the wheels of neo-liberalism—and its master engine, capitalism— would be dramatically slowed as society becomes more inclusive and tolerant of values at variance with capitalism.

CHAPTER 3: NEO-LIBERAL SCHOOLING

...We don't need no education...
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teacher
Leave those kids alone
Hey teacher
Leave those kids alone
All in all we're just
Another brick in the wall

(‘Another Brick in the Wall’ by Pink Floyd from the album *The Wall*)

1. Introduction: Challenging the neo-liberal ideologies

The last chapter explained the benefits of self-regulation in the awakening of people’s minds and their ability to think autonomously in all areas of life. An essential element of self-regulation is the notion of being critically and politically aware in order to see through the smoke-screen of certain economic policies. This chapter will explore the motivations behind economic neo-liberal policies and the impact of these policies on Aotearoa (New Zealand) society from the early 1980s to the present day (2009). How these policies have infiltrated and affected the schooling system is specifically a focus of this enquiry. The trilogy of documentaries written and directed by Alister Barry titled generically *The New Right is Wrong* has been a valuable resource for the subsection on “emergent neo-liberalism in Aotearoa”. His evidence and research has stretched far and wide.

The overall link made here in regard to Summerhill—and more importantly to self-regulation—is to understand how a nation of people can be so easily swayed by ideologies that they may not understand. Although Summerhill will barely be mentioned in the analysis in this chapter, the understandings of the impact of the neo-liberal reforms on the schooling system provide valuable arguments for the need to take drastic action to reverse the harmful culture of these reforms. In this respect, I argue that there is an urgent need to reinvigorate the values of creativity and autonomous critical thought in the schooling domain. Arguably, only in this

way can resistance and the power of the people create effective results. This chapter will canvass various ideas for collegial resistance additionally.

The bulk of this chapter is therefore to inform the reader about the agenda of the neo-liberal advocates from 1980s onwards and how they proceeded to influence and transform the public schooling system under the New Right²⁶ regime in Aotearoa. The implementation of “Tomorrows Schools”, I argue here, was largely misunderstood by the general population who did not realise how these reforms transformed schools into businesses that competed in the marketplace and how the professionalism of the teachers would be ultimately undermined by such policies. Government ministers’ fast-tracked changes into society before the general population could grasp the wider implications of them and organise a united resistance. Now, almost thirty years on, the price is still being paid for such radical changes in our schools. Designed to give the nation competitive freedom in the world market with little or no concern for personal, social, and environmental ramifications, the reforms involved;

- the privatisation of state owned assets to increase multinational corporation control and reduce government power
- huge state spending cuts in education and other state departments
- the commodification of schooling by using managerial business models and market theories
- increasing the influence of the market whilst decreasing the role of the government in schooling initiatives and funding
- disempowering school leadership and curriculum autonomy at the community level by increasing the mundane workload of school leaders through the decentralisation of day to day school management responsibility

²⁶ “The New Right” is a phrase commonly used to refer to a right wing party which is synonymous with values that espouse the “free” market, private ownership, minimal government power, individual gain, and the absence of a conscience of the social or environmental consequences of such policies.

- empowering central micro-management of schools by retaining central curriculum authority
- turning teachers and school leaders into commodities by an appraisal system of performance
- turning children into commodities to be used as future “worker ants” and “wage slaves” in an increasingly competitive economic global market
- imposing a “one size fits all model” of schooling by enforcing standardised tests, assessments, and credentialisation (that are directed by a prescribed curriculum) upon children
- decreasing the ability of children to think autonomously in order to create future ineffectual adults who are unable to challenge and resist the wage slave mentality that their future holds
- the “ideological reduction of education to schooling” (Oliver, 1998) in order to lessen the mana (status) of the family, the home life, recreational activities, work life, and all manner of learning environments outside of the classroom
- a distinct restriction of creativity and critical dialectical thought by enforcing a curriculum full of imposed rote learned ideas
- channeling the means of neo-liberal indoctrination into the general population
- perpetuating an increasingly unequal schooling system where the “fittest of the fittest” survive; where race, age and gender are treated inequitably

While globalisation intensifies, this neo-liberal culture continues to influence the basic structure and operations of the schooling system. What has become increasingly clear is that the fundamental purpose of schools has changed from the creation of well-rounded, community-minded citizens to the creation of self-motivated, money-oriented individuals. The danger to democracy that this orientation has brought with it will then be explored in the succeeding chapter.

2. Neo-liberal practices and policies defined

What is neo-liberalism? Neo-liberalism is a term said to have been used to propel liberalism into this post-modern era²⁷. Neo-liberalism is often loosely used interchangeably with other terms such as “globalisation”, “neo-liberal globalisation”, “the New Right”, “right wing”, “global market”, “free market”, “privatisation”, “capitalism”, “imperialism” and “colonisation”. Neo-liberalism is fundamentally the “extending of the market mechanism into areas of the community previously organised and governed in other ways”. There are three central principles of neo-liberalism: “Free trade, the free mobility of capital, and a broad reduction in the ambit and the role of the state” (Bargh, 2007, p.1).

“Free” trade advocates promote the opening up of national borders so that goods and services can be exported and imported without hindrance. They claim that it is more efficient if each country specialises in exporting goods that they can produce at a low cost and import those goods that would otherwise have cost them too much to produce. In this way “free” trade may not be seen as an intrinsic way of developing imperialistic objectives for private gain (Gallagher & Robinson, 1953). Neo-liberals claim that it would be more efficient if each country specialised and traded rather than closed off the borders to produce their own goods locally and become more self-sustainable. This concept of specialising and trading across international borders is what has become known as globalisation and the free market.

In effect, it is a way of opening countries up that were previously inaccessible²⁸ so they become fair game to any competitor and can be accessed without restrictions (namely by the large multinational business conglomerates). For example, the “transnational corporations” (TNCs) or “multinationals” can set up mass production

²⁷ Post-modern era is the term used loosely with reference to the time after World War II, and even more so from the 1960s onwards in the West.

²⁸ For more details on the difficulties of moving capital and production facilities across borders in the 1800s and early 1900s, refer to the following authors in the reference list; Keynes, 1964; Engler, 1995; Ormerod 1995; Korten, 2000.

factories in countries that have allowed their borders to be opened up to “free” trade. Meanwhile these very same TNCs can also pack up and move their factories from one country to another without genuine loyalty to any one of those individual countries. The developing countries²⁹ are usually the target. The TNCs can use the people and resources; exhaust them, and then move their facility on to a new country where they can continue to produce goods en masse by employing a more impoverished group of people for less money. It means nothing to the TNCs that they have left behind hundreds or even thousands of redundant workers. Capitalism has no personal or social conscience (Allman, 2001, 2007).

Neo-liberals argue that the freedom of mobility allows competitors an equal chance at producing and exporting goods in any given area where the borders have been opened. What they fail to express is how these competitors are usually the large TNCs who have the financial ability to achieve this. Rarely is it a local organisation employing local people. This is because the local organisations generally do not have the financial capacity to provide the necessary facility and resources in order to compete with the huge offshore interests (especially in developing countries). Simultaneously the government is unable to give adequate assistance to the local companies so they may compete against the overseas interests. For this reason neo-liberals endorse the reduction of governmental power which weakens the government’s ability to intervene and regulate market forces—and hence provide aid to its people. The privatisation or the selling of state-owned-assets ensures that the government remains powerless and the giant multinational corporations retain control through privatised ownership. This form of exchanging assets is money laundering on a billion dollar scale. It appears in the news on our television screens as another state-owned asset slides into overseas ownership.

Neo-liberal advocates endorse the reduction of state power³⁰ (elected authority) and contest the idea of state aid. Their objective is to reduce the social conscience of

²⁹ Developing countries are considered by neo-liberals to be extremely deficient in capital.

³⁰ The state includes all of the people of that country, not just the government.

the state so it appears willingly to relinquish economic regulation in favour of the “free” market mechanism. For that reason, if the people of the state or country lose their social conscience, they will become desensitized to the origin and manufacture of the goods they purchase. It is a simple argument of economics. Low to middle class income earners will buy a cheaper product that was made in a country that is being exploited e.g., China or Taiwan—rather than a similar, but more expensive, product produced locally. The more that people buy the item, the richer the organisation becomes. The privatisation of state-owned assets weakens and prevents the government from subsidising local organisations which would ensure a lower cost to the consumer. This weakens the government’s position because the state coffers are no longer receiving the maximum income from the once-state-owned-assets that have been sold. Once an item has been sold, the seller no longer has rights to it. Instead, not only do huge private conglomerates make billions of dollars from those same assets, but their global economic power also continues to strengthen. The privatisation of state-owned-assets “expands the market; it shifts emphasis from public to private purposes; and it reduces the size of government by stripping it of the resources that allow regulation and intervention” (Waligorski, 1990, p.168). Neo-liberal ideology cares not for the personal and social needs of the people at the “grass roots” level. It cares only for the need to accumulate more wealth; the greed is inexhaustible.

Neo-liberals argue against the distribution of state money to people and organisations that they feel have not worked for and earned it. They bemoan the damaging effects of a welfare state; that is, if people are handed out money, it creates dependency. It would not serve the neo-liberal cause if governments provided aid to local organisations as it would create a reduction in the price of goods and the general populace could then afford to buy the products. The “free” market on the other hand chooses to eradicate the competition at the local community level by privatising state owned assets so the government cannot afford to independently support its own people.

Neo-liberals contend that “free” mobility of capital is a fundamental necessity in order for countries to grow and develop. They claim that *investment* is needed in developed countries to retain existing conditions and create more growth. In the developing countries, they claim that *investment* is a necessity for the initial movement towards development and growth. Investment may be obtained from a number of institutions, i.e., “government official development aid; from foreign direct investment; and from institutions as loans” (Bargh, 2007, p. 3).

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are the two most significant institutions that provide investment capital for countries. The World Bank supplies loans for the purpose of infrastructural development and The International Monetary Fund ensures stability so that world trade can grow and balances of payments³¹ are protected:

The IMF and the World Bank coordinate closely their work in developing countries. The Fund focuses on macroeconomic issues including monetary, exchange rate, and fiscal policies, fiscal, monetary, and financial sector institutions and related reforms, and economic governance. Projects supported by the World Bank focus on structural reforms in such areas as private sector development, social protection, water, energy, health, and education (International Monetary Fund, 2008).

The TNCs are one of the principal providers of direct foreign investment. The neo-liberal argument is that the TNCs offer more benefit to the people by providing foreign investment in the form of “additional capital, and access to technology and international markets” (United Nations Conference, 2001). It can be argued that such foreign investment and “technology transfer” provided by the TNCs are not always as efficient as may be portrayed. Often the goods and services provided for developing countries are substandard, past their use-by date, and in danger of jeopardizing the people and/or the environment (Khor, 1996; Marjoram, 1994).

Through a labyrinth of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank set down the conditions that governments had

³¹ Information on balance of payments can be found on the following Investopedia website <http://www.investopedia.com/articles/03/060403.asp?viewed=1>

to adhere to in order to qualify for investment loans. These loans were then used to make repayments on previous debts owed to “commercial banks, governments and the World Bank” (Structural Adjustment Program, 2008). Although the SAPs varied from country to country, their universal principles included export-led growth, privatisation, liberalisation, and the efficiency of the free market.

Financial control over governments was maintained by imposing certain conditions upon them. These conditions included forcing the devaluation of a country’s currency against the dollar; lifting import and export restrictions; removing price controls and state subsidies; balancing the budget and not overspending (Structural Adjustment Program, 2008). The more a country’s dollar became devalued, the cheaper their products became for foreign buyers. Conversely, the country’s imports became more expensive. Therefore, contrary to the norms of sound financial practice, the IMF encouraged countries (especially if they had large foreign loans) to purchase imports. It was through such policies that the IMF was able to exert control over a submissive country and thus ensure for itself a viable source of income for the future.

In order to balance the national budget, the government could either raise the taxes or cut state spending. Whereas the raising of taxes would add money to the state coffers—giving the government more choices and able to spend more money on its people—cuts in government spending tend to be targeted at services in education, health, social care, and subsidies that regulate the price of basic goods such as food and milk. Rather unsurprisingly, the IMF discouraged the raising of taxes, recommending government spending cuts instead. Prices rise rapidly when both the currency is devalued and price controls are removed at the same time. The SAPs invariably hurt the poor and the working class; the ones most reliant upon these services who comprise the majority of the world’s population. When seen in this context, populations became tools increasingly of multinational corporations³². By

³² For example, the World Bank, IMF, TNCs or multinational corporations.

monopolizing and dictating the terms of reference³³ of the global economic market, the majority of the world's population became submissive, uninformed and in permanent debt.

Given the importance of understanding how this expansive movement of neo-liberal reality was able to sweep across borders and infiltrate individual societies to become normalised “ways of being”, the following subsection will examine how neo-liberalism emerged in Aotearoa to make our country a leading exemplar of neo-liberal practice.

3. Emergent neo-liberalism in Aotearoa

Aotearoa mirrors the effects of “right wing”³⁴ economic manipulation on a global level. The question here is not so much *why* neo-liberalism came into Aotearoa because we already know *why*; the question is *how* did it get here and become so dominant? In a sense, the “why” generally remains static while the “how” can be changeable over different periods of time. Foucault (1977; 1980) dissected theories on “discourse and power” and realised that there was a subtle difference between the *why* and the *how*. It involves a mind shift from one reality to another. For example just because our society behaves a certain way now, does not mean that we always behaved that way in the past. At the same time our current behaviour as a society does not necessarily mean that the course of action it took to get us to this point was the only option available at the time. It is highly probable that things could have been done differently, with a very different outcome. The same can also be said for our future. Hence my argument is that if we understand *how* the driving forces caused movement behind the “official techniques of regulation, punishment, normalisation and so on”, we are then able to disseminate information to allied factions “who have a direct interest in their subversion” (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p.19). For this reason we will now examine the driving forces behind the recent

³³ The terms of reference are contained in the criteria for funding of nations as set out in the Structural Adjustment Programme discussed above.

³⁴ Right wing = New Right, neo-liberal, “free” market, private ownership, minimal government power, individual gain, no social or environmental conscience.

economic history of Aotearoa and how neo-liberalism is becoming the “common-sense” mentality of this nation.

During the 1970s, the multinational corporations grew rapidly in strength and began to dominate the world’s economic activity. Many countries of the world had laws in place that regulated markets and protected domestic business from foreign corruption. In Aotearoa, during the preceding 40 years, both the Labour and National governments had established economic “protectionist policies” to safeguard the people and their national assets (Barry, 2007b). Deep within the caverns of the national Treasury however, there was a group of New Right economists reviewing its strategy for economic intervention of multinational corporations. Geoff Bertram, a senior lecturer in economics at Victoria University talked about the motivations of this “elite” group of economists:

The view that they were proposing was really that markets do know best and that markets are places where private patrons pursue private welfare, private benefit, private profit... they saw markets as better at making social judgments, better at shaping society than human agencies. And there was a real unwillingness to go back and visit the origins of the welfare state in New Zealand and to think about why New Zealanders came to do things the way they did. Because of the lack of historical understanding...their work really did come very directly from a single theoretical preconceived position (Barry, 2007b).

In the Aotearoa Treasury, the neo-liberal economists faced the problem of having a Prime Minister (Rob Muldoon³⁵), who did not like their “free” market theories or recommendations. Muldoon came from a poor, hard-working background. A solid relationship with his grandmother during his formative years shaped many of his ambitions and ideas. He spent many hours in her company debating politics vigorously:

Rob from a very young age became a supporter of the welfare state and developed a strong belief that society should not throw the aged, widows, deserted wives, invalids or the unemployed into the gutter. (Gustafson, 2000, p.20)

³⁵ Robert Muldoon was the Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1975–1984.

Muldoon became very astute in economic matters and could not be easily duped. He admitted his economic knowledge to the public in his lead up to the 1984 general election:

I know the New Zealand economy better than any other living soul in or out of the state services, in or out of politics, parliament, anywhere else. I've lived with it intimately for 20 years...And I know what we're doing, I know where we're going... And we're winning. (Barry, 2007b)

Muldoon was Prime Minister of Aotearoa for nine years but, by the 1984 election, his party had declined in the polls. Three days before the election, the IMF³⁶, eager to be rid of Muldoon's leadership, leaked unfavourable reports of his handling of the economy. In 1984 David Lange led the Labour Party to a landslide victory and became the new Prime Minister of Aotearoa.

