

Humanist *in Canada*

a voice for reason & community

ISSUE 150 • AUTUMN 2004 • \$4.50

EDUCATION
& CRITICAL
THINKING 

'Skepticism' is really just the lesson that many things in life are a lot like buying a used car. If our kids are going to make sound choices on global environmental, economic, military and health issues, they're going to have to know how to look under the hood.

THIS MONTH'S COVER features humanist Daniel Robert Loxton. The photo captures him sitting in his graphic design studio in Victoria, BC, taking a break from writing and illustrating parts of the up-coming issue of *Skeptic* magazine (www.skeptic.com). Among his current projects at Skeptic is a book series entitled *The Baloney Detection Series*, which is intended to help kids build deductive reasoning skills while investigating Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster and other peculiarities. His past projects have included founding the Rational Inquiry Society of UVic, and illustrating the cover of the humanist magazine *Free Inquiry*, for its issue about 'Freethought on Campus.' This is the fifth in a series of covers showing the many faces of humanism in Canada.

Humanist in Canada

VOL 37 · NO 3 · ISSUE 150 · AUTUMN 2004

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Humanist in Canada is published quarterly (ISSN 0018-7402) by Canadian Humanist Publications, a non-profit organization with charitable status. The magazine is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and is available on microfilm or microfiche from University Microfilms in Michigan.

For promotional purposes, our mailing lists are occasionally exchanged with other organizations and publications reflecting a kindred philosophy. Please contact us if you would like to have your address excluded.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program, and the Canada Magazine Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Canada Post Agreement 40012140, REG 08992. Please return undeliverable magazines for Canadian addresses to the address at top of this page.

Printed in Canada, on Canadian-made paper which contains 30% post-consumer recycled fibre, EcoLogo certified by Environment Canada's Environmental Choice Program. Typeset in Garamond and Minion.

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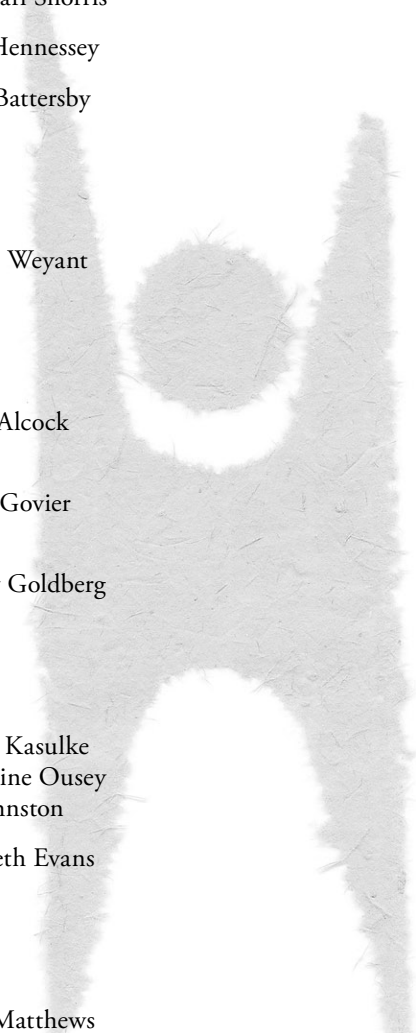
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WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING ANYWAY?

This is a question many people ask, and almost as many try to answer. Some experts in the field try for short, snappy definitions that identify the essence of the matter, but these always seem, to me at least, unsatisfying. Others try to capture the whole idea, but these attempts tend to be too long and leave one without a central unifying idea. It's a bit like trying to define humanism.

Well, in spite of the inherent difficulty, and the more worthy efforts such as that by Jim Alcock in this issue, I'll have a go at it myself. I find it helpful to think of critical thinking in terms of its characteristics.