Lange's knowledge of the country's economic state was a complete antithesis to that of Muldoon. "I am not an economist," he announced, "[and] am proud to assert that I am not an economist... I tell you that I am not going to worship at the altar of pretending to be an economist" (Barry, 2007b). Lange's admission of economic ignorance placed the country in a dangerous position. He thereafter chose his friend, Roger Douglas, to be the Minister of Finance. Unbeknown to Lange, Douglas had strong right wing tendencies, and soon sought support from economists from the Treasury and the Reserve Bank. The problem Douglas faced was that the "free" market theories he wished to embrace were in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of the Labour Party. Such theories included a reduction in corporate tax rates to attract overseas investment; the abolition of foreign exchange controls; wage cuts; the abandonment of export and tariff incentives; possible government assets commercialised or sold; and the reduction in welfare spending.

Treasury and Reserve Bank officials understood that the new government was naïve in economic matters. There was a huge run on the New Zealand dollar and foreign

³⁶ IMF refers to the International Monetary Fund.

exchange reserves were almost depleted. The money officials met with Lange and advised a devaluation of the currency by 20%. Although this would cost the taxpayers \$750,000,000, it would supposedly fix the problem. In retrospect, Lange's admission of economic ignorance at the time mirrored the economic ignorance of the nation in general. The economic "wolves" were quick to bring down their prey. Lange dealt with the crisis in the only way he knew how:

When the governor of the Reserve Bank tells me something, I listen. When the secretary of the Treasury tells me something, I listen. When the business community...tell me something, I listen. (Barry, 2007b)

The devaluation was hurriedly pushed through in order to overcome the crisis. The Labour Party President, Jim Anderton,³⁷ sensed the alarm bells ringing early on:

The atmosphere was a financial crisis and we had to do what the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance said and we'd just been elected and we had to trust them and they had this terrible crisis to fix and they couldn't really spend much time with us but it would be alright and we'll look after it and so on.

...I think there was a conspiracy between senior officials of the Reserve Bank and Treasury to work with elements of the Labour party, Roger Douglas and others, to prepare a policy direction for government...that they couldn't get past Muldoon. And it was virtually in the top draw, and all those documents were already well prepared, if not written and printed practically. And as soon as Roger Douglas was elected...and I think Roger Douglas's election was more important to the Treasury in more sense than the Labour party. They had a minister of finance that was going to let them have their head. (Barry, 2007b)

Douglas began immediately to implement his portfolio of reforms; he believed that the introduction of competent economic management would increase the future standard of living. Encouraged and supported by advisors from the Reserve Bank, Douglas executed the most drastic changes in New Zealand's economic history since the first Labour Government "instigated its social welfare system in the 1930s" (ACT, 2008). He introduced principal changes to the economy at a rate never before witnessed in New Zealand. This effectively altered the basic constitution of both public and private sectors, and attracted tribute and applause

³⁷ Jim Anderton was the Labour Party President between 1979 to 1989. He was a Labour Member of Parliament from 1984 to 1989.

from various financial commentators, theorists, and politicians throughout the world. During the 1980s and 1990s “rogernomics” became a catch-phrase that every Kiwi knew.

Public opposition to rogernomics did not survive. It was not wise to be too critical of the government’s stance for fear of counter attack and funding cuts. Douglas declared packages in “quantum leaps” where whole sectors of the economy were to lose substantial government protection and support. Jim Anderton continued his criticism of Douglas:

Roger Douglas’s line on all this was you sort of had to do it to them before they did it to you, and the faster you did it the less chance there was of opposition. So it wasn’t a democratic process, it was a draconian process almost totalitarian. He just rammed it through quickly because this medicine would never be swallowed voluntarily, so it had to be forced down, the faster the better. (Barry, 2007b)

The decision was made to float the exchange rate in which Douglas and his advisors saw as a logical progression from changes they had already made. The value of the New Zealand dollar was now out of government control and in the hands of international currency traders; it could be bought and sold freely. Borrowed money flooded into the country; property investors could borrow massive amounts of money; new investment companies and foreign banks sprang up like mushrooms. The loss of direct controls over the economy meant that jobs were lost and unemployment rose. The poorer working people and trade unionists were hit the hardest by the rogernomics regime.

In typical “divide and rule” fashion, Douglas set about fragmenting and reshaping publicly owned organisations so that they resembled private corporations and could be sold off more readily; organisations such as transport, shipping, railways, aircraft, and state forests. The government announced that on April 1, 1987, the Forest Service and the Department of Lands and Survey would be abolished (Clarke, 1996, 1998, 1999). Douglas ensured that right-wing businessmen headed

these organisations³⁸. The next in line was the Ministry of Energy with its divisions in oil and gas, coal mining and electricity. On March 31, 1987 (in what David Caygill³⁹ called the “Pre-emptive Strike”), the government announced the corporatisation of nine entities which included Telecom, the Post Office, Coal, Electricity, and Land.

Converting government organisations into business models had not been tried anywhere else in the world at the time. The government of Aotearoa did not have the mandate to privatise state-owned-assets because most Kiwis were not interested in selling or privatising. The corporatisation of state assets created tens of thousands of job losses. The public were becoming upset and disillusioned with the Labour government and their string of broken promises. Lange made grand sweeping statements to the public (filled with economic ignorance) while Douglas and his treasury friends relentlessly continued planning their reforms away from the public eye. Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Rob Deane was appointed head of the State Services Commission. The business roundtable chairman Ron Trotter was in charge of recommending business men and women to run the state-owned enterprises. “Control of the nation’s resources was shifting from elected authorities to the big business “elite” (Barry, 1007b).

The Tangata Whenua (indigenous people) of Aotearoa were appalled at the total lack of respect shown for their rights over rivers, land, and other natural resources as laid out in the Treaty of Waitangi⁴⁰. These were the rights of “Tino Rangatiratanga”⁴¹—or the right to self-governance. The New Zealand Maori Council took the government to court. In order to overcome this crisis, Treasury set up a hit squad to squash Maori opposition.

³⁸ Alan Gibbs and John Fernyhough.

³⁹ David Caygill – Associate Minister of Finance.

⁴⁰ The Treaty of Waitangi is a legal agreement signed by the government and the chiefs of the Maori people in 1840.

⁴¹ Sovereignty is another term often used to describe this right.

In the 1987 general election, with financial assistance from multinational corporations, the Labour party (or more importantly Roger Douglas) returned to power. Nine weeks after the election on October 19, 1987 (known as Black Monday), Wall Street crashed⁴² and suffered the greatest financial loss known at that time in history (Wikipedia, 2008). An estimated \$1.5 trillion vanished on Wall St (Kennedy, 1995, p. 107). Although the economy went into recession, it didn't stop Roger Douglas and the New Right agenda. In fact, they accelerated their process of reforms. On December 17, 1987, company taxes were cut to below that of Australia. Tariffs were halved. In addition, there were massive tax cuts for high income earners and investors. The biggest shock to the nation was the announcement of the sale of thirteen state-owned enterprises.

Lange soon began to show signs of doubt toward the integrity of the government he led, which was leaping more and more to the right. His beliefs were in direct opposition to those of Douglas. Jim Anderton, a Labour MP at the time, revealed his thoughts:

I had several meetings with David Lange trying to convince him that there were alternatives, presenting him some of them and feeling almost at the end as though he was a captive... and at that point it was clear that Lange had no control whatever in cabinet and the New Right had total control in the government. (Barry, 2007b)

By the end of 1988 the public had lost faith in the Labour Party. On November 4, 1988, Lange sacked Richard Prebble who was the Minister of State-owned enterprises. The sacking of Prebble created conflict between Lange and Douglas. Douglas resigned as Minister of Finance and David Caygil stepped in; but when the Labour caucus re-elected Douglas to cabinet Lange could take no more and he resigned his position as Prime Minister. Geoffrey Palmer became Prime Minister. Prebble was reappointed and the sale of state assets continued.

⁴² A stock market crash is a sudden dramatic decline of stock prices. Crashes are driven by panic as much as by underlying economic factors. Stock market crashes are in fact social phenomena where external economic events combine with crowd behavior and psychology in a positive feedback loop where selling by some market participants drives more market participants to sell.

The general election in 1990 brought in a new National led government with Jim Bolger as Prime Minister. Bolger appointed right-wing advocate Ruth Richardson as Minister of Finance. Due to the impending “financial collapse”, Treasury advised a major slash in government expenditure. They scared the new Prime Minister into taking impulsive action. They wanted to encourage foreign investment by reducing corporate taxes, implementing benefit and wage cuts, and shift health, education and welfare costs onto families and individuals. Meanwhile Bolger was promising the public the exact opposite.

The changes were ruthlessly implemented and the government’s first economic package was announced on December 19, 1990:

- sickness benefits for solo parents – cut by 11%
- widows benefits – cut by 17%
- unemployment benefit for adults under 25 – cut by 25%
- medical expenses were increased – (doctors charges and medicines)
- education spending was cut
- public health system would be reviewed

Winston Peters who was a National MP and cabinet minister at the time spoke out:

Basically if you move with enough speed as they had with the December 19 package, you can get away with it. But what’s very clear though was the December 19 package was written a long way before the 1990 election. It wasn’t prepared after the election; it was probably in full preparation in August–September before the election...the approach was the same... hijack, ambush, speed. Before they got a chance to think, move on to something else. Whilst ensuring that the announced package sees completion. (Barry, 2007b)

The next measure to cut labour costs was the “Employment Contracts Bill” which completely rewrote New Zealand’s industrial relations law. The words “trade union” were to become obsolete. The new bill would give the employer ultimate power over wages and work conditions and remove national bargaining structures from the workers. International investors would be attracted by cheap labour. There were marches and strikes throughout the country and thousands of

submissions made to the government. The people were ignored and the new legislation was passed. Workers and Unions suffered.

The public health system was next to come under scrutiny. Simon Upton (Minister of Health) appointed a taskforce to clean out the public health services. Business people replaced elected boards that had run public hospitals, and patients were charged for health services under the user pays framework. Dr Peter Roberts (Coalition for Public Health) strongly disagreed with the health reforms:

The taskforce was led by a banker and included in the group a lady from Treasury who was very interested in health economics and in particular she believes very strongly in the market model of delivery. They moved very quickly in the direction of major changes in the health care system but none of us were told of this; it was all done in secret, it was all done behind closed doors. It was done with a very narrow ideological group of advisors. (Barry, 2007b)

The National government continued to sell state assets including the railway system and the rail ferries, which were sold to an American corporation and Fay Richwhite. As Barry has argued, “The New Zealand people...felt deeply betrayed by the process of privatisation” (Barry, 2007b). After most of the national assets had been sold, the government turned to regional and local councils. In Auckland, the people rallied and protested strongly and so the government left them alone; the Port, Bus Company, rubbish trucks, water and sewage system remained in the public domain. Other communities however lost their assets. Wellington, for example, lost its buses and was only left with partial control over its power network and sewage treatment system.

New Zealand soon became known as “the profitable partner” so continued to attract more foreign investors by advertising “low interest rates, inflation restrained by law, freely convertible currency with no restrictions on transfers, and equitable taxation without levies on capital gains” (Barry, 2007b). By 1993, foreign multinationals had control of telecommunications⁴³, most of the banks and

⁴³ 96% of Kiwis” opposed the sale of Telecom to an American conglomerate

insurance companies, and the forestry sector. The erosion of democratic organisations such as hospital, harbour and power boards revealed that New Zealand had been converted into a dictatorship while nonetheless professing itself a democracy. The pseudo-democracy had no need for the support of a military force to impose its ideologies.

Tony Simpson, a well known New Zealand historian, spoke candidly of the New Right reforms:

Some individuals in the corporate business sector have been considerably empowered by the events of the last ten years. But I would guess that 90% of the population of New Zealand have been thoroughly disempowered compared to the influence and effect that they could have on the economy as it impacted on their daily lives in previous decades. We ran what was essentially an insulated economy; we did that for very good reasons. It was one of the instruments we used to achieve control over our lives and to achieve the sorts of social ambitions that most New Zealanders would want...One of the consequences of that of course has been the thorough interpenetration of the New Zealand economy by large transnational corporations. Many New Zealanders will find as a result of that of course that it will become increasingly difficult to achieve their social ambitions because they will have no means of control in those organizations, and those organisations of course have no interest in the social infrastructure of New Zealand. (Barry, 2007b)

The New Zealand electoral system operated at that time under a system called “First Past the Post” (FPP). The political party with the majority of votes (even if it was only 51%) became the sole government for the country. Minority parties had no chance. FPP was often known as an elective dictatorship. FPP suited the New Right agenda because it had the ability to give key ministers enormous control. A radical change was instigated and two referendums were held in 1992 and 1993 on the electoral system. The first was for voters to decide whether to stay with FPP or adopt a new system of proportional representation. The second referendum was to decide between FPP and the preferred proportional representation alternative. The second referendum and the general election occurred at the same time, in November 1993. The alternative that the people chose was called “Mixed Member Proportional” (MMP). Only 15% of voters chose FPP. In the lead up to the referendum, the chairman of Telecom New Zealand Limited, Peter Shirtcliffe, organised an advertising campaign damning MMP that cost more than both the

National and the Labour Party's election advertising combined. Ron Donald, of the Electoral Reform Coalition, spoke out in support of MMP:

What we're wanting is a system where every vote counts equally and the pressure groups can't go and tap on the shoulder of their favourite cabinet minister and get what they want. And that's what they stand to lose with MMP. (Barry, 2007b)

MMP was voted in. As Barry tells it, "Next morning Treasury officials arrived at work early and began shredding documents" (Barry, 2007b). The face of politics in Aotearoa had changed forever; the people now had more voice. But it was too late to turn back the clock. The majority of assets were gone—and with it the security of a nation. It is in this way that Aotearoa has continued to be influenced by international investors and transnational corporations.

Against this backdrop, *how* neo-liberal reforms were injected into the schooling sector in Aotearoa will be highlighted in the next section of this study. Particularly pertinent in this section is the lengthy struggle between the government and teachers over the major issue of "bulk funding"; how "bulk funding" was intended by the New Right to be the precursor to the privatisation of schooling. The intention here is for the reader to understand how politicians continued to implement underhanded tactics in order to impose educational policies without the mandate of the people. My intention here is to highlight the driving forces behind those educational policy initiatives, and to show how they almost managed to convince a nation to agree.

4. Neo-liberal schooling in Aotearoa

The neo-liberal reforms that swept through Aotearoa in the 1980s and 1990s caused huge expenditure cuts in the state coffers. The public schooling system was purposefully targeted for these reforms within the state services. This was not only because of the huge cost schools posed to tax payers, but schools were also seen by neo-liberals as weapons of mass manipulation:

Schools were designed...to be instruments for the scientific management of a mass population. Schools are intended to produce, through the application of formulas, formulaic human beings whose behaviour can be predicted and controlled (Gatto, 2005, p.23).

The notion of schools pumping out thousands of young people each year who can be readily manipulated and controlled was undoubtedly part of the hidden economic motive behind the new educational policies. These motives were dictated by the “free” market economy in which we, as a nation, unwittingly chose to be a part.

In the 1980s, under the influence of New Right ideologies, the whole social infrastructure of Aotearoa came under threat and schools began to change. The concept of a holistic culture, where everybody had a right to benefit, was in opposition to the incoming “free” market theories of “individual” gain. The individual gain cared little for the social harmony and goodwill of the nation as a whole. In this respect, Professor Jane Kelsey, author of *The New Zealand Experiment*, spoke of the ills of the New Right and its ideology of individual gain:

On new right – the conception of human nature was based around the individual. The individual as a self-maximising unit, completely devoid from any social relationships. As Margaret Thatcher said, “Society is simply an aggregate of individuals”. (Barry, 2007a)

By 1987 the media was inundated with New Right propaganda which fast became the “dominant discourse”. Not unexpectedly, the public were then being told that state schooling was in a “crisis”. The dominant discourse claimed that teachers had too much control over the curriculum, a highly contestable claim. In reality, teachers had to work within specific parameters, which they understood clearly. Placing the blame on teachers was employed as a specific “divide and rule” tactic. Divide the teachers from the parents; sow the seeds of mistrust early on in the process. The public didn’t know what to think because they didn’t understand the political and educational jargon. Advertising was used as a powerful tool to unnerve the populace and convey a sense of mass concern. The affluent business “elite” had the money to promote such neo-liberal propaganda, thus maximising their chances of success whilst pushing those without money further toward the

periphery. Peter Ramsay, of the Picot committee, observed these sorts of phenomena in Knight, Lingard and Porter's book, *Schooling Reform in Hard Times*:

...[T]he dominant "elite" of largely white, male, and affluent New Zealanders were the most influential group in New Zealand schools... [T]he near hegemonic conditions were being contested by women and Maori groups. (Knight, Lingard, & Porter, 1993, p.262).

As I have already outlined above, neo-liberals had built up the New Right momentum by turning public services into private companies. In 1987, it was the turn of the schooling system for review. The government commissioned a taskforce for this purpose, choosing businessman Brian Picot⁴⁴ to head the group, and to organise a report with suggestions for reforms to the management of education. Picot was originally a part owner in the first American-styled supermarket to open in New Zealand in June, 1958⁴⁵ (Tapaleao, 2008). He was an affluent businessman, who had no background as an educator in the schooling system. As such, he was therefore seen to be neutral with respect to the specific learning direction for children. The other members of the committee were (Beare & Boyd, 1993, p.83):

1. Colin Wise – an affluent businessman in Dunedin;⁴⁶
2. Peter Ramsay – Associate Professor of Education at Waikato University and a specialist in Primary⁴⁷ schooling;
3. Margaret Rosemary – Senior lecturer at the College of Education, Wellington and a specialist in Secondary schooling.
4. Whetumarama Wereta – Ngai te Rangi and Ngati Ranginui, a Maori political scientist and statistician, and a social researcher for the Department of Maori Affairs, Wellington.

⁴⁴ Some of Brian Picot's business positions have been—Director of Progressive Enterprises, Director of Ellingham & Co, Sales' Director of Bond & Bond, Director of SC Johnson, Auckland Uniservices, South British Insurance, NZI and NZ forest Products, Chairman of Phillips NZ, and Chairman of Pacific Venture.

⁴⁵ On June 28, 1958, the first Foodtown opened its doors in Otahuhu, Auckland.

⁴⁶ Colin Wise—was formerly CEO in multinational corporations such as Cadbury, Schweppes, and Australasia's largest food manufacturer Goodman Fielder. He also held Directorships in corporations such as Life Assurance, Food, Sports Development, and Geospatial Solutions, to name but a few.

⁴⁷ Primary translates as elementary level schooling.

The non-voting participants were Simon Smelt, an economist who represented the Treasury and Marijke Robinson, who was a senior advisor on education at the State Services Commission. Maurice Gianotti,⁴⁸ a former school inspector, was the secretary.

There was a general election due in 1987. At that time, Smelt was composing an education policy briefing for a “treasury review of government management” which was not to be announced until after the election, lest it sway public opinion (Barry, 2007a). Labour succeeded in winning the 1987 general election with Prime Minister David Lange soon becoming the self-appointed Minister of Education. After the election, treasury released their report which also contained a second volume explaining treasury theories to education. The theories included ideologies such as private schools receiving greater subsidies, public schools being made to compete with each other, and the strong belief that education should benefit the individual first and foremost.

Senior official in the Department of Education Lyall Perris,⁴⁹ was shocked by the announcement:

It was a shock. No one knew it was being worked on. No one had any idea that the treasury was going to deliver a briefing paper on education. After all, why should they...and certainly not a briefing paper remotely like this one. It was totally out of the ordinary. (Barry, 2007a)

Treasury officials were gunning for a schooling system which emulated the “free” market model with a major emphasis on competition. Parents were to be considered “consumers”, and the offspring of the system (namely the students) were to be seen in terms of serving the needs of the economy. As with previous reforms in other

⁴⁸ M. Gianotti was a former school inspector. At the time of the report, he was serving as an administrator in the Department of Education.

⁴⁹ Lyall Perris was a senior official in the Department of Education from 1986 to 1989.

public areas, there was also to be a considerably reduced role of the government in the ability to regulate educational processes.

Simultaneously, the Picot taskforce (as it came to be known) had a specific economic management agenda. “The taskforce’s terms of reference were specifically around management structures and cost-effectiveness, and did not include issues of curriculum, teaching or assessment” (Levin, 2001, p.44). A few months after the election they released their report⁵⁰. They claimed that the old system had too many departments and boards which made administration unwieldy and cumbersome. From a business perspective, it was a highly inefficient system. They wanted to dissolve many of the departments and have one central Ministry of Education. In addition they would create locally elected Boards of Trustees (BOTs) at the community level. In doing so, they advocated the “decentralisation of decision making” for schools. They packaged this idea with beautiful wrappings; claims of greater school autonomy, more control by parents for the outcomes of their children in the guise of the BOT.

As well as suggesting that there were elements of the Picot report that were an educational farce, it is also reasonable to suggest that certain members of the taskforce had no idea of the monster they were creating and the misunderstandings that would arise in the following decades. The “decentralization of decision making”, for instance, has been said to have entailed nothing less than “the relinquishing of mundane *unimportant* decision making”. The taskforce mandated that...

- The BOT will have responsibility for managing the everyday operations of the school such as resourcing, staffing, maintenance, etc.
- The principal will be responsible (through a system of assessment and appraisal) to ensure that the overall “educational” performance of the school is up to the required national standard.

⁵⁰ The Picot Report.

- The staff will be accountable to the Principal to ensure the children are meeting the “achievement objectives” (AO) and the “specific learning outcomes” (SLO) set out in the curriculum.
- The Principal will be accountable to the Ministry to ensure the AOs and SLOs are being met by his/her staff.
- The school will continue to be funded as long as the AOs and SLOs are being met (knowledge of the curriculum is used as the criteria for success and thus secure future funding).

The taskforce made sure that the most *vitaly important* element stayed within central control; which was the absolute control over curriculum direction; in other words the absolute control over what was being plugged into students’ heads:

As a policy-making, rather than an operational body, the Ministry of Education relinquished control of functions such as picking staff and determining discretionary expenditure, but it continued to exercise tight control of the all-important areas of level of funding, curriculum and accountability. The changes made managerial sense but they also carried an important political message... [T]he government has moved to relinquish “no win” areas and consolidate its control of vital areas where losing would threaten its ability to manage the system at all. (Fiske & Ladd, 2000, p.52)

The Principal became, in effect, a glorified manager dressed up as an educational leader. Likewise, the Boards of Trustees and teachers. Despite the belief that they have some sort of control through setting the “key competencies” and “values” in the core curriculum framework, they had no control over the direction of the curriculum. More detail of the curriculum will be given in the curriculum chapter of this thesis.

In retrospect, it is now obvious who were pulling the policy-making strings in parliament. The right wing economists intended to use schools as instruments of indoctrination for economic socialisation purposes. John Codd, a then Professor of Policy Studies in Education at the University of Massey, explained the purpose of this socialisation process:

If you want to produce a society in which the members of that society are either producers or consumers, then you have to socialise individuals into that kind of society and secondary education is fundamental to bringing about that sea change in social values and constructing the kinds of individuals who would function effectively and efficiently within a market environment.

... For the New Right, teachers were there to prepare children for the market economy. They weren't expected to encourage such things as critical thinking, independence, and so on. (Barry, 2007a)

In the 1980s, “free” market theories were outside the realm of understanding for the average Kiwi. The public greeted the idea of an elected board in every school with approval and felt that democracy was alive and well. Although teachers felt a general approval for more community involvement, they were concerned however with the haste in which the government was trying to push the reform through. They questioned the need for such haste; especially without trialing it first. Bruce Murray, Principal of Tawa College,⁵¹ like many other principals and teachers, was skeptical—and had good reason to be:

You must pour on the change as fast as you can and keep it moving and don't give anyone time to think about it. Don't give anyone time to marshal any arguments against it or to say hang on a moment. Let's have a real think about this. (Barry, 2007a)

Thousands of submissions poured in but they were put out the back in cardboard boxes. There was no time to analyse them. The Picot Report became government policy in May 1988 in what became known as “Tomorrow's Schools”. Each school was to become “self-governing”. At least, that is what the people believed. What they didn't understand however was that their interpretation of self-governing was different to a neo-liberal version⁵². Even the vocabulary began to reflect the language of a New Right paradigm. Parents became “consumers”. Children became “students”. Teachers became “practitioners”. Schools became “institutions” or

⁵¹ Bruce Murray was Principal from 1989–2002.

⁵² The same type of misinterpretations occurred between Maori and Pakeha in the translation of the Treaty of Waitangi.

“organisations”. Departments became “ministries”. Boards of Trustees were expected to operate like a Board of Directors.

The two professional organisations that represented teachers were the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI)—Te Riu Roa—which represented preschool and primary teachers, and the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) which represented secondary school teachers. Leaders of these Unions had grave concerns for the direction that schools were headed. Trade Unions across the board protested against the government proposing an “Employment Contracts Act”, which meant that workers would lose Union coverage and would have to sign individual contracts.⁵³ This in turn would give employers more control over wages and work conditions. The following comments from various Education Union representatives typified the mood of the teachers. Ruth Chapman—President of the PPTA—warned; “I believe it’s the most serious threat to public education there has been since New Zealand education in a formal sense began” (Barry, 2007a). Helen Duncan—from the Executive Council of the NZEI⁵⁴—stated:

NZEI was used to being consulted by the government and the Department of Education about changes to the education system. But with Tomorrows’ Schools, here was being proposed hugely radical reform with almost no reference to the practitioners in the teaching profession.

...the real concern that we had as teachers and as a union was that the agenda was to have individual contracts for all teachers. Our concern was that they wanted to break the national contract—which we believed preserved uniformity of educational provision across the whole country, and was actually good for teachers and for education and for the children. (Barry, 2007a)

Roger Tobin, Otago Regional PPTA Chairperson, echoed this sentiment⁵⁵:

They came up with the idea called “provider capture,” which was the people who worked in the field would only ever represent their own vested interests—so therefore couldn’t be trusted to participate in policy making, and they applied that to teachers. So, essentially in education decisions, they asked everybody *except teachers* what they thought. (Barry, 2007a)

⁵³ The Employment Contracts Act commenced on May 15, 1991.

⁵⁴ Helen Duncan was a member of the Executive Council of the NZEI from 1988 to 1998.

⁵⁵ Roger Tobin was the Otago Regional Chairperson of the PPTA from 1988–1998.

Boards of Trustees were now in control of the day-to-day running of the schools and the hiring of teachers. Principals were offered a 16% pay rise if they signed individual employment contracts, which would effectively separate them from their staff and their unions. Educators could not understand the necessity of such a move. The government tried to force principals and senior staff to sign individual contracts but they refused; the PPTA and NZEI would not concede. There was a long, drawn-out standoff in negotiations.

The government continued to move quickly. Regional boards were closed. The Department of Education was slashed to a much smaller Ministry. Curriculum development was contracted out. “Committees of officials and interested parties were to work out the restructuring details, but teachers and the union representatives were excluded” (Barry, 2007a). “Bulk funding”, the linchpin policy, continued to lurk in the background. “Bulk funding” was an important step to the marketisation of schooling. If schools had control over their revenue, they would then be able to operate fully as commercial businesses. 70–80% of the proposed money for “bulk funding” was to be spent on salaries. The neo-liberals knew that most of the money would be for this purpose and only a small percentage would be for extra running costs. They didn’t care about the money because it had to be spent on these areas, regardless of who controlled it. What they did care about was attaching tight strings to the money so they could use it as a type of blackmail, which guaranteed their control in the direction of the schooling system.

A primary belief that underpinned neo-liberal thinking was that humans are “self-maximising units”, as Kelsey mentioned earlier (Barry, 2007a). We are all believed to be on a level playing-field competing with one another on the same level. As we all know, however, people come from different backgrounds with different “cultural capital” (Bernstein, xxx). In a schooling situation, if “difference” is negated by treating everyone the same, the disadvantaged continue to miss out and the advantaged continue to reap the rewards. The right wing privilege an “equal

opportunity” to compete to the detriment of providing people with an equal opportunity to succeed.

Returning briefly to the “bulk funding” issue, by the late 1980s, the Labour government found its popularity declining in the polls. As a result, they couldn’t afford to be too heavy-handed on the teachers and schools, so made a pragmatic decision to stay with the status quo and not institute bulk funding. Teachers remained part of the state schooling system and continued to be paid directly from the centre, which was by this time the new Ministry.

During this time, it is also interesting to note that David Lange resigned his position. In his resignation speech he asserted; “There is no place in New Zealand for deregulated labour markets” (Barry, 2007a). In that simple sentence (possibly without even realizing it), Lange showed the country he had been “neo-liberally” duped. Having spent the last several years *imposing* deregulatory practices across the whole country, he was now admitting that he didn’t really understand the neo-liberal reforms or their ramifications, proving that power and control in the wrong hands can be a dangerous thing.

The 1990 election brought the National Party into power with Jim Bolger as the new Prime Minister. Promises were soon forgotten and the right wing revolution continued. Now, labour relations lay at the forefront of the reforms. Trade unions became the major target. The “Employment Contracts Act 1991 was passed which weakened the power of the unions and strengthened individual employers. Unions were the last place of opposition and protection that workers had to neo-liberal policies. People protested and strikes continued, but the “Act” passed through parliament regardless. It was a divisive piece of legislation. Employers could save money on wages and working conditions. Ironically, the same concept would apply to schools with their BOTs. Individual teacher contracts would undermine both the unions and the idea of cooperative schooling.

Lockwood Smith was the Minister of Education during this period, and he set about developing a new formula for “bulk funding” salaries. The reforms continued: subsidies for private schools were increased, BOTs could accept foreign fee paying students, and school zoning was abolished. This meant that affluent parents could desert their local school and send their children to “better schools” away from their local community. Schools now had to compete with one another instead of working together. In addition, there was a new system of decile⁵⁶ rating where schools were ranked according to their socio-economic status. This caused even more segregation. The concept of school zoning was an important one in regard to the building of a *National Culture*. Aotearoa was supposed to be the land with a “classless society”⁵⁷. Everyone was meant to share the load. Everyone was meant to benefit regardless of whether you were rich or poor, Maori or Pakeha⁵⁸. We all lived in this land together—side by side.

The BOTs had not yet been given control of teachers’ salaries. Lockwood Smith wanted to impose salaries “bulk funding” on all schools. The teachers’ collective employment contract was due to expire, so the government would not negotiate a new deal unless teachers dropped their opposition to “bulk funding”. On July 1, 1992, the teachers went on strike. They wanted to make a statement to the government and the public that they didn’t want to be pushed around anymore. The public supported them. Smith tried to negotiate “bulk funding” for Principals, Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals, and Senior Teachers—which would remove them from collective coverage. The PPTA and NZEI would not agree. Only 1% of BOTs supported “bulk funding” of Principals and senior staff. After a week of rolling strikes, the government postponed passing the legislation, and teachers went

⁵⁶ Decile ratings for schools range from 1 – 10. 1 being a poor socio-economic school and 10 being an affluent school. Ratings are made according to the income of the childrens’ parents.

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class_in_New_Zealand

⁵⁸ White Kiwi, usually but not always descended from the UK. Although there were ongoing racial issues between Maori and Pakeha, the prejudice was not as prominent as in other countries. There were various reasons for this, such as the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, and the fact that the Maori race descended from a strong spiritual and warrior stock and therefore did not view Pakeha as being superior.

back to work. The government decided to add more money into the pot so schools would be tempted to opt into a trial voluntarily:

Smith worked out a compromise that permitted a voluntary trial of “bulk funding”. Schools that opted for this method would receive funding for the number of teachers to which they were entitled, based essentially on average teachers’ salaries by school type. Under such a formula, the only schools that would benefit financially from a shift to “bulk funding” were those currently employing a disproportionate number of teachers who, because of their inexperience, were paid below the national average. The National government further angered the teachers when, in 1992, without consulting the unions, it amended the Education Act to require all schools’ boards to pay the salaries of senior teachers and principals from a bulk grant. (Fiske & Ladd, 2000, p.162)

Seven secondary schools and six primary schools chose to join the three year trial while the employment contract negotiations remained at a standstill. The 1993 general election saw the “bulk funding” issue temporarily shelved and National won by a weak margin. It gave teachers a short breathing space. The three year trial of salaries’ “bulk funding”—for the schools that had opted in—came to an end in 1995. This meant more schools could now opt in. The money was increased again in 1996 to further tempt schools. Financial pressure for schools increased as the operational grants were not enough to cover ongoing costs. The game of cat and mouse continued between the teachers’ unions and the government.

In 1996 the first election occurred under proportional representation. Many of the right-wing MPs were voted out. The people realized that the minor parties would now have more say in parliament. National stayed in power and formed a coalition with New Zealand First—a minor party. In 1997, Jenny Shipley ousted Jim Bolger as Prime Minister with an agenda to accelerate the New Right revolution. While New Zealand First was generally opposed to “bulk funding”, their party didn’t have enough sway in parliament to make any real changes. They proposed increasing the salaries funds—so that they would “no longer be based on average salary levels for teachers but rather on top salary levels” (Fiske & Ladd, 2000, 162). In this way, it was believed that all schools would benefit by opting in. Although possibly a good hearted option, it was inevitably unrealistic. Insofar as \$220,000,000 was allocated

to “bulk funding”—instead of the expected \$85,000,000—it was the most expensive form of “bulk funding” you could ever imagine. As Kevin Bunker—General Secretary of the PPTA noted, “[It was] fiscally irresponsible; a promise that no government could ever continue to deliver upon” (Barry, 2007a).