Critical thinking entails (among other things):

- learning to make intelligent judgments based on evidence;
- insistence upon a critical evaluation of evidence;
- understanding of what constitutes good evidence;
- refusal to be certain about any knowledge, regardless of evidence;
- understanding that we live in a world of probabilities rather than certainties;
- unwillingness to accept or reject an argument because of its source;
- being respectful of arguments from intelligent, reliable and experienced authority;
- familiarity with the various techniques of argument;
- striving for logical consistency;
- being alert to techniques of deception;
- understanding probability;
- being skeptical of all significant claims to truth;
- being committed to searching for truth.

These qualities of thinking are also, of course, at the heart of humanism. Critical thinking and humanism are both about a rational approach to a natural world, rather than a wishful approach to a magical world.

Our theme, however, is about *Education & Critical Thinking* – how to get students to do it. I spent a large part of my career in education arguing that the undergraduate curriculum in our colleges and universities is much too focused on academic specialization, and too little concerned with equipping students to lead the lives they would actually lead – as workers, as citizens, as responsible individuals. Students should gain some knowledge of the intellectual traditions of the society they live in, they should learn to interact with

others in a civil way, they should learn how to critically evaluate evidence and draw reasonable conclusions. In short, they need to learn to become critical thinkers.

Some undergraduate programs (especially Philosophy) are undoubtedly better than others in this regard, but anyone who thinks that any university education provides a sound basis for critical thinking is simply wrong. We all have horror stories about this – like the college humanities teacher I knew who said, with considerable feeling, that she “hates logic,” dismissing it as some sort of male conspiracy. Then there were the “well-educated” people on Vancouver Island (where I live) who moved 1,000 kilometres to the interior of British Columbia, fearing that a confluence of earthly and otherworldly disturbances at the turn of the millennium was going to completely flood the Island, drowning all those foolish enough to stay behind. We do get a little damp here sometimes, especially in the winter, but so far we seem to be staying above water.

Then there are the depressing polls that show how many university graduates consult horoscopes, or believe in psychic phenomena, or have fundamentalist religious beliefs, or do not accept evolution, or (in the USA) still believe George Bush to be an effective President. Such indicators, and there are very many of them, do suggest that there might be some deficiencies with the teaching of critical thinking in our schools and universities.

So how do we go about teaching students the critical thinking and other skills they need to know to lead intelligent, responsible and productive lives? The best chance of achieving this is through well-conceived programs of general education, focusing on interdisciplinary study of important works of art, literature, history and philosophy. Such programs help students to write intelligently about ideas and to discuss them with peers in an analytical, disinterested and civil manner. Students learn critical thinking by practising it, guided by good teachers.

Where do such things happen? We touch on two of them in this magazine, in a discussion between Anne Leavitt, who has taught for many years in the BA in Liberal Studies program at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, BC, and Earl Shorris, a Contributing



Christine & the Small Stellated Dodecahedron
a mural intended to encourage interest in mathematics by Emrys Damon Miller

Editor for *Harper's Magazine* and founder of the Clemente Course, a program in liberal arts for poor people. Liberal Studies at Malaspina program was designed to provide a strong emphasis on general education and critical thinking, and make it available to all undergraduate students. The Clemente Course makes such education available to disadvantaged people who have never had the chance to go to university, arguing that they are disenfranchised not so much by their poverty but by their lack of analytical and conceptual skills, their need for better oral and written expression, their deficiencies in cultural, economic and social awareness, their feeling of alienation and separation from mainstream culture, and their lack of confidence. Earl's idea was that people can rise out the poverty cycle not so much through programs of specific job training, as are usually seen as what is needed, but through a course in liberal education which provides an opportunity to converse with great thinkers of the past, and to engage

in deliberation and discussion of important ideas. Earl argued, and proved, that this kind of education need not and should not be reserved for the academic elite, but should be for everyone, and that it can be a transforming experience even for those who have been relegated to the fringes of society. The Malaspina idea was similar, though restricted to students already in university programs.

Earl tells the story of a rough, menacing and sometimes violent young man who took the Clemente Course, and later phoned Earl to tell him about a disagreement he had just had with his girl friend. The young man said he got so angry he had wanted to hit the girl. A very worried Earl asked what had happened. "Earl," he said "I wanted to hit her, but then I asked myself, 'What would Socrates have done?'"