As anticipated, schools continued their refusal to join the scheme. By 1998, only 13% of schools had opted in. The government sweetened the pot even further saying that the schools could bank any money they did not spend at a particular time, let it earn interest and then use it again later at their own discretion. By March 1999, 27% of schools had joined the scheme. It took a lot of courage for a school to turn down the amounts of money being offered⁵⁹. Martin Cooney, from the PPTA noted: “93% of boards who were really feeling the pinch...turned down the biggest bribe in educational history. There’s \$31,000,000 on offer and 93% of the people turned it down” (Barry, 2007a).

Meanwhile, the Labour Party, who had initially supported “bulk funding”, had changed its mind and was vehemently opposing the policy. The groups that most strongly opposed “bulk funding” were the Secondary Schools’ Union (PPTA), followed by the Primary Schools Union (NZEI). Those most in favour were the Business Roundtable and its interest group on education, the Education Forum (Fiske & Ladd, 2000, p.163). Such a split is very clearly indicative of the attempt to turn schools into businesses, making schools more accountable for spending and opening up the servicing of schools to a competitive business market. Rather than the state sector having full control over the sector’s service provision, “bulk funding” would allow businesses to compete on a level playing field.

Lockwood Smith’s popularity was declining, and so he was subsequently replaced with Wyatt Creech. An economist from Treasury became the new Director General

⁵⁹ At the same time, hospitals were closing down because of “bulk funding” in the Health Sector.

of Education.⁶⁰ The “bulk funding” debate continued to cause conflict and the erosion of relationships in schools. BOTs would sign up and teachers would walk out; it happened all around the country. Creech increased the operational grants by 14%. The Unions continued to work with their branches to monitor their school boards; the aim was to keep schools that opted into “bulk funding” to an absolute minimum. By this time, it was six to seven years into the fight and the branches were getting tired. In addition, there were new BOTs making new decisions. Linda Mitchell, a senior researcher for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, recounted the negative impact that “bulk funding” under the then current formula had on schools:

Studies showed the impact of “bulk funding” was predominantly negative; kindergartens changed the way they operated in order to make more money. Group sizes in kindergartens were increased; this had an effect on teachers’ ability to work with individuals and work with small groups of children. They were in a supervisory role; that’s how they saw themselves. Some kindergartens started charging fees but it’s to the credit of the association that most of them didn’t do that. The only positive impact that anyone mentioned was that associations had more management autonomy but there’s nothing that links management autonomy with benefits for children. (Barry, 2007a)

Not only did the government want to break the collective power of the PPTA and the NZEI, but they were also having trouble coming to terms with the fact that they weren’t winning the “bulk funding” argument as easily as first anticipated. The Unions, realising that they were only just managing to keep a lid on the situation, knew it would finally come down to the election result; would the policy continue or not? In 1999, the Labour Party won the election and Helen Clarke became the first elected woman Prime Minister of Aotearoa. Soon after, Labour effectively abolished “bulk funding”, and with it went an immediate threat of a privatised schooling system.

⁶⁰ The retiring head, Maris O’Rourke, went to a new job—Director of Education to the World Bank. There, she promoted the privatisation of primary and secondary schools. The World Bank made its loans—for example, to countries like Ghana—conditional on the introduction of school fees. The result was a 40% dropout rate in primary schools and rapidly rising illiteracy.

Given that a National-led coalition has now taken up the mantle of office, having won the November 2008 election, the challenge ahead will again be maintaining a healthy and robust public schooling system. The following subsection will consider some avenues of resistance to the right-wing ideologies that are changing the way we live, and the way our schools operate in Aotearoa.

5. Avenues of resistance to neo-liberalism

I shall refer to neo-liberalism more overtly as “capitalism” in this subsection as I pose questions of resistance here. Before we can offer any reasonable suggestions, we first need to understand what it is that we are choosing to resist. Neo-liberal ideologies have largely been contextualized into this *thing* we know of as *capitalism*.

The purpose of this thesis is to find ways in which to subvert the course of the capitalist regime. There can be no argument against the fact that capitalism puts profit before people. In this way, capitalism has often been labeled “anti-humanist” and “anti-life”. Capitalism privileges the individual *with capital* at the expense of those who have none. It will only give back to the majority if there is some kind of return or profit to be gained. Its main ideologies condone the use of finite resources for personal acquisition and gain. Resources on the earth and under the earth—the earth’s blood from her core⁶¹—are taken without some form of recompense. Worse than this, capitalism captures the minds of the people so that they judge this pillage and abuse as acceptable. This “bad” social consciousness ensures that capitalism thrives and the planet continues to be exploited.

In order for us to be able to resist capitalism, we must first understand what keeps it alive. The preceding subsections showed us *how* capitalist ideology imposed itself upon our country. Now, we need to look back even further. Moana Jackson puts it

⁶¹ Oil.

like this; “When Maori people speak of the past as *i nga ra o mua*, we know it is the days before and that we carry them with us, rather like walking back to the future with history dogging our footsteps” (Bargh, 2007).

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2 under religion, the only time people co-existed in holistic harmony was in the time of matriarchal guardianship. It wasn’t until the patriarchal order came into being⁶² and engulfed the earth that humans learned how to resist one another. Prior to this, their chief resistance was directed toward the environment or other species, not towards each other.

Western patriarchal dialogue has given labels to each time-span and identified the means of sustenance for each respective period, from the time of matriarchy onwards. The time of “savagery” [sic] was when the means of sustenance was created by *hunting and gathering*. “Barbarism” was a time of crops and animal farming, and the means of sustenance was created by *slave labour*. “Feudalism” saw the evolution of slave into serf or villain. The serfs were attached to the land and the landlords would sell or lease the serfs with the land. The means of sustenance was created by *serf labour*. When the “commons”⁶³ were stolen—piece by piece by the wealthier classes for the purpose of growing sheep and creating capital gain—the serfs or peasants became a displaced people. Tangata Whenua⁶⁴ of many countries lost their tribal lands. The only thing they had left to sell was their labour. From feudalism came the birth of “capitalism”, which we experience today. In “capitalism” the means of sustenance is created through *wage labour* (Edwards, 1998). The problem that occurred early on in this era was that the workers started producing more than they actually needed to support their own lives; a surplus. So they were *paid wages that were worth less than the value of the goods and services they produced*. Therefore the ruling class needed some kind of outlet and a way to control this surplus wealth. The dominant social system developed a vehicle by which to collect and concentrate this surplus, which became

⁶² Within the last 10,000 years, especially the last 5000 years.

⁶³ The commons refer to grounds owned by all.

⁶⁴ The indigenous peoples of a nation are known as the tangata whenua.

known as the “stock market”; where investment through the use of *interest* was set in motion. In areas of public service, there was so much surplus that they had to find ways of redistributing the wealth so the working majority could not use it. In effect the capitalists⁶⁵ had to make the surplus disappear. For if the working majority had access to the wealth they themselves produced, they would no longer want to work. It was therefore vital that the working majority remain as *wage slaves* so the capitalists can continue to live off the surplus derived from exploiting the wage labour. In addition, it also keeps the working majority suppressed because they’re so busy working to survive that they don’t have time to stage an uprising:

If these huge surpluses were to be ploughed back into the production of the means of life, they would create such a mass of wealth that this would result in everyone on earth having a sufficiency of the necessities of life, enough food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care, all in exchange for a one day “working week”.

Of course they would then be free, ungovernable, and the profitability of investment capital would collapse as would the power of the five hundred or so super-rich families who own thirty per cent of the strategic resources of the world. (Edwards, 2003, website).

There are many ways in which the capitalist system can make the surplus wealth disappear or redistribute it so the working majorities don’t get their hands on it. For example, the military forces and weapons are one of the greediest guzzlers of the excess wealth. The cost for weapons, vehicles, ships, planes, submarines, stations, technical equipment, uniforms, wages for troops, etc. is phenomenal. The excess legally disappears in this way from the public coffers, and at the same time, a huge profit is made in the opposite direction. Wars create incredible profit for a small handful of people. The capitalist “elite” benefit two-fold in this situation because the extreme profit gained by building and supplying all of these *useless things* has gone into the hands of the multinational corporations, the corporate “elite”; while the cost of production has simultaneously guzzled up the wealth surplus.

⁶⁵ Capitalists are men and women who are characterized by owning sufficient capital (wealth invested to gain more wealth) which enables them to live without having to work. Retrieved on January 2, 2009 from <http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/pdf/fcts.pdf>.

Research shows us that in the year 2000, 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets and the “richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world total. In contrast, the bottom half of the world adult population owned barely 1% of global wealth” (Global Policy Forum, 2006). It is this calibre of corporate elite “that govern the “unholy trinity”; the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), (STWR, 2008). In their mind, the “unholy trinity” rules the world. They have their agents in every government so they can infiltrate policy making at every level. In Aotearoa, we’ve had our own share. They do it by creating a “one size fits all approach”, and then they spread it out globally by systematically bullying countries into becoming neo-liberal havens of the capitalist regime:

The policy of the World Government is to first penetrate the economy of a country and take over its key sectors; having taken over the key sectors of the economy it strips all public and private assets from the population. They then plunge the country into debt by force-feeding it unwanted loans which it cannot possibly repay (Edwards, 2003, website).

They place unreasonable conditions⁶⁶ and demands on the loans which the countries cannot meet, thus ensuring subservience. All the governments of the world are indebted to the World Bank and the IMF. We see the dilemmas on the television news; of struggling countries that are being stripped of their wealth by the greed of capitalists. We need only look in our own back yard to realise the staggering truth of the situation we are in:⁶⁷

Conditions attached to IMF World Bank loans require the reduction of the social services, raising prices, raising interest rates, devaluing the currency, increasing

⁶⁶ “The normal conditions attached to such loans are that they should not be used to develop the economy, especially the wealth generating sectors. Of course the loans may be spent on sports stadiums, roading projects, advertising, developing tourism, monuments, skyscrapers, public works, and wasted on Americas Cup yachts or movies but nothing which will improve the lot of the people of that country. First using public utilities and taxes to asset strip the people, then plunging the country into debt” (Edwards, 2003).

⁶⁷ There are many strategies used for keeping the masses under control such as contaminating public food and water supplies; introducing pathogens into the ventilation system of underground railways; and dominating all forms of media by spreading propaganda which perpetuates consumerism, competition, and violence.

unemployment and other such conditions as control every aspect of the economic and the political life of the country. Unofficially, it is illegal for the public of New Zealand to acquire assets. In fact, [it is] a modern form of colonialism (Edwards, 2003, website).

We think that we live in a free democratic country, but most people are consumed by the quest for a higher standard of living. They think that by gaining more wealth, they will become free. Of course this is a total farce. Only a minority can gain their freedom in this manner, because it can only be gained on the backs of the working majority. It's a simple law of mathematics for those who wish minority rule; there is simply not enough wealth for everyone, so some will have to opt for less in order for others to have enough or more than enough.

There is only one way that resistance to capitalism can work. That is through the collective action of the majority of working people laying down their pens, hanging up their tool-belts, and saying "no more". There is a very complex formula that must be used in order to achieve success. It cannot be achieved within one or two decades. It took capitalism many centuries of evolution before feudalism was put to rest (Vinogradoff, 1924). Even so, there are still aspects of feudalism and "barbarism" remaining today such as "oppressor and oppressed in constant opposition to one another", "subordinate gradations" and "class antagonisms" as Marx and Engels (1848) express these modes of friction in the Communist Manifesto⁶⁸. What is all the more significant is that this antagonism was not a prominent aspect of human life in the time of the matriarchal lineage. There was once a time when these tensions were non-existent.

Marx opposed capitalism because the working people majorities were only useful as long as their labour increased capital. The labourers had to sell themselves like a commodity, and in doing so were therefore open to all other aspects of competition and fluctuations in the market. Marx believed in the working people uniting and the

⁶⁸ ...Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London and sketched the following manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

movement away from capitalism towards socialism. We see lots of people working and wishing for a better life. The only way it can be achieved is by everyone working together:

If the mass of the have-nots were to escape from debt and poverty they would drop out of the workforce and the profitability of the stock market would cease and the system of capitalism as we know it would collapse. The rule of the World Government would be overthrown. (Edwards, 2003, website).

Marx talked about how workers would sometimes have victory in uprisings or revolutions, but only for a short time. The real victory, he argued, lay in the ever-expanding network of allies formed and their ongoing contact. “It was just this contact that was needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle” (Marx & Engels, 1848).

An example of this can be seen in the New Zealand referendum for MMP in 1993 where the capitalists tried to squash the MMP reform, but to no avail. As Dana Glendining, of the Electoral Reform Coalition noted:

The Electoral Reform Coalition had a vast body of people and built up networks of activists through allied organisations and sort of spread that network out so that we found people in every little places like Takaka, Kaikoura and Lumsden and we thought “who knows who knows who” and educated them about what MMP was about. (Barry, 2007a)

This is a prime example of the “working people majority” uniting and creating a revolution of sorts. It was created by a minority making the effort to talk with others, educate others. In this way, the majority could be informed and create a united resistance. The majority knew in their hearts something was wrong with their current system but needed a push to get into action. The minority were like their catalyst. They didn’t just all of a sudden; all of them at the same time decided to fight in a centrally focused manner. It took the work of pockets of minorities to spread the word to the majority. In the quote below, Marx refers to the bourgeoisie who were our

post-modern version of the ruling capitalists and the proletariat who was the worker.

...Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a genuinely revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. (Marx & Engels, 1848, p.55).

The working people are the backbone of human civilisation. Working people everywhere can subvert every area of work that they are involved in. In Chapter 1, I supported Reich's (1971) philosophy of minorities instigating change, and how democratic changes have never emerged from large groups of people or social classes. Our situation today is a juxtaposition of sorts, because for the working people to overpower capitalism, the majority is needed or it cannot happen. Yet how many people are consciously fighting for the eventual overthrow of capitalism? How many people are actually fighting for land rights, fighting for water rights, conscious of what products they are buying and where/how they were produced, refusing to invest, consciously trading in such things as "green dollars" or bartering etc without using money? These are all forms of revolutionary action against the "machine". But all too many of us would like the benefits of a life without capitalism's invisible chains, whilst all the while continuing to participate in activities that keep those chains in place:

In political practice, therefore, they join in all corrective measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their high falutin' phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honor, for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits. (Marx, 1848, p???)

It is not unusual for people to buy a house/s and then rent it out so someone else can pay for the mortgage. That is a capitalist whakaaro (philosophy) contributing to the "commonsense" consciousness of the dominant system. To benefit from personal gain without having to work for it means that other people have to work for it somewhere else along the "meat" line. Any form of interest, is in fact dipping into that well of surplus wealth that was created by the labour of the working people

majority (Kennedy, 1995). This is the wealth that was originally destined to be untouched by the workers.

Sometimes people will moan about their lot in life (or less assertively buy a lotto ticket to try and escape), and then turn around and buy all the goodies that make their life “easier”. For example, just about every product we buy, apart from the locally handmade products, have been subjected to the ups and downs of interest rates in one form or another. The products have been through all sorts of tariffs and middle men before they reach the shelf to be purchased by the “consumer”. The majorities still haven’t made the connection—that because they are choosing to make their lives easier now, they are creating a longer life span for capitalism to survive. *Capitalism is the legacy of an unaware mindset.* What we need to do is start pulling apart the way we think, and changing the philosophies that are embedded in our consciousnesses.

The following is an extract of a poem called “The Tree” from *Inside Black Australia: An Anthology of Aboriginal Poetry*. The anthology illustrates a contemporary aboriginal perspective of the way to a meaningful life:

...and you are nothing yet for all creation, earth and god and man is nothing until they fuse and become a total sum of something. Together fuse to consciousness of all, and every sacred part aware, alive in true affinity. (Gilbert, 1988, p. 22).

Indigenous peoples worldwide have thousands of years of wisdom and knowledge which has largely been negated and neutralised in one way or another by the capitalist regime. In Aotearoa, for example, there have been many disputes over land and water, between the tangata whenua and the capitalists. It is a struggle that is known by many tangata whenua from many lands. The whakaaro of tangata whenua nurturing the whenua (land) is anti-capitalist in its foundation. Indigenous peoples worldwide must work together. Minorities must unite because most minorities have something in common; that is, they are made up of a majority of working people. Working people together make up the majority.

We may look at Tangata Whenua and use Maori in Aotearoa as an example. Although we are a minority in this land now, we still have minorities within the minority. There are the ones who care about the land, the water and such like and the ones who actively rebel against the system. But there are many ways of rebelling and subverting the dominant ideology at grass roots level. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Pro-Vice Chancellor Maori at Waikato University in Aotearoa, talked about “sharing knowledge” (as opposed to just sharing information) with one another regardless of peoples’ academic background:

By taking this approach seriously, it is possible to introduce communities and people who may have had little formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think just like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concern in similar sorts of ways. To assume in advance that people will not be interested in, or will not understand, the deeper issues is arrogant. The challenge is always to demystify, to decolonize. (Smith, 1999, p.16)

This way of thinking and “sharing knowledge” should not be defined in terms of Tangata Whenua only. Those of us who are fired up by the idea of the collapse of capitalism and believe in this kaupapa⁶⁹ must chip away at our various subversive activities. We must use our “oppositional imaginations”, align with other like-minded minorities and “deepen our caverns of resistance”, as Rapp (2002) would say. It may not be an easy path, but it is a *conscious path*.

There are all kinds of minorities fighting for different things. We shall specifically look again at Maori people in Aotearoa and define yet another minority within. It is a gang culture; a culture of displaced people, who have denied their birthright and cultural heritage. The gang is their family now. These gangs are yet another consequence of colonisation and capitalisation. They never existed before the imperial powers arrived with their forced capitalist ideas. One particular gang is called the “Mongrel Mob”. To outsiders, they are a violent and hideous lot. The gang is a reactionary force of total rebellion against the system. Instead of lying down and taking what is dished out to them, they choose to rebel in an openly

⁶⁹ This word is pronounced “co-papa”.

aggressive manner. The following extract may give the reader a glimpse of the Mob's rationale for acting the way they act:

The image of the bulldog wearing "Krautlid"—the German Stahlhelm helmet exhibiting a swastika—was the gang emblem I wore on my back and had tattooed all over my body. It symbolized the mongrel dog spirit and was, to put it quite simply, an emblem that screamed anti-society. "Seig Fucken Heil" was our rally cry. Many have asked why the British bulldog stood as our gang symbol. The bulldog was a symbol of the British colonial oppression that consumed the Maori people. The guys figured if you put that image on a Maori's back, with the dog wearing a German helmet with a swastika attached to it, then you had a dual symbol of contradiction and hatred. That was what we stood for—that was who I was". (Isaac, 2007, p.1).

The above extract is from an auto-biography of an ex-Mongrel Mob leader, Tuhoë "Bruno" Isaac. You will notice that he mentioned "Maori" in the above extract. Yet in the book, he spoke of how they denied being Maori; they denied their heritage. These contradictions show us a group of people who are fighting the only way they know how. The gang is a minority trying to do it alone. But no one can do it alone and succeed for any length of time.

Isaac later talked about his transformation *away* from the gang and his dream of uniting the gangs. This is an example of someone chipping away at the "grass roots" level to create peace and break down barriers of oppression. This brings to mind a question: What is worse; the rape and pillage caused by a small gang like the Mongrel Mob—who causes a relatively small number of people to suffer—or the rape and pillage caused by a small gang like the super rich "elite" who cause millions of people worldwide to suffer?

You may wonder sometimes and ask yourself, "How can I make a change when it seems almost impossible?" The answer is simple: We can begin to live as if we were already living in a "sane, just world". We can guard our health, avoid poisonous air, water and food, and avoid over-eating and under-exercising "which more than defeat the miracles of modern medicine" (Reimer, 1971, p. 154). We can decrease our consumption of goods produced by the "wage slave" labour. Reimer gives an example of three simple ways we can do this:

People can either increase or decrease their consumption and production, depending on whether they are now doing more or less than their share of the world's work and using more or less than their share of the world's goods. They can share their possessions or their needs. They can conserve, among other things, the natural environment they live in.

Lowering consumption, sharing and conserving are three actions most of us can take and yet, jointly, they constitute a powerful revolutionary programme. (Reimer, 1971, p. 154)

We can share our goods and services with one another instead of purchasing them, circulate what we don't need instead of throwing it away, buy and receive second hand goods instead of the need for "new" things all the time, and get things fixed instead of trashing them and buying new ones. Reuse, renew and recycle. Imagine if everyone that truly wanted to be rid of capitalism tried this method. There would be a sharp drop in demand; the capital system would suffer dearly. The power is in the people and the relationships we build consistently with one another to spread these ideas. The super rich produce the means through "*interest*" for the capitalist system to work; but it would collapse without the people power. McHoul and Grace talk about Foucault's concept of the power in the relationships we have with one another:

Such a theory would need to think of the "wielders" of power as being just as inextricably caught in its webs as the supposedly powerless. It would have to see power in terms of *relations* built consistently into the flows and practices of everyday life, rather than as some *thing* imposed from the top down. (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p.7)

In other words we need to appreciate the power we have within ourselves and the power we can create together at the "grass roots" level, by talking and sharing with one another. We must pull ourselves out of the "victim" role by blaming it on the "oppressors":

Let us not ... ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc. in other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc. We

should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects.
(Foucault, 1980, p.97)

Marx spoke about how capitalism will not be able to sustain itself and how it will be displaced by communism; which is a stateless, classless society. I support this whakaaro because capitalism *must* collapse eventually; it is unsustainable from a global perspective. I would like to bring in here an element of Christian doctrine which, if interpreted in a certain way, could come into partnership with Marx' theory. Christians in general know that there is something wrong with this temporal society; they feel there is a better way. My argument is that perhaps some Christians have not quite made the connection in a practical sense of how peace can be achieved here on earth instead of dreaming it in the clouds; of how "real" people can generate it themselves, instead of relying on something else to save them. Christian doctrine has dreams and aspirations that predict a time of peace that will come upon the earth in the latter days. The following verses are an example:

Psalms 37:11 – But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. 37:12 – The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon [him] with [his] teeth. 37:14 – The wicked have drawn out the sword and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation⁷⁰.

Other biblical predictions⁷¹ pull the timeframe of world peace nearer to where we sit today, perhaps in this very millennium. The average Christian knows what they must do to make it happen; be kind, love thy neighbor, etc., but do they practice it in everyday life? The same analogy can be placed upon the average person who knows that the environment is being exploited and we need to look after it. That said, does the average person recycle everything they use? As mentioned earlier, Marx talked of the notion of socialism and then communism⁷² arising from the ruins of capitalism, just as capitalism arose from the ruins of feudalism. Although these time spans may last for hundreds of years, the eventual demise of each "means of

⁷⁰ The Psalms verses were taken from the King James version of the Bible.

⁷¹ New Testament

⁷² True communism is not the bastardizations of communism as is known in countries such as China, Russia and Vietnam etc. At present only three countries in the world operate with a democratically elected communist leadership; they are Cyprus, Moldova and Nepal.

sustenance” is inevitable because they fight against the natural laws of the universe. For example, the capitalist mindset is fueled by greed, which in turn cannot last because the environment cannot sustain it forever. Is it not possible then that the future of communism arising from the ruins of capitalism might actually coincide on a global level with the biblical predictions of world peace; could they actually be one and the same?

6. Conclusion

Regardless of whatever walk of life we come from and head toward, there is one thing that most people in the Western world have in common; school. Most people have attended some kind of formal schooling at some stage in their lives. In the first two chapters, I discussed some of the philosophies of Summerhill School. Summerhill’s concept of democracy is the antithesis of the pseudo-democracy that is operating. It is the complete opposite of the type of school that capitalist ideology supports. If all schools were self-governing, capitalism would collapse—for the reason that, over time, people would be able to think for themselves and would refuse to be the dummy “wage slaves”. It wouldn’t take too many generations to create such a sea change. The beauty of Summerhill is that the children “learn for freedom”; they do not “learn to earn”. There is a huge difference between the two, as previously discussed.

Our school environments are characterized by the process of memorizing, “somebody else’s answers to somebody else’s questions” (Postman & Weingartner, 1971). It is what Paulo Freire referred to as the banking model, which was discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. According to assessments done on students, they are supposedly achieving at an acceptable standard when they can answer questions correctly. The art of actually *asking* questions is not taught in schools. It is a common thread that is woven through all schools. One of the very best ways therefore that teachers inside the schooling system can subvert the “dominant discourse” is to help their students learn *how to ask questions*. The fear of asking

questions shows a fear of challenging something they may not agree with—or possibly represents an unquestioning acceptance of authority. In the schooling system, those who challenge authority are quickly rooted out. If they do not acquiesce, then their school life is made very difficult, and eventually they drop out. That is the way it works.

An example of some mind-provoking questions that a teacher posed to his students—taken from Postman and Weingartner’s book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1971, pp. 167-171)—are the following. The students were not to answer in complete sentences, but rather in three to five word phrases:

- What sounds do you hear if you are walking with heavy boots in deep snow? (Don’t use the word “crunch”).
- Describe the taste of salt.
- How would you describe fear? If you’ve never been afraid, don’t answer. If you have, you don’t have to answer either, unless you want to.
- Describe the odour of gasoline.
- Is there a particular odour in the air after a rainfall? Describe it.
- Describe the flight of a seagull.
-

The questions carried on in that vein, and then a volunteer was asked to write her answers on the board without identifying numbers. The twenty or so answers were turned into a poem. The following list is another example of a teacher asking questions that provoked much discussion and verifiable answers:

- Is there any moral or legal relationship between fooling around with marijuana, fooling around with someone else’s wife or husband, and fooling around with an income-tax return?
- Why do people like to buy items made of plastic? What does it say about them? What does it say about plastic?
- What does it mean to you that most families have a bathroom cabinet filled with small bottles of drugs?
- If you want to say something without using words, how would you go about it? Is there a silent language?
- Why are people who love each other sometimes cruel to each other?

Through the teacher’s diligent efforts, the students started to learn how to ask questions. The following are some examples of the students’ questions—maybe not as in-depth as the teacher’s, but certainly on the road to discovery:

- Why do we have such a thing as a “dirty word”?
- Why do I fear certain words?
- Do people kill each other over words?
- Who knows most about how words work? Teachers? Advertisers? Politicians?
- Why do people pray?
- Why do people yell at each other?

Would you enjoy a teacher like that? Provoking thinking outside of the square is exactly the kind of teaching we need in our schools. Postman and Weingartner talked about “little cause for celebration unless the classrooms were arranged, so that students could *do* question asking; not talk about it, read about it, or be told about it. Asking questions is a behaviour. If you don’t do it, you don’t learn it” (p. 34).

There are many pockets of society becoming more aware of the breakdowns in our “social-less system” and the schooling “system” is no different. Teachers need to talk and listen with one another and to share their ideas on ways to undermine the “system”. “Deepening those caverns of resistance” requires thoughtful strategies for undermining the capitalist regime. Keeping the power alive means building relationships. Some teachers may feel alone in a school because they may think no one else understands. Yet they will never understand if you don’t talk with them and share. It’s all about sharing. Create collegial pockets of resistance and subversion. Help young people “learn how to learn”. Think of the world you are helping to create for yourself and your descendants.

The following chapter will address some deficiencies in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework that all schools must adhere to. It will focus more on the schooling system itself as opposed to the wider society as a whole.

CHAPTER 4: THE CURRICULUM A CAPITAL MYTH

When I was a child I caught a fleeting glimpse
Out of the corner of my eye
I turned to look but it was gone
I cannot put my finger on it now
The child has grown
The dream has gone

I have become comfortably numb

(Comfortably Numb by Pink Floyd from the album 'The Wall').

1. Introduction: Challenging the myths

The first two chapters of this thesis addressed the idea of an alternative form of schooling that might enhance the common good of humankind. Summerhill School⁷³ exists as a counter-hegemonic example of a minority group who have turned their back to neo-liberalism and a world that has rapidly forgotten its commitment to social and environmental justice for all. Chapter 3 examined the neo-liberal ideologies that are creating, strengthening, and perpetuating this rapid decline in social and environmental justice; this 'bad' consciousness of our capitalist society which trickles down and grows roots into our very own whanau (families). This chapter (four) will focus primarily on the document, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 2007). This document specifies what is to be taught in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand schools. It will identify and describe the neo-liberal ideologies that have been invited into our curriculum over time.

The global objective as expressed in the vision statement of *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* is for children to become confident, connected, and

⁷³ The oldest children's democracy in the world.

actively involved, lifelong learners (p.8). As I will argue here, however, a contrasting, covert mode of action can be detected within our schools that radically undermines this same intention. The way in which our curriculum is ‘executed’ in everyday school life is a complete antithesis not only to the *Vision* in which it advocates, but also to the principles and philosophies of Summerhill School and the notion of a futuristic equivalent here in Aotearoa. Our schools display the ‘grassroots’, ‘chalk face’ reality of mind control.

This new curriculum was revised over a period of time with consultation and input from schools around the country; it was finalised and published in 2007. Just how informed the Boards of Trustees (BOTs) and the school staff were around the country at the time this document was being created is questionable. Was there an adequate interrogation of the most crucial and important issues relating to the core curriculum itself? Were fundamental issues raised such as why and how so much importance was being placed on the planning and assessment of the *learning areas*⁷⁴ in the curriculum—as opposed to other areas such as the *vision, principles, values* and *key competencies*?⁷⁵ What was the rationale for giving one part of the curriculum more authority over another and who was to decide? I would argue that some of the decision makers, and those who had input at the time, were perhaps influenced by various pre-conceptions. In addition they may not have believed the extent to which the *learning areas*, when taken out of context from other areas of the curriculum, could dominate the direction and functions of the school. I question how many of the BOTs at the time understood the future ramifications of buying into a globalised free market economy by supporting systems of competition, credentialisation and standardization which inevitably leads to a more commodified and marketised system of schooling.

⁷⁴ Mathematics and statistics, science, technology, English, health and physical education, learning languages, the arts, social science

⁷⁵ Critical thinking, autonomous thinking, creative thinking, care for the environment, equity, community participation for the common good, relating to others, managing self etc

There is an obvious sense of concern within schools to ensure that their students are competitive as decreed by a national standard which is based primarily on information acquisition of the learning areas within the curriculum. Funding is the means by which schools are assessed against the national standards, as set out by the ‘achievement objectives’ within the learning areas.

If the BOTs and school staff in general did have pre-conceived ideas, were they even able to come from a ‘paradigm of freedom’ considering the majority of these people were once schooled, and taught to conform to the ravings of the dominant discourse? Therefore I suggest that although there *was* widespread consultation and input from the BOTs and school staff, in my view the input was flawed because it was full of half truths and well meaning yet misguided assumptions i.e. that the *vision, principles, values* and *key competencies* would be as rigorously implemented as the key *learning areas*.

In the New Zealand curriculum document (2007), it states that “A school’s curriculum is likely to be well designed when “...the long view is taken: each student’s ultimate learning success is more important than the covering of particular achievement objectives” (p. 39). In support of this statement, certain groups may argue that the learning areas do **not** take precedence over the other areas of the curriculum. However, I would argue that this claim cannot be substantiated and that the achievement objectives take precedence over any such ‘umbrella’ statements. Contradictions within the curriculum document make it clear that the *learning areas* are compulsory and schools must adhere to the achievement objectives within each strand:

None of the strands in the required learning areas is optional, but in some learning areas, particular strands may be emphasized at different times or in different years. Schools should have a clear rationale for doing this and should ensure that each strand receives due emphasis over the longer term (p. 28).

The wording throughout the curriculum is clever because it gives schools the impression that they have a lot of autonomy and power over their own choices for

curriculum implementation. Under the new curriculum, schools may have more flexibility than they used to, but the end result is still the same; *learning areas* are a ‘must’, while the *vision, principles, values, and key competencies* are a ‘maybe’. The change in policy over the last decade has been away from concerns with “good citizenship” goals, towards more effective imprinting of pragmatic learning objectives into students’ minds. So although schools have been given more flexibility over curriculum delivery, the new objectives methodically and deliberately ensure that schools remain ideologically controlled. Conforming to the *learning areas* is of utmost importance. The majority of a teachers’ paperwork is tied up with planning, executing, and assessing the children’s level of competency specifically in relation to the *learning areas*. These areas of planning and assessment are also very important to the Education Review Office (ERO)⁷⁶ when they report on the quality of “education” in all New Zealand schools.

There is a feeling as one reads through some of the *vision, principles, values, and key competencies* in the curriculum, that there is genuine hope for us as a people and a nation. Unfortunately these learning directions also sit alongside the ubiquitous—yet covert—neo-liberal ideologies that are infused within the implementation framework of the *learning areas* in the curriculum.

These capital ideologies are reinforced by the nature of our learning in schools via the “banking model”, as explained earlier by Freire (1970). In addition, they have a profound emphasis on the achievement of the *Learning areas* within the curriculum. The emphasis on these learning areas, as opposed to certain values and key competencies—such as *critical and autonomous thinking*—is in direct opposition to Freire’s idea of rediscovering our “humanness”. This is where we communicate with one another through authentic dialogue, and create a clearer understanding of the world around us. In this way, we can stop seeing ourselves as

⁷⁶ ERO—a government department that reports publicly on the quality of education in all New Zealand schools. Each school is inspected once every three years, unless there are special circumstances, i.e., a school that is incompetent may be inspected annually until they fall into line and attain the required standard.

pawns of the marketplace and begin to reject the victim/bully or oppressed/oppressor mentality (Freire, 1998; Roberts, 2000).