That story reminded me of Trudeau's famous dictum "Reason Over Passion." Maybe that is the concise description of critical thinking we were looking for. ~

THE WORLD AROUND US

an interview with Pat Duffy Hutcheon

HUMANIST NEWS

by Theo Meijer

¶ *Theo Meijer*
How did you become involved in modern humanism?

¶ *Pat Duffy Hutcheon*
It was a rather long and lonely road. My early memories are of rejecting what other children around me believed. Under my father's influence, I came to regard belief in a god on the same level as belief in Santa Claus or the tooth fairy. My father was a freethinker, who encouraged me to communicate with people rather than with spirits. He had turned away from Catholicism. With my mother religion did not seem to be an issue. However, I discovered as I cared for her during her final, pain-ridden, months of life that she continued to believe in a punishing God, although she had forsaken the rituals and duties of the church.

¶ *Theo Meijer*
You didn't have to go through the arduous process of severing the emotional ties to religion that many humanists have to deal with.

¶ *Pat* No, it was my father who went through that whole process for me. Still, I always felt different from the other kids in this regard and I couldn't really talk about it. In fact, I think now that this early experience

of 'marginality' encouraged me to become a sociologist.

¶ *Theo* You have also been a long-time member of the Unitarian Church, particularly in Vancouver. What connection do you see between them and humanism?

¶ *Pat* For me the connection was very close. It was where I first discovered humanism. I happened upon sociology earlier when, as a country schoolteacher, I took summer-classes at the University of Alberta. The subject was quite scientifically oriented then and I could discuss my naturalistic ideas without being regarded as a freak. About 12 years later, while doing my Masters at the University of Calgary, one of my professors suggested that I join the Unitarians because "that's where all the humanists are." I attended one of their meetings and immediately felt at home.

¶ *Theo* Do you feel that Unitarianism has changed since that first encounter?

¶ *Pat* Yes. Until the 1970s Unitarian ministers in central and western North America were trained chiefly as humanists. Then, in the early eighties, when I was serving on their international committee for selecting graduating ministers, I noted a rapidly growing emphasis on the type of liberal Christianity characteristic of Unitarianism in the UK, and on 'New Age' mysticism.

¶ *Theo* Nevertheless, you have maintained ties with the Unitarians.

¶ *Pat* Yes, because of good friends there and the persisting humanist strand, which we encourage through discussion groups and the like. Also, the new minister at the Vancouver Church is a humanist.

¶ *Theo* You have also made numerous contributions to modern humanism through your involvement with the BC Humanist Association, and in particular through your talks and writings. I'd like to focus on some of that, starting with your magnum opus, *Leaving the Cave*, published in 1996 by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. Tell us how you came to write this significant book.

¶ *Pat* I was really building up to it all through my career, as I grew increasingly unhappy with what was going on in the social sciences. In the sixties they became overridden with ideologies such as Marxism and Postmodernism. This was particularly the case with sociology. I felt the discipline needed a sounder and more scientific model. I began exploring the idea of evolutionary naturalism as the basis for social-scientific thought. That idea provided the thesis for *Leaving the Cave*. Although the writing of it took only a decade, the book actually reflects a lifetime accumulation of my thoughts and research.

¶ *Theo* What happened to it? Are you content with its use in universities and the like?

Pat I'm disappointed. It's been used very little. It hasn't made a dint in sociology, which I'm sad to say continues to be stalled at the level of proto-science.

Theo Yet, your view makes a great deal of sense. Why do you think that it has not caught on more? There must be others in the field sharing your concerns.

Pat There seems to be a resistance to accepting the fact that we're biological creatures and that the findings of the biological sciences have a bearing on social behaviour. I remember a professor at Yale in the late 1960s who declared that biology was merely about animals and had nothing to do with humans.

Theo In 1999 Praeger Publishers in the USA published your second book which attempts to bring a more humanist orientation to the social sciences. What motivated you to write *Building Character and Culture*?