One way that this mentality is unfortunately being perpetuated in our schools is by the way that people have interpreted the clever wording within the curriculum. For example, students are rewarded when they conform, and punished if they challenge in a manner that threatens the stability of continual information acquisition via the *learning areas*. This information acquisition which lays the foundation for specific skill formation is what I will hereafter refer to as the ‘hidden curriculum’.

The purpose of this chapter is to address some of the contradictions that the New Zealand Curriculum presents and question some of the ironies within, in order to form some kind of understanding as to how these contradictions are maintained within the framework itself. It will explore the notion of whether children in the New Zealand schooling system are learning to be self-governing thinkers and how curriculum accountability for ‘educators’ affects this learning process. In order to understand more clearly the dilemmas that teachers and school leadership have, we must first understand how the New Zealand Curriculum works; namely we need to understand how it is organized and implemented into everyday school life.

2. What is the curriculum anyway?

The current Ministry of Education (2007) New Zealand Curriculum has five major “directions for learning” (p.7); the *vision, values, key competencies, learning areas, and principles*. We will now address these five directions of learning:

1). The *Vision* as stated in the document is: “What we want for our young people”. Accordingly, our youth will

- be creative, energetic and enterprising
- seize the opportunities offered by new knowledge and technologies to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for our country

- work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Maori and Pakeha recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring
- in their school years, ...continue to develop the values, knowledge, and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives
- *be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners*⁷⁷ (p.8) (emphasis added).

The emphasis is placed on confidence, connectedness, active involvement, and lifelong learning that embrace the way that young people see themselves, how they relate to and participate with others, the land and the environment. Lifelong learning involves both creative and critical thinking. It involves being able to seek, use and create knowledge by making informed decisions in any sphere that is chosen.

The *vision* comprises **one** page in the New Zealand Curriculum document, and although it is generally full of positive ideals—ideals that if adhered to would create a population of well informed people capable of thinking for themselves and creating a holistic environment through the decisions they make — neo-liberal discourse also peppers the document. Insofar as the goal is to create “enterprising and entrepreneurial” and “connected international citizens,” the *vision* can therefore be interpreted in an ambiguous — if not contradictory — manner.

2). The *principles* are the “foundations of curriculum decision making” (p.9). It states that all curriculums should be *consistent* with eight statements:

- high expectations
- Treaty of Waitangi
- cultural diversity
- inclusion
- learning to learn
- community engagement
- coherence
- future focus (p. 9)

Once again, despite the rhetoric of a holistic and socially just environment, the neo-liberal ideology creeps in toward the end under the subheadings of “coherence” and “future focus.” Although it is stated that “The curriculum offers all students a broad

⁷⁷ Italic emphasis added

education that makes links within and across *learning areas*⁷⁸, the “future focus” is primarily on citizenship, enterprise, and globalisation (p.9). Although schools are required to *base* their curriculum on the *principles*, there are no set achievement objectives that bring the *principles* into the realm of specific learning outcomes. The *principles* comprise **one** page of the New Zealand Curriculum document.

3). The *values* are “to be encouraged, modelled, and explored” (p.10). The *values* appear to be the least comprehensible of the five “directions for learning” through phrases such as “enjoy widespread support”, “should be evident”, “likely to be expressed”; offering a vague account of how these values *might* be implemented in the school. The following *values* are what students are *encouraged* to learn:

- excellence
- innovation, inquiry, and curiosity
- diversity
- equity
- community participation
- ecological sustainability
- integrity
- and to respect themselves, others, and human rights (p.10)

The *values* advocate among other things, ethical behaviour, participation for the common good, cultural–social empathy, and critical analysis. There is only a passing reference to “economic” values, which could be read as neo-liberal ideology being less prevalent within this area. Perhaps this explains why the implementation criterion is so vague and unclear. The *values* comprise **one** page of the New Zealand Curriculum document.

4). The *key competencies* are “capabilities for living and lifelong learning” (p.12). They encompass five major competencies:

- thinking

⁷⁸ Italics emphasis added.

- using language, symbols, and texts
- managing self
- relating to others
- anticipating and contributing (pp. 12–13)

In brief, the *key competencies*—which were once referred to as the “essential skills”—are to be used so young people can “live, learn, work, and contribute as active members of their communities” (p.12). The idea is to think creatively, critically, and metacognitively in order to make sense of the world around them. Students are to be able to ask questions, challenge, and make informed decisions. The competencies encourage students to receive and express knowledge by using language, symbols, and texts in order to communicate effectively. The managing of one-self underpins self-motivation and self-discipline in all areas of a student’s input and output in life. Relating to others is seen as communicating effectively and flexibly with a wide range of people in various situations; no *one* situation should be seen as a concrete benchmark. And finally, participating and contributing relates to our community involvement as a whole; whether this is the whanau, school, cultural or work community. Contributing entails being an active participant in community issues as opposed to being a passive bystander; which means that people will have a direct influence on the world they create for themselves and others.

These *key competencies* are seen as an integral part of the system; they interconnect with the *vision, principles, values* and *learning areas* and neither one are seen as isolated from each another. Once again the neo-liberal emphasis on the *learning areas* is subtle and restrained by referring to the *key competencies* as “...the key to learning in every *learning area*”⁷⁹ (p.12). Although the *learning areas* are referred to in an understated way in these sections, they are used as a point of reference for both the *key competencies* and *principles*. It is important to note here, as with the *values*, that it is unclear how these *key competencies* will be achieved because there are no “required” specific achievement objectives in place;—only statements such

⁷⁹ Italic emphasis added

as; “successful learners make use of the competencies”; “successful learners are also motivated to use them”; “opportunities to develop the competencies occur in social contexts”; and these “continue to develop over time”. Such statements once again only offer a vague account of how these values *may* be implemented in the school life (p. 12). The *key competencies* comprise **two** pages of the New Zealand Curriculum document.

5). The *learning areas* are seen as “important for a broad, general education” (p. 16). The overview of the curriculum places the *learning areas*, *key competencies*, and *values* alongside each other, underpinned by the *vision* and *principles* (p.7). Although the *values*, *key competencies*, and *learning areas* sit equally side by side, the *learning areas* are the only of three “directions for learning” that have “achievement objectives’ attached to them. (Refer to the appendices for the New Zealand Curriculum overview). By contrast, the *values* and *key competencies* have no achievement objectives; instead schools are expected to consider how they will “encourage” or “model” the *values* and *key competencies* which are seemingly of less importance. The *learning areas* consist of eight components which are;

1. English
2. the arts
3. health and physical education
4. learning languages
5. mathematics and statistics
6. science
7. social sciences
8. technology (p. 16)

Each component is divided into specific learning strands. For example, the mathematics strands are; i) number and algebra, ii) geometry and measurement, and iii) statistics. Or the science strands are; i) nature of science, ii) living world, iii) planet earth and beyond, iv) physical world and v) material world. Each strand has a specific set of “achievement objectives” that are set in place according to the level of the learner from levels one through to eight. The “achievement objectives” are specific fragmented elements of information (to be acquired by the learner) that are relative to each individual subject. For example, in level one of the *number* and

algebra strand for mathematics; an achievement objective for number strategies is—“Use a range of counting, grouping, and equal-sharing strategies with whole numbers and fractions” (p.46). Or the achievement objectives for number *knowledge* under the same level and strand are—“Know the forward and backward counting sequences of whole numbers to 100”, and “Know groupings with five, within ten, and with ten” (p.46). The ‘achievement objectives’ are not optional; each student is required to learn and explore each “achievement objective” according to their level as they progress throughout their years of schooling. Teachers are required to ensure that the students meet the achievement objectives.

The current curriculum obligations place more emphasis on the *learning areas* than any other area. The *learning areas* alone comprise **sixty five** pages of the document in comparison to the *vision*, *values* and *principles* which comprise one page each, and the *key competencies* which comprise only two pages. This alone should tell us the importance that the curriculum makers place on the *learning areas*. There is also the added requirement of ‘achievement objectives’ for the *learning areas* which are absent in any other “direction of learning” in the New Zealand Curriculum. Therefore, some important qualities are being swept under the carpet and devalued whilst being tokenistically displayed through the *vision*, *principles*, *values* and *key competencies*. They seem too obscure or abstract to place in a box, and teachers tend not to ‘commit them to paper’ after the pressures and obligations of the *learning areas* and the standardised testing relative to the *learning areas*, are fulfilled.

My question at this stage is: Of what importance are the *learning areas* of the curriculum in creating a meaningful life? My argument is that they are of **no** importance in order for us to create and live meaningful lives as human beings. The dominance of the neo-liberal ‘hidden curriculum’ evident within the *learning areas* ensures the conformity and domestication of its ‘subjects’. It matters not by which mindless means the information is acquired. Rote learning and memorization is more condoned than condemned. The *vision*, *values*, *key competencies*, and

principles, it can be legitimately argued, are only there to placate people and give them a false sense of security and integrity. The long-term, neo-liberal plan (of which I believe the majority of teachers and parents are unaware) is to produce students who are able to mechanically and systematically follow instructions and rules without challenging or upsetting the status quo.

The following subsection will explain how teachers and school leaders are placed between “a rock and a hard place” with regard to implementing the curriculum. Those teachers and school leaders who see the bigger picture of freedom and making a meaningful life are bound by an opposing code of managerial performativity (Ball, 2003; Gerwitz, 2002). Teachers sometimes have to walk a fine line between either being a dictator, a friendly manipulator, or a friend of the child. The neo-liberal curriculum makes it very difficult indeed for the teacher to be a friend of the child. This is yet another reason why the “unfree” standard schools and the curriculum they impose upon their “subjects” are a complete antithesis to the principles and philosophies of Summerhill School.

3. Performativity and conformity

The fact that the curriculum is compulsory is evidence of the authoritarian nature of our schooling system with its lack of equity for children, parents, teachers and school leaders. Children in general are treated with disregard because they are forced to learn what “the system” deems appropriate for them to learn. They have no real voice or empowerment. Teachers and school leaders are also treated with disregard in an abstract sense because they are being compelled to teach the children; quite often before the children are ready to learn. The imposition is disguised to look as though it is crucial for their survival (Arendt, 1968; Gatto, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Walker, 1996).

The idea of political coercion or blackmail, which could place schools in financial jeopardy if they do not perform to a certain set of rules, is a reality that most

schools face. The Ministry of Education (2007) New Zealand Curriculum sets out the requirements for Boards of Trustees. One of these requirements is as follows:

Each board of trustees, through the principal and staff, is required to implement its curriculum in accordance with the priorities set out in the National Education Goals (NEGs) and the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) (p. 44).

All schools are aware of the National Education Goals (NEGs) and the National Education Guidelines (NAGs) which are a comprehensive set of rules that enable the government to maintain control of schools from the centre. (See appendices for details of the NEGs and NAGs.) The NEGs and NAGs are the criteria by which the schools are audited by the Education Review Office (ERO). The New Zealand Curriculum itself is merely a tool that supports and strengthens the position of the NEGs and NAGs. It is through the New Zealand Curriculum that the “grassroots” “chalk face” work is identified and interpreted from the NEGs and NAGs, and put into action in schools. This certain set of rules—as explained in the last subsection—is fundamentally centred on the implementation of the *learning areas* of the New Zealand Curriculum. In other words, it is centred on the adherence of conformity with regard to the way this information is acquired through performance based criteria; which I will refer to as ‘performativity and conformity’ (Lyotard, 1984). The importance of ‘performativity and conformity’ is shown in the National Education Goals (NEGs) numbers five and six below; there are ten in total (Ministry of Education, 2008b):

...Education is at the core of our nation's effort to achieve economic and social progress. In recognition of the fundamental importance of education, the Government sets the following goals for the education system of New Zealand.

NEG 5: A broad education through a balanced curriculum covering essential learning areas. Priority should be given to the development of high levels of competence (knowledge and skills) in literacy and numeracy, science and technology, and physical activity.

NEG 6: Excellence achieved through the establishment of clear learning objectives, monitoring student performance against those objectives, and programmes to meet individual need.

The Ministry of Education (2008a) outlines the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs). Several components have been taken from NAGs one and two and entered below to show the importance once again of the *learning areas*, and the assessment of these areas through evaluation and observation which ensure a certain level of performance:

NAG 1

...Each Board of Trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

- (i) develop and implement teaching and learning programmes:
 - (a) to provide all students in years 1-10 with opportunities to achieve for success in all the *essential learning and skill areas of the New Zealand curriculum*;
 - (b) giving *priority* to student achievement in *literacy and numeracy*, especially in years 1-4;
 - (c) giving *priority* to regular quality *physical activity* that develops movement skills for all students, especially in years 1-6;
- (ii) through a range of *assessment practices*, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive *to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated*; giving priority first to:
 - (a) student achievement in *literacy and numeracy*, especially in years 1-4... (Emphasis added).

NAG 2

...Each Board of Trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

- (i) develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to the National Education Guidelines through their policies, plans and programmes, including those for *curriculum, assessment* and staff professional development;
- (ii) maintain an on-going programme of self-review in relation to the above policies, plans and programmes, including *evaluation of information on student achievement*... (Emphasis added).

This formula of ‘performativity and conformity’ is very effective because it is adhered to without overt resistance from schools; that is, there is no need to use excessive force from the centre. Schools follow the regime because they believe that it is a requirement that they must fulfill and that they basically have no choice. Therefore it is important now that we take a closer look at how this mindset of ‘performativity and conformity’ originally became embedded into our consciousness and became normative within our schooling system.

The 18th and 19th centuries marked an era where all manner of acts of pain inflicted upon the sinner's body were seen as the ideal tool of retribution. Gradually, however, more 'humane' and 'gentle' forms of punishment emerged by way of imprisonment or work gangs. Prisons were a way in which authoritarian control could covertly observe and document its inmates, and ultimately have power over them. This 'modern' form of punishment evolved in such a way that the inmates began to internally discipline themselves and conform to a certain code of behaviour because they didn't know when or where someone may have been watching them. Forever lurking in the background was the possibility of constant observation, whether they actually were being observed or not; it was known as the "unequal gaze" (Foucault, 1975). This meant that the inmates were less likely to break rules or laws because they could never be sure if they were being observed or not. This 'unequal gaze' so to speak was the tool by which inmates were rendered into 'docile bodies'. They were no longer viewed in a holistic manner as human beings in relation to the world around them, but more as individual, separated, physical bodies.

Foucault (1975) argued that the ideal for the modern 'industrial age' was to create "docile bodies"; bodies that could operate in factories, in military regimes, and in school classrooms. This new individuality or ontology of "man as a machine" emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries and saw to it that only through 'discipline' could these 'docile bodies' be constructed. By observing and keeping records of the bodies they controlled, the disciplinary institutions excessive force was no longer necessary. External punishment gave way to forms of internal discipline, engineered through the process of careful observation by the 'invisible hierarchy'. Foucault understood how this form of discipline developed and how it became highly refined by highlighting the most precise aspects of a person's body, e.g., the clothes or shoes they wore or the manner in which they sat or stood etc. The industrial age meant that the body was to be moulded according to its usefulness on the production line.

With the industrial age came the growth of ‘en masse’ production lines where factories expected bodies to be ‘individuated’ and segregated according to the tasks at hand. In this way, it was easier for hierarchies to train, observe and control the subjugated bodies in their employ. Foucault (1975) suggested that this form of individuality used ‘discipline’ to create concealed power relations that were non-egalitarian in nature but conveyed the outward appearance of a system that was officially egalitarian:

Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded, and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. (p.222)

An example of those tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms and those non-egalitarian systems of micro-power that Foucault spoke about can be seen today in our very own schools under the guise of the “disciplines” within the *learning areas* of the New Zealand Curriculum. The neo-liberal purpose is for teachers to keep a rigid form of control over their students by enforcing conformity toward the achievement objectives. Assessing each child’s ability and comprehension of these achievement objectives is standard practice in schools. It is yet another tiny, everyday, physical mechanism of non-egalitarian micro-power in action. This standard practice of observation is an example of “performativity and conformity” which creates the “docile bodies” that Foucault talked about.

The teachers in our schooling system internally discipline themselves and see to it that the children in their care must perform to a certain standard. If the standard is not met, they think the children will miss out on something or the teachers themselves may get in trouble, leading in to possible demotion, loss of reputation or even lead to redundancy. The principal may not be watching the teacher’s every move, but the teacher knows that the principal has the power to find out his or her

work record through the recorded observations and assessments that the teacher is obliged to document. Teachers and school leaders must perform to a certain standard or their state funding will be cut—placing their school and all the children in it in jeopardy.