Pat It had a different emphasis. In *Leaving the Cave* I had developed an inter-disciplinary philosophy of science, which would incorporate both biological and social science. This time I was trying to integrate biology and sociology with psychology and to show how such an interdisciplinary model (I called it the 'triple helix') is essential for the study and teaching of education, and for understanding human socialization in general. This idea had formed the basis for my PhD dissertation at the University of Queensland in the mid-1970s. I wanted to challenge the dualist position that the mind and body are somehow separate and unrelated entities and that

education is merely about the mind, disregarding its physical reality.

Theo What happened to it?

Pat It's still in print and actually used more in the USA than in Canada. An inner-city 'character education' school in Nashville is based on it, and the principal remains in touch with me. The book has lots of practical applications. Appendix A identifies ten basic values and suggests how to teach them in a manner appropriate to the various age levels. Appendix B provides a summary of research findings on the destructive consequences of media violence.

Theo In 2001 Canadian Humanist Publications published *The Road to Reason*, which is largely a collection of essays you wrote over time. This book seems to be aimed more at both humanists and the general reader who want to know more about modern humanism. Tell us about it.

Pat In the early 1990s I started to write articles (which subsequently formed the chapters of the book) for *Humanist in Canada* magazine,

trying to present the theories of great thinkers who were neither educators nor social scientists. I wanted to show their ideas in historical context, and make them more accessible to the general reader. Many of these precursors of humanism did not necessarily hold all the beliefs that we presently identify with modern humanism. However, their ideas were far ahead of their time and culture. An example would be the Buddha. Early Buddhism reveals the beginning of a scientific way of looking not only at the surrounding world, as in the case of the early Greeks, but also at human beings.

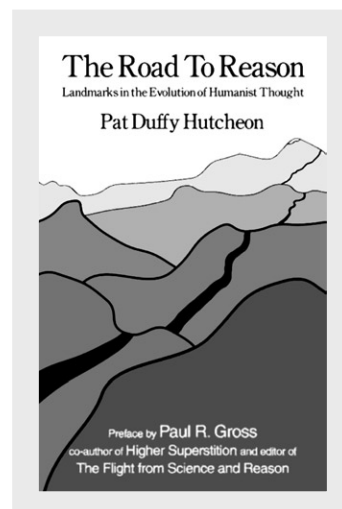
Theo Are these early ideas still a part of any of the various streams of modern Buddhism? Buddhism seems often regarded as an atheistic religion.

Pat The Theravada branch, which moved into Southeast Asia maintained this early approach. On the other hand, the Buddhism which evolved in India, China and Japan assimilated much of the Animism of the common people of the day.

Theo What is your view of the Dalai Lama as a Buddhist leader who is very much in the news these days?

Pat He doesn't actually say very much, other than platitudes. But there is no dwelling on the supernatural. He may be somewhat of a humanist at heart, or at least an adherent of early Buddhism.

Theo Shortly after *The Road to Reason* came out the religion writer for the Vancouver Sun interviewed you. Since he had studiously avoided writing anything about modern humanism for decades, you must have been surprised.



Theo Meijer

is a retired educator, coordinator
and freelance court interpreter/
translator, previously the president
of the BC Humanist Association.

Pat Duffy Hutcheon

is a sociologist and educator.
Raised on a drought-stricken Alberta
farm in the Depression, she became
a country schoolteacher. While
struggling up the teaching career
ladder she unwittingly pioneered the
concept of “work-study” – acquiring
higher education in fits and starts
over 30 years at the universities of
Alberta, Calgary, Yale and Queensland,
Australia. Following early retirement
from university teaching she served
as a research consultant and as a
director of the Vanier Institute of
the Family. She is now writing full-
time. Pat was named ‘Canadian
Humanist of the Year 2000’ by the
Canadian Humanist Association, and
recipient of the American Humanist
Association’s ‘Distinguished Humanist
Service Award’ for 2001. Most
recently, she served on the drafting
committee for *Humanism and Its
Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III*.

Something Lost

Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2004.
ISBN 1413440746

The Road to Reason:

*Landmarks in the Evolution
of Humanist Thought*
Ottawa: Canadian Humanist
Publications, 2001.
ISBN 0968601413

Building Character and Culture

Westport: Praeger, 1999.
ISBN 0275964698

Leaving the Cave:

*Evolutionary Naturalism
in Social Scientific Thought.*
Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier
University Press, 1996.
ISBN 0889202583

A Sociology of Canadian Education

Toronto: Nelson of Canada, 1975.

¶ Pat Yes, and even more surprised that the published article was favourable. There was also a good response from the public. I heard from a number of people who recognized themselves as humanists and some actually joined the BC Humanist Association.

¶ Theo What was the public reaction to the book?

¶ Pat The first printing sold well. It got a number of good reviews and I received some enthusiastic letters from readers. A reviewer in Australia wrote that the concluding chapter of the book was the best and most concise description of modern humanism she had ever encountered. It’s now in second printing here and just out in Japan.

¶ Theo That is most unusual. How did that come about?

¶ Pat It was actually through the Unitarian connection. A few years earlier I was speaking to the Unitarian community in downtown Victoria about *Leaving the Cave*. A Korean science professor happened to be in the audience. Then after *The Road to Reason* came out he contacted me and arranged for a Japanese translation and publication.

¶ Theo You must have spent a great deal of time on all the research for the book, particularly because you mostly use original sources.

¶ Pat Yes. I kept card files on books all my life. A favourite professor once told me always to go back to the original writers. That is something I remembered all my life. I’m afraid that most students today encounter only secondary sources.

¶ Theo However, when dealing with topics such as early Buddhism

there is still the problem of accurate translation. There may be bias there.

¶ Pat Yes, that’s always a limitation and a barrier. Nevertheless, the first translators, who used only original documents, are reasonably reliable. But there’s always the possibility of misunderstanding. Interestingly, in the case of Omar Khayyam, modern Persian scholarship has now confirmed early British conclusions as to his humanism.

¶ Theo It would seem fair to say that later followers inevitably distort the ideas originally expressed by founders of new religions or worldviews.

¶ Pat Yes, you just have to remember how gossip changes form as it’s passed on. When it comes to important new worldviews such distortions over time can be disastrous.

¶ Theo You have written about spirituality. That word makes some humanists uncomfortable because of its strong identification with religion. What is your view of it?

¶ Pat I decided to redefine spirituality in humanist terms because, when we merely ignore it, we are open to accusations of dealing only with the material world and the reasoning aspects of the brain, while disregarding other aspects of the human person. The original meaning of ‘spirit’ refers to breath and therefore there is nothing non-material or non-organic about it. When I ask people what spirituality means to them I find they often equate it with awe and wonder, or with a concern for morality. Humanists experience these sensations and have these concerns no less than anyone else but we don’t define them as religious.

¶ *Theo* It is perfectly reasonable to accept the reality of emotions and feelings.

¶ *Pat* Of course. We humanists agree that all these so-called ‘spiritual’ sensations are important aspects of being human. So when, carefully defined, I don’t mind the term’s use although I admit that it can lead to misunderstanding. It’s probably safer to stick with specific words concerning feeling, imagining and valuing. When talking about wonder or emotion I use wonder and emotion and so on.

¶ *Theo* Modern humanism makes a great deal of sense and many people actually live their daily lives generally following humanist values and principles even though they may formally identify themselves with a religion. Why then is there so little public awareness of modern humanism and why are people not more inclined to support humanist organizations in our country? What are we doing wrong?

¶ *Pat* I sometimes ask people that question. Some say that part of being humanist is not to want to join formal organizations. Some are afraid of offending family members or are concerned about consequences for their job or professional status. Others state that they don’t like what they perceive as a political position that is ideologically left wing. As scientifically oriented people they feel uncomfortable with dogmatic stances of any type.

¶ *Theo* That is a remarkable perception because the constitution and publications of the BC Humanist Association clearly state that it is non-religious and non-political, and the membership is indeed very diverse regarding political views.