The ultimate purpose of the school, which is fundamentally centred on the children, is often forgotten. Children must also perform to a certain standard set out by the achievement objectives so that the teacher may tick the assessment boxes and thus continue to be a “good” teacher and do their job. In this way they believe that everything will continue to function smoothly and the school will continue to receive funding. Summerhill School refused to be bribed in such a manner; they refused to sacrifice the hearts and minds of the children in their care. As mentioned in the self-regulation chapter of this thesis, A. S. Neill refused to compromise with external forces; namely the government when it came to funding (Hemmings, 1972). That is why Summerhill refuses state funding and is in a perpetual state of financial struggle.

Since the neo-liberal reforms and “Tomorrow’s Schools” have come to Aotearoa, the mindset of teachers has changed. In the past, teachers would become more involved in the interests of the children in their care; there was more flexibility. Nowadays, teachers are not so much interested in what the child’s interests are, or teaching to a child’s interests. Teachers are more likely to “teach to the test” or teach to the achievement objectives, regardless of children’s interests. Teachers now are also more likely to manipulate the children into thinking that the topic they are teaching is something that the children really want to learn. This subtle change in the mindset of the teaching profession has helped to turn our schools into commoditised, user-pays, market-driven institutions.

In the New Zealand schooling system, which follows the global trends of the Eurocentric model, the teachers are spending less and less time on instructional activities and more time on behaviour control and administrative routine. A lot of the time spent by teachers is centred around assessment purposes, checking

assignments etc (Durkin, 2008). Time studies conducted by Anthony Lauria show that less than 20 per cent of a teacher's time is available for instructional activities (Reimer, 1971). Not only are the social behaviours of the youth becoming more alarming but also the level of administrative paper work load is becoming more burdensome. Teachers' hands have become tied behind their backs and they have become less empowered by the web of rules and regulations that ensnare them. The teacher-proof curriculum ensures that the teacher follows a certain set of rules when instructing his/her students (Russell, 2008).

Teaching and learning in a free, Summerhill type environment, by contrast, involves instructing and learning with a willing audience. Teachers do not have to deal with undesirable resistant behaviour or an excessive amount of unnecessary paper-work. This is made possible at Summerhill because there is a timetable for teachers but no performativity tasks such as assessments, reports and appraisals. If any assessments are to be made in regard to children's learning then it would be more along the diagnostic lines of investigating and problem-solving; all of which are self-driven by the pupil him/herself. The assessments are not punitive because they are not imposed by an external force and the child has the complete freedom to know exactly what he/she wants and whether he/she chooses to pursue more specific goals that may require milestones along the way. In the unfree environment, who reads the assessments anyway and who do these assessments really benefit? They are merely maintaining the hierarchical systems of red tape that keep us entrenched in neo-liberal capitalistic values.

In Aotearoa, our schools continue to be exposed to this non-egalitarian system of enforced conformity whilst being governed by an 'egalitarian myth'. John Codd, Professor of Policy Studies in Education at Massey University New Zealand made the following statement in relation to the political changes that have occurred in this country:

Imagination, creativity, critical thinking gave way to such notions as usefulness, relevance and measurable performance. And so we have a narrowing of the curriculum towards these very specific economic goals and a loss of the broad concern of the overall all round

development of the individual ...the overall aim was to put a focus on to what was called enterprise, creating the enterprise culture. (Barry, 2007a)

One way in which mass production can be increased is by narrowing the curriculum toward these very specific economic goals, as John Codd stated. On the front-line of production, this narrowing down process can be seen through a system called the ‘division of labour’. The current New Zealand Curriculum perpetuates the ‘division of labour’ by endorsing segregated information learning and furthermore learning to conform to this mode of memorisation without challenging its motives. The “division of labour” meant that the labour involved in producing a product was divided up into a series of tasks where different individuals worked separately to perform each. The individual worker’s productivity increased if he/she only had to perform one simple task or function. Each worker was in fact seen as a single cog that made up the total ‘machine’. The idea was to dull the senses of the workers with these mind-numbing, repetitive movements. Smith (1976) explained the concept of the “division of labour” thus:

In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, of the great body of the people, come to be confined to a few very simple operations; frequently to one or two... The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations... has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. he naturally loses... the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. (pp. 781-782).

With the emergence of the “division of labour” came a change in the general consciousness of the people as a whole—the working majority. Brown, Green and Lauder (2001) stated that “The division of labour dulled the intelligence of the mass of workers” (p. 4). Karl Marx had earlier argued (Marx, [1867]1976) that it wasn’t the division of labour in isolation that restricted the intellectual, moral, and social improvement of the working majority. It had more to do with the way in which the division of labour was structured and controlled in relation to the principles of capitalism (Marx, [1867]1976). Industrial capitalism meant that the means of production was owned and controlled by an ‘elite’ minority. In order for the ‘elite’

minority to maintain control, they had to ensure that the working majority continued to be exploited and subjugated.

The development of industrial capitalism brought with it the demise of the “long tradition of craft production and the reproduction of skills across the generations” (Brown et al., 2001, p. 4). The industrial age saw to it that products were no longer being made by small family businesses, where the whole process of production was thought through holistically from beginning to end. In that era, the people involved in the business had to think carefully about everything they were doing to create the finished product. When problems arose they had to work together and think carefully through each individual situation to find a suitable solution.

The development of human capital theory in the 1960s meant that a new understanding for a wider concept of capital had evolved. Capital was now seen also in terms of the skills, know-how and knowledge of the workers to increase the capital yields of human labour (Brown et al., 2001, p. 5). Schooling became more defined in terms of an investment rather than consumption. Here, investment meant expenditure that brought in more money—as opposed to consumption as expenditure on assets that brought immediate gratification but bore no relation to the future (Woodhall, 1997; Wikipedia, 2007).

Schooling as an investment became a high priority from a capitalist worldview. As human capitalist theorists have argued (Brown et al., 2001, p.5), children became seen in terms of an investment for the future of the economy and treated accordingly. To keep capitalism’s production machines operating smoothly, they must be turned into the “docile bodies” that Foucault talked about while they are still young. One way of ensuring this will happen is to use a systematic and methodical approach of performativity and conformity in their schooling years. The average length that a child will attend school in Aotearoa is ten years. That equates to ten to fifteen years of being drilled in the art of conforming and performing to a prescribed set of rules—which basically come to us in the form of the New Zealand Curriculum.

A. S. Neill of Summerhill understood the complexities of “unfree” schools and how they created these robotic docile creatures:

The unfree child... sits at a dull desk in a million barrack schools, and later at a duller desk in office and shop. He is docile, prone to obedience to authority, fearful of criticism and almost fanatical in his desire to be normal, conventional, correct. He accepts what he has been taught, and he hands all his complexes and fears and frustration on to his children. (Neill, 1953, p.19)

Children as “docile bodies” inherit a sense of conditional self-esteem through evaluation and judgment. As critics of traditional schooling have reminded us; “The lesson of report cards, grades, and tests is that children should not trust themselves or their parents but should instead rely on the evaluation of certified officials. People need to be told what they are worth” (Gatto, 2005, p. 10).

When the New Zealand Curriculum is viewed through a critical lens, one can see how flawed it really is and how neo-liberal influence underpins the “schooling” principles of performativity and conformity that are covertly advocated within. The following subsection will offer support for the Summerhill Schooling philosophy which is a complete antithesis of the myth that performativity and conformity are necessary for success.

4. A Summerhill alternative – dispelling the myths

As explained earlier in chapters one and two of this thesis, Summerhill School functions by the principles of direct democracy and self-regulation for children. Enacting a concept of self-regulation, in a neo-liberal setting, is by no means an easy task for its organizers. Since its inception in 1921, Summerhill has continually had to contend with neo-liberal antagonism from external forces. At times the government has made it very difficult for Summerhill to survive and keep its head above water. As mentioned earlier, A. S. Neill refused to compromise with bureaucratic government procedures and chose to run the school independently of any state funding. The school is funded by public donations and student fees, so it

cannot be coerced or blackmailed by central performance-based criteria. The staff often has to accept a drop in wages because the school cannot afford to pay the 'going rate' for teachers' salaries. This alone should tell the reader that money is not the driving force behind the concept of Summerhill; nor does the school intend to be dictated to by the fluctuations of the market.

Summerhill is a place of power because everyone in the Summerhill community has a choice. Summerhill still lives up to its aim of creating a "happier childhood by removing fear and coercion by adults" (Vaughan, 2006, p. viii). The children have the ultimate choice to decide upon their own direction and outcomes; they choose what and when they want to learn. There is no prescribed curriculum; unless they choose to adhere to one themselves. There are no punitive external pressures to create outcomes.

Summerhill refuses to remain within the context of a standard school. It refuses to be a subordinate social institution to the state, as the majority of schools are. Many schools preach that their pedagogical relationships between student and teacher are equal and create positive outcomes. But if a school remains obligated to the state by a prescribed set of rules, then teacher and student can only be equals as subordinates under a greater social power. As long as schools continue to judge and appraise their students and teachers success through external, performance-based criteria, they will never be in control of their own affairs. In this sense, students and teachers cannot be equal when it comes to creating liberation for any of them (Arney & Finkel, 1995).

The decentralisation process in Aotearoa was a big part of the performance-based plan and it was never intended for schools to have real power. Lauder (1991) captured this sentiment:

The nature of the changes, and especially the decentralization of responsibility without power suggests that "reform" has been driven by ideology rather than with a concern for good educational practice... [D]emocracy is not well served by the processes of

change that we have witnessed. It is now time that both the nature of educational change and the processes by which change is effected should be reconsidered. (p. 22).

According to Ivan Illich, it was not the style of teaching, teacher apathy, or specific procedures within state schools that were failing children and society. It was rather the way that the schooling system functioned as a social institution, and how it has been used inappropriately for economic and cultural purposes (Illich, 1971). He did not believe in trying to reform the schools as such, insisting that schools “had to be disestablished, that society had to be deschooled” (Arney & Finkel, 1995, p. 121).

The concept of Summerhill is so extraordinary when compared to standard schools. Summerhill is like the deschooling establishment that Illich talked about. The students and teachers look upon Summerhill as a community rather than a school. Domestication and indoctrination are not part of the Summerhill community; and neither is performativity and conformity. The learning at Summerhill is a different kind of learning than we are accustomed to. The students are learning about *power* because they work it in their everyday lives and in their relationships with one another; *power* is a natural part of their lives at Summerhill. Unless we interrogate the myths that are embedded in the curriculum—and the myths that are embedded in the notion of schools as social institutions—we are not going to understand how this power operates. We need to consciously work toward reconsidering the processes by which change is effected (Lauder, 1991).

5. Conclusion

The *integrity* of the curriculum as it is currently being imposed upon schools is a myth. But it is a myth that has become normative—not only within the schooling system itself but also in the way that our society in general views the schooling system. Normative assumptions afford comfort; they allow people to become disconnected. When something is comfortable and accepted, one no has to think about it any longer.

To challenge this idea of non-thinking is the foundation of this entire thesis and the fundamental purpose of Summerhill School. I wanted to shed light on this larger issue; of people being able to think for themselves without fear and to work cooperatively with one another, regardless of culture, gender, or age. Our current curriculum, when combined with standards of credentialisation imposed by neo-liberal economic policies, does little to raise the standard of critical autonomous thought among its recipients. In fact, as I have argued here, it stymies independent and critical thought.

The purpose of this study has been to show an alternative way of learning to the way in which we have been ‘schooled’ to think. As I have argued here, neo-liberal ideologies have been set in place specifically to perpetuate the major system of ‘capitalism’. Capitalism however does not contribute to the formation of a society of equity and unity. It is the means to divide a society into those who have capital and those who do not. In a world where the market is fast becoming the dictator of human lives, capitalism ensures that the rich ‘elite’ gain the most profit, while the working majorities create the profit for them. Their advocacy of freedom of choice and an equal opportunity to *compete* does not constitute provision of a schooling system where there is an equal opportunity to *succeed*.

Ten to thirteen years of contemporary neo-liberal schooling in Aotearoa gives a child plenty of time to become ‘over-socialised’ by neo-liberal values. By contrast, the philosophy of Summerhill constitutes the complete opposite. I would argue that it may not be easy to achieve, but it is definitely not impossible. Aotearoa has been used before in a cutting-edge experimental arena. The neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s are a prime example. The use of EFTPOS⁸⁰ cards is another (in line with Australia). We are a country that has not shied away from a challenge

⁸⁰ EFTPOS stands for Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale. EFTPOS is an Australian and New Zealand electronic processing system for credit cards, debit cards and charge cards.

when other countries may hesitate; for example, granting women the vote (Aotearoa was the first country in the world where all adult women gained the right to vote in parliamentary elections on November 28, 1893); the nuclear-free stance in the 1980s; the refusal to join the UK and the USA in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

If we have the courage to attempt huge feats—such as the women’s suffrage campaign—then I believe that there is hope for the concept of a Summerhill type school in Aotearoa. The first step is to have genuine dialogue with people and open the idea up for discussion so that ‘everyday’ people can understand what the neo-liberal ideologies truly stand for, how a school like Summerhill could resist those ideologies and what a school like Summerhill could really look like.

There have been infrequent attempts both presently and in the past in Aotearoa to open schools based on Summerhill type philosophy⁸¹. Of these schools, Taurangi almost completely replicated Neill’s philosophies, including the age range of children (Ramsay, 1984). Taurangi opened in 1955 but was closed down in 1966. The other alternatives have catered for either primary or secondary school levels in isolation, which puts the school at risk in relation to positive long term results for children. These alternatives have taken certain elements of Summerhill philosophy and adapted it to their own purposes. Unfortunately there is no current alternative school community in Aotearoa that replicates Summerhill in its entirety.

People have a sense of hopelessness that they find hard to shake off. This is a mindset that must be opposed in every possible way, right down to the way we speak. We must “disrupt the dominant discourse” (Bishop & Glynn, 2003). It is a fact that the dominant discourse is engineered by a dominant minority. This whakaaro needs to change so that a discourse becomes flexible, fluid, and open to the voices of people who have differing values. The ‘working majority’ have the numbers to create movement and change. Some people may argue that they want

⁸¹ Four Avenues School (Christchurch), Auckland Metropolitan, Taurangi (Gisborne), Te Wharau (Wairarapa), Mataurangi (Wellington).

competition and they may therefore assume the persona of the oppressor if need be. But that is a whakaaro based on a ‘colonised-schooled’ mindset. Competition and kotahitanga (unity) do not go hand in hand.

A Summerhill type environment is a solid and proven course of action that can help fight against the neo-liberal ideologies that ensnare us. If one school could be opened in our country, that could lead the way for more schools to open in the future. These things do not happen over-night. Our schooling system does not look the same as it did 100 years ago just as it will not look the same in another 100 years. One way to create movement is to work through the obstacles, gain public support, and open up a real life school community in Aotearoa that will function according to the four principle aims of Summerhill (Vaughan, 2006, p.viii):

- to allow children freedom to grow emotionally
- to give children power over their own lives
- to give children the time to develop naturally
- to create a happier childhood by removing fear and coercion by adults

Another set of principles that the school community would have to abide by would be A. S. Neill’s solutions to a healthy teaching practice (Neill, 1992, pp.208–209):

- Always be on the side of the child
- Abolish all punishment, fear and external discipline
- Trust in children to grow in their own way without any pressure from outside - save that of communal self-government
- Put learning in its place – below living
- Knowledge is not a criterion for success
- Emotions are more powerful than intellect

Summerhill has been operating on the basis of these values for over 87 years—and continues to successfully do so. Kia ora Summerhill! Thank you for showing us the way!

(For anyone who would like to make a donation to Summerhill, please view the Summerhill Trust details in the appendices. Also available in the appendices is the Summerhill OFSTED report for 2007).

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Appendices

1. The National Education Goals (NEGs)

The National Education Goals (NEGs) were amended in December 2004 to include the reference to physical activity in clause 5. The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) were also amended.

The National Education Goals are available in te reo at the bottom of this page.

Education is at the core of our nation's effort to achieve economic and social progress. In recognition of the fundamental importance of education, the Government sets the following goals for the education system of New Zealand.

NEG 1

The highest standards of achievement, through programmes which enable all students to realise their full potential as individuals, and to develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand's society.

NEG 2

Equality of educational opportunity for all New Zealanders, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement.

NEG 3

Development of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by New Zealanders to compete successfully in the modern, ever-changing world.

NEG 4

A sound foundation in the early years for future learning and achievement through programmes which include support for parents in their vital role as their children's first teachers.

NEG 5

A broad education through a balanced curriculum covering essential learning areas. Priority should be given to the development of high levels of competence (knowledge and skills) in literacy and numeracy, science and technology and physical activity.

NEG 6

Excellence achieved through the establishment of clear learning objectives, monitoring student performance against those objectives, and programmes to meet individual need.

NEG 7

Success in their learning for those with special needs by ensuring that they are identified and receive appropriate support.

NEG 8

Access for students to a nationally and internationally recognised qualifications system to encourage a high level of participation in post-school education in New Zealand.

NEG 9

Increased participation and success by Māori through the advancement of Māori education initiatives, including education in Te Reo Māori, consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

NEG 10

Respect for the diverse ethnic and cultural heritage of New Zealand people, with acknowledgment of the unique place of Māori, and New Zealand's role in the Pacific and as a member of the international community of nations.

2. The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

The National Administration Guidelines for school administration set out statements of desirable principles of conduct or administration for specified personnel or bodies. Recent amendments include the planning and reporting requirements, the footnote to 1(iii)c relating to gifted and talented learners (with effect from Term 1 2005), and clause 1(i)c regarding "regular quality physical activity" (with effect from Term 1 2006).

The National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

In December 2003 a notice in the New Zealand Gazette advised that NAG 1(iii)c had been amended with a footnote that states: "including gifted and talented students".

From Term 1, 2005 it will be mandatory for all state and state-integrated schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the needs of their gifted and talented learners, as they are currently required to do for students who are not achieving, who are at risk of not achieving, and who have special needs.

A range of professional support is in place to assist schools with implementing this NAG change. This includes:

- in-depth professional development through School Support Services advisors;
- the handbook Gifted and Talented Students: Meeting their Needs in New Zealand Schools;
- a range of online and hard copy materials, including resources on Te Kete Ipurangi/The Online Learning Centre www.tki.org.nz/e/community/gifted/ and the Ministry of Education website www.minedu.govt.nz; and
- the recently released research into effective approaches to meeting the needs of gifted and talented learners www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/gifted

In December 2004 a notice in the New Zealand Gazette advised that an additional clause had been added. The addition, NAG 1 (i) (c), requires the development and implementation of programmes that "give priority to regular quality physical activity that develops movement skills for all students, especially in years 1-6". This requirement takes effect from Term 1 2006.

In May 2007 a notice in the New Zealand Gazette advised that two new clauses had been added to NAG 5. From 1 June 2008 the additions require boards of trustees to:

- promote healthy food and nutrition for all students; and
- where food and beverages are sold on school premises, make only healthy options available.

The Ministry of Education's Food and Nutrition for Healthy, Confident Kids: Guidelines to Support Healthy Eating Environments in New Zealand Early Childhood Education Services and Schools (March 2007) provides a framework to help schools and their communities develop environments that support healthy eating. The Ministry of Health's Food and Beverage Classification System (July 2007) is a tool for schools to use to assess healthy food and beverages. It identifies food and beverages to be offered everyday, sometimes and occasionally.

The National Administration Guidelines are available in te reo at the bottom of this page.

NAG 1

Each Board of Trustees is required to foster student achievement by providing teaching and learning programmes which incorporate the New Zealand Curriculum (essential learning areas, essential skills and attitudes and values) as expressed in National Curriculum Statements.

Each Board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

(i) develop and implement teaching and learning programmes:

(a) to provide all students in years 1-10 with opportunities to achieve for success in all the essential learning and skill areas of the New Zealand curriculum;

(b) giving priority to student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1-4;

(c) giving priority to regular quality physical activity that develops movement skills for all students, especially in years 1-6;

(ii) through a range of assessment practices, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated; giving priority first to:

(a) student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1-4;

and then to:

(b) breadth and depth of learning related to the needs, abilities and interests of students, the nature of the school's curriculum, and the scope of the New Zealand curriculum (as expressed in the National Curriculum Statements);

(iii) on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students;

(a) who are not achieving;

(b) who are at risk of not achieving;

(c) who have special needs

and

(d) aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention;

(iv) develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified in (iii) above;

(v) in consultation with the school's Maori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Maori students;

(vi) provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

NAG 2

Each Board of Trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

- (i) develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to the National Education Guidelines through their policies, plans and programmes, including those for curriculum, assessment and staff professional development;
- (ii) maintain an on-going programme of self-review in relation to the above policies, plans and programmes, including evaluation of information on student achievement;
- (iii) report to students and their parents on the achievement of individual students, and to the school's community on the achievement of students as a whole and of groups (identified through 1(iii) above) including the achievement of Maori students against the plans and targets referred to in 1(v) above.

NAG 3

According to the legislation on employment and personnel matters, each Board of Trustees is required in particular to:

- (i) develop and implement personnel and industrial policies, within policy and procedural frameworks set by the Government from time to time, which promote high levels of staff performance, use educational resources effectively and recognise the needs of students;
- (ii) be a good employer as defined in the State Sector Act 1988 and comply with the conditions contained in employment contracts applying to teaching and non-teaching staff.

NAG 4

According to legislation on financial and property matters, each Board of Trustees is also required in particular to:

- (i) allocate funds to reflect the school's priorities as stated in the charter;
- (ii) monitor and control school expenditure, and ensure that annual accounts are prepared and audited as required by the Public Finance Act 1989 and the Education Act 1989;
- (iii) comply with the negotiated conditions of any current asset management agreement, and implement a maintenance programme to ensure that the school's buildings and facilities provide a safe, healthy learning environment for students.

NAG 5

Each Board of Trustees is also required to:

- (i) provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students;
- (ii) promote healthy food and nutrition for all students;
- (iii) where food and beverages are sold on school premises, make only healthy options available; and
- (iv) comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the

safety of students and employees.

NAG 6

Each Board of Trustees is also expected to comply with all general legislation concerning requirements such as attendance, the length of the school day, and the length of the school year.

1 including gifted and talented students

3. The New Zealand Curriculum Overview



4. Summerhill School Ofsted Report November 2007

Details taken from the Summerhill School website = <http://www.summerhill.co.uk/>

DCSF Registration Number 935/6016

Unique Reference Number 124870

Inspection number 301621

Inspection dates 6 - 7 November 2007

Reporting inspector Declan McCarthy

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Summerhill School

Independent School

Inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. This inspection takes full account of the school's unique philosophy as required by the High Court Judgement of 2000.

Information about the school

Summerhill is a democratic, self-governing school providing boarding, day education and care for 78 pupils aged 5 – 17 years old. It is situated in the small market town of Leiston, within walking distance of the town centre.

The school adopts an alternative philosophy to education based on the work of its founder, A S Neill. It is based on the notion that children should be free to decide for themselves how to spend their time in school. The proprietor, who is the daughter of A S Neill, continues to uphold these principles. The daily life of the school is governed by the school meetings, held three times a week, in which everybody has an equal vote. School meetings are used to create, confirm and amend all the school laws which form the structure of expectations for the community of staff and pupils,

in which the adults and children have complete parity of status. The school's philosophy is to allow freedom for the individual, each child being able to take their own path in life and find, through experience, the things that they want to do and the person they want to be. The school proposes that this leads to an inner self-confidence and real acceptance of themselves as people. All of this is done within the structures of the school, through the meetings, self-government and the clear distinctions between freedom and licence, all elements which are at the very core of the school's philosophy and the day-to-day experiences of the pupils and staff. The school is part of a regional, national and international democratic network and reflects the extent of A S Neill's continuing influence on the world. This is mirrored in the pupil intake. Approximately two thirds of pupils (mainly Dutch, German, Korean Japanese, and Taiwanese) speak English as an additional language. The principal and, from time to time other staff and children, go out from the school to speak to and work with other children and adults and to promote democratic education.

Evaluation of the school

Summerhill provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Pupils learn appropriately and make satisfactory progress in their accredited courses because effective systems of assessment, tailored to the school's philosophy, are in place and the curriculum is satisfactory and relevant to their needs. Good quality teaching supports good progress in lessons and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning outside lessons. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and behaviour is good, mainly as a result of the good quality care, support and guidance they receive. The school meets nearly all the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. It is relevant to the needs of pupils, with an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills. The personal, social and health education curriculum which permeates the life of the school meets pupils' needs adequately. The curriculum also meets the needs of those pupils on the 'special attention' register including new arrivals, those with statements of special educational need and those who speak English as an additional language. A wide range of learning opportunities both within and outside lessons is available. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to take public examinations. Appropriate subject planning provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to make progress. Pupils are able to choose and organise activities which they enjoy and find relevant. There are local community links through dance, sport and horse-riding and the school receives many visitors throughout the

year on regular visiting days. Visitors are looked after by the Visitors' Committee and allowed to observe the whole-school community meeting. Teaching is good and assessment is satisfactory overall. Relationships are very good and pupils are polite, courteous and considerate. Pupils really enjoy lessons. They are absorbed in their activities, highly motivated and focused on learning. Teachers challenge pupils' learning and provide good support to help clarify any misunderstandings. However, teachers do not set clear learning objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what they are expected to achieve, nor do they discuss with pupils how well they have achieved at the end of the lesson. One to-one teaching is effective and small class sizes enable pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons. There are sufficient resources which are well used by teachers to promote learning. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology outside lessons to support their learning. For example, an older pupil is learning Dutch through the exchange of emails and course work with a tutor in Holland. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, taking account of their learning outside lessons. By comparison, their progress in lessons is good. By the time they leave school they have gained an appropriate range of qualifications including GCSE passes and certificates in the use of English as a foreign language. There were some individual examples of very good progress made outside lessons, as seen in the high quality furniture pupils made in after school woodwork activities and in the 'RedRam' film production which received much praise and was presented as a film premiere to parents and the community. Pupils clearly make progress through such out-of-class activities. For example, when pupils are engaged in the game of dungeons and dragons, they are developing literacy, numeracy sub-skills of spatial awareness, creative and aesthetic skills and physical skills. The school regularly reviews the progress of each pupil within its own relevant assessment system. Any pupil who is deemed to be making inadequate progress is provided with additional support or guidance. When they leave school, pupils usually continue their education or training. In 2007, all pupils who left Summerhill moved on to further education or training.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. The democratic process used to manage the day-to-day running of the school, as seen in the various pupil committees and the whole-school community meeting, provides pupils with outstanding opportunities for personal development. Behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave very well in and around the school, but a few pupils behave inappropriately. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very positive. They are rightly proud of their community and many are keen to share their

positive experiences of their life in school. They are confident and articulate, with a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Their commitment to equality is seen in the day to-day way they engage with each other. The democratic process enables even the younger pupils to reflect on issues which impact on the community, such as not clearing up sweet wrappers. Pupils have the choice whether or not to attend lessons and effective learning was observed both in and outside the classroom. A strength is the way in which pupils from different countries work together to form the school community, celebrating its international dimension. Pupils learn how to get on with each other through compromise, negotiation and communication within the community so that by the time they leave they are well rounded, confident and mature young people. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of public institutions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good. The dedication of the staff and the concern of the community as a whole ensure excellent support for all pupils. The school complies with safeguarding requirements. Pupils say they feel safe, and can always find someone to talk to if needed. This might be an ombudsman appointed by the school community, a member of staff or another pupil. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, are brought up at the community meetings and dealt with effectively. Sanctions are clear and the community decides on the level of severity, agreeing which sanction to apply. Overall, behaviour is good, with pupils and staff showing great respect for each other. The school canteen offers healthy choices, although an entrepreneurial initiative to run a junk food shop provides crisps and fizzy drinks. The community effectively promotes pupils' awareness of health and safety issues. The school does not yet meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school makes all the necessary checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises are satisfactory. The main building, housing the dining room, the art room and living accommodation for some middle-school pupils, is wellappointed. Teaching blocks, some recently improved, are situated around the perimeter of an attractive open space. Good-sized classrooms and specialist teaching areas for practical subjects such as science and woodwork provide ample learning spaces. Attractive displays, including pupils' work and interesting posters, ensure that the classrooms for younger pupils are bright and stimulating, providing positive learning

environments. Other buildings include subject-specific teaching rooms for the older pupils, further accommodation for boarders and a gym, which also doubles as a theatre for plays and films. Extensive grounds complement the spacious premises. Pupils have exciting opportunities for play, which include a tree house, the revered 'Big Beech' and large climbing frames. Very uneven flooring in the corridor by the kitchen is hazardous, as are the worn carpet tiles in the porch when they become scuffed.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents with all the required information. Helpful resources include the parents' handbook and an informative website, which captures the spirit of the school through photographs and comments. The school fully explains its philosophy about sharing information about an individual pupil with his or her parents. This only occurs with the pupil's agreement.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's written complaints procedure fully complies with requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England)

Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must do the following.

Ensure that all flooring is safe (paragraph 5(s)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

Empower young people to take even greater ownership of their learning by setting targets for themselves. Inform pupils what they are expected to achieve at the beginning of lessons, by setting clear objectives and review their progress against these at the end of lessons.

School details

Name of school Summerhill School

DCSF number 935/6016

Unique reference number 124870

Type of school Primary and secondary
Status Independent
Date school opened 1921
Age range of pupils 5-17 years
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number on roll Boys: 40 Girls: 38 Total: 78
Number of boarders Boys: 38 Girls: 37 Total: 75
Number of pupils with a statement of
special educational need
Boys: 2 Girls: 0 Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Number of children receiving day care Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils) £3,087 to £7,386
Annual fees (boarders) £7,086 to £12,315
Address of school Westward Ho
Leiston
Suffolk
IP16 4HY
Telephone number 01728 830540
Fax number 01728 830540
Email address zoe@summerhillschool.co.uk
Headteacher Mrs Zoe Redhead
Proprietor Mrs Zoe Redhead
Reporting inspector Declan McCarthy
Dates of inspection 6-7 November 2007



5. The A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust

Details taken from the Summerhill School website =
<http://www.summerhill.co.uk/>

Introducing the A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust

Summerhill Founded in 1921 –

Still ahead of its time

(Registered charity 1089804)



DONATE TO SUMMERHILL TRUST ONLINE

Summerhill Founded in 1921 - Still ahead of its time
(Registered charity 1089804)

The A.S.Neill Summerhill Trust was created for two main purposes.

The first aim is to raise funds for assisted places so that a wider range of pupils can benefit from the experience of Summerhill. At present any parent or child with an alternative philosophy on education is not catered for by the government.

Over the years the school has unofficially managed to help a number of children, but this has been at the expense of other important things. If the school is to continue it must be able to afford the numerous extra expenses incurred by modern life, such as health and safety requirements, security, staffing, etc. There are also other on-going areas desperate for attention, such as the roof of the main building!

There are many, many children and parents who would love to enjoy the Summerhill experience, but they cannot afford the fees. Assistance for them is not about 'gaining the benefit of a private education' - it is about allowing children and parents the freedom to choose a school system that suits their own principles.

During our recent court-case against the government it became clear that Summerhill is not just a school with a unique philosophy – it is a part of education history world-wide. All historical sites need some financial help to remain viable and Summerhill is no exception. The second aim of the Trust is to promote the extensive writings and work



of A. S. Neill and the present day practices of Summerhill School. There is an on-going need to promote Summerhill's international and historical importance on the world education stage.

Neill was voted by the Times Educational Supplement to be one of the 12 most important educators of the last millennium. This aspect of the Trust's work will focus on the many ideas of Neill on how children learn, how adults in authority should behave towards children and young people and the importance of play in the learning process.

There is to be a regular Newsletter giving up to date information about the School; the seminal book by Neill titled Summerhill, which was a world-wide best-seller, is to be updated and re-issued in 2005 (hopefully by the Open University Press).

In this part of the Trust's work, there are plans to issue a variety of publications aimed at the mainstream school and teacher, as well as offering consultation and training to ordinary schools about the best practices at Summerhill. In the longer term it is hoped to offer residential placements at Summerhill for teachers and others to learn from the 'Summerhill experience'

Donations may be made to the Trust by cheque, credit card on-line or by direct debit.

By choosing to GIFT AID a donation to the Trust you can provide extra income to the Trust, at no extra cost to yourself. For every £1.00 you donate, we can claim 28p on your behalf. It costs you nothing and the Trust benefits.

All you need do is to let us know by post, phone fax or email that you wish to make a GIFT AID donation to the Trust, which is a registered charity, and we can claim your tax back from the Inland Revenue

Further information is available from:

The A. S. Neill Summerhill Trust
Hill Farm
Theberton
Leiston
Suffolk
IP16 4TD

Email: trust@summerhillschool.co.uk

6. Glossary of Maori terms

Aotearoa	- New Zealand
Iwi	- tribe, people
kaiako	- teacher
karakia	- pray
kaupapa	- purpose
korero	- talk
kotahitanga	- unity
mana	- status, standing
Maori	- indigenous people of Aotearoa
Pakeha	- white people
puku	- stomach
Tainui	- ancestral canoe
tamariki	- children
tangata whenua	- indigenous people
te reo Maori	- Maori language
tikanga Maori	- Maori cultural values
tino rangatiratanga	- sovereignty, self-determination
tupuna	- ancestor
Waikato	- tribal area
waka	- canoe
whakaaro	- thought, way of thinking
whanau	- family
whare	- house