¶ *Pat* I answer in the same way. Nevertheless the perception is out there and I think that is unfortunate. Perhaps those with leftist views are more vocal.

¶ *Theo* Perception is everything?

¶ *Pat* In terms of attracting new members, it is. We have to be very careful taking public stands. For example, the issue of Sharia law (and the general separation of church and state) is something that humanists across the board could unite on. Support for Planned Parenthood is another. In any case, we must separate our social goals from party politics. Of course other problems are that we don’t like to proselytize and we lack influence in the media.

¶ *Theo* How do you see the future of modern humanism? Will there be an inevitable evolutionary development toward it?

¶ *Pat* Not inevitable. Cultural evolution can flow in any direction and may well descend into a downward spiral from our perspective. The growth of fundamentalist tribalism all over the world is of great concern to me. I’m not so much pessimistic as realistic when I fear that we may be in for another Dark Age, or at least teetering on the brink of one.

¶ *Theo* I would like to conclude on a more personal note. In addition to the many important contributions you have made to modern humanism, you have been a wife, you are a mother and have been quite busy on the home front as well.

¶ *Pat* Yes, I’ve had two marriages. The first didn’t last, but I gained a very special son from it so I can’t regret it. My late second husband, Sandy, had two grown

sons when we married. I have eight grandchildren and I am very close to all of them. I’m happy to say that a number of them are humanists. I feel fortunate in my family.

¶ *Theo* You must be extremely well organized and disciplined to have been able to raise a family, study, complete your PhD, teach and do research and write a great deal.

¶ *Pat* Perhaps, but it took me a long time to get all the study done. I sometimes think that I pioneered the work-study method. The correspondence courses from Queens were a great help when I was a prairie farmer’s wife and country schoolteacher. I learned to be structured early on because I had to grow up fast in a large, impoverished family struggling to survive in the worst of the prairie dustbowl during the dirty 1930s.

¶ *Theo* Most recently you had your first foray into the field of fiction with the publication of your novel, *Something Lost*. What made you decide to do that?

¶ *Pat* Actually, I didn’t write it with the idea of having it published. My husband had become very disabled in the years before he died (in his bed at home) and while I was tied to the house I thought I’d write just for myself. I had witnessed from afar and experienced directly a lot of strange goings-on in the world of academia so there was a lot to draw on. The story is an imaginary murder mystery with fictional settings. The novel format encouraged me to create characters, which could represent the experiences of women in the academic world from the early 1960s on, as well as of various men, who were also victimized. And it allowed me to get a humanist message across. ☺

FEATURE

CRITICAL THINKING IN SCHOOLS

by Peter H Hennessy

LET'S BEGIN with what critical thinking is *not*. It is not the mere propensity to criticize everything at first blush – every proposal for change from the window decoration of the living room to the nation's Middle Eastern foreign policy. A tendency to knock down new ideas reflexively is merely reactionary thinking, usually superficial and usually proof of a lazy or immature mind. Let's dismiss those 'thinkers' right away.

Critical thinking is about engaging in a lifetime of personal growth and civic responsibility in a free society – a lifetime in which such thinking comes naturally, though never easily.

Unfortunately, typical classroom instruction does not do much for critical thinking. Consider what's involved in solving a quadratic equation, writing a grammatical paragraph and punctuating it, constructing a birdhouse, making a cake or participating in a formal debate. Some complicated mental processes may be required in learning such skills but critical thinking is not essential to success. Rather, physical and mental dexterity combined with a good memory and competence in imitating a model or example are the traits most needed. Those traits are often enough to earn a high school graduation diploma and even some college and university degrees.

A very well informed high school teacher named Bob Davis, now a professor at York University in Toronto, recently wrote a book entitled *Skills Mania*. It is a spirited attack on the ballooning fixation on skills in the classroom. Davis denounced such teaching because, he says, it is at the expense of more important things in education: depth of content, historical meaning, folk tradition, aesthetic experience and appreciation, intuitive learning and responding freely to natural curiosity. It is out of that mix that the habit of critical thinking may develop.

I do not suggest (nor does Bob Davis) that students should not become proficient in the use of numbers and language(s). Those skills, commonly called the basics, are the keys to survival in the sweep of information technology now rolling over us. But the essentially human basics in education transcend mere literacy/

numeracy and the mastery of facts and techniques needed for passing a test or qualifying for a job interview. The basics in this sense can be stated as three operational principles around which parents, teachers, counsellors and peers can help children and youth move towards mental and emotional maturity. They can be summarized under three headings: Personal Autonomy, Personal Security and Community Engagement.

Personal Autonomy. At the moment of birth, the struggle for independence begins. Good parents respond by allowing baby as much freedom of choice as possible, consistent, of course, with its safety and security. Dr Benjamin Spock, the guru of child rearing 40 years ago, defied traditional views in his claim that infants can grow up to be disciplined adults without being overtly coerced all the time and without being physically punished. Kids instinctively want to do the right thing which is to enjoy success and please their supporting adults. It seems so simple but as any parent knows, it is not. The hazards and dangers are everywhere – the electrical outlet, the hot stove, the roaring traffic, the disease ridden objects lying around, the dangerous animal, the thin ice on the pond, the schoolyard bully, the predator adult, the addictive diversions, the negative and violence-prone electronic images – without even mentioning parental fatigue, both physical and mental, which can lead to all kinds of errors and pangs of shame and regret.

But the underlying certainty remains the same. A person must have as much independence as prudence will allow and often more. Practice in making choices that are real and substantial is the indispensable nutrient of independent thinking. The focus, therefore, should be on cultivating a quality of mind conducive to self confidence and self esteem such that every significant action is put to the test of personal acceptability and accountability. Is this according to my sense of right and wrong? Who benefits? Who may be harmed? Is the price too high? Does this have any meaning for me or is it merely what somebody else wants?

Security. Fear shapes far too much policy-making in education. It would be a mistake to dismiss these fears as foolish or unfounded even though they are frequently blown up by media hype and fevered imaginations, the more so as

*Unfortunately, typical classroom instruction
does not do much for critical thinking.*




urban pressures increase. Insecurity is the reason for a rash of new laws. The government of Ontario in the year 2000 passed the Safe Schools Act which ensures police-school interaction on a regular basis. The act supplements a provincial code of student conduct designed to promote respect, responsibility and civility in the schools. This Ontario law reflects not only the mounting anxieties related to urban living but also the gradual creep towards a police state. David Garland, a criminologist at New York University and author of the recently published book, *The Culture of Control*, examines how we have moved out of the welfare state social ethos of the post-wwii era with its emphasis on supporting, rehabilitating and counselling the errant and marginalized members of society towards the current official preference for punishing, controlling and 'scientifically' correcting misbehaviour. The subjects of Garland's study are American and British prisoners, probationers and parolees. His general proposition is that currently popular conservative fiscal policy is responsible for the abandonment or under-funding of many preventive social reform initiatives, which are being replaced by control measures that are cheaper and more attractive to politically influential people.

Community engagement. In the Hall-Dennis report on Ontario education, *Living and Learning, 1968*, there is a paragraph worth repeating: "There are in most communities various professional and technical experts whose specialized and up-to-date knowledge would make them valuable resource persons whose services on a part-time basis might be utilized in the curriculum. Some of the areas in which such persons could make significant contributions are vocal and instrumental music, ballet, art, drama, introductory psychology, science, economics, politics, oral French, and a wide range of commercial and technical topics. Serious study should be given to ways of making use of resource persons who could enrich the curriculum with their specialized knowledge and abilities." (page 143)

Thirty six years later, that advice has not yet been taken up seriously by educators even though there is a steadily enlarging cadre of available volunteers. Consider the excitement if a design engineer or a genealogist or a jazz musician could find time to meet with a few students, on a voluntary basis, for an hour or two each month. Think of students, at least those older than 12-14 years, going into the community to do much of their studies – of roadways, parks, archives, notable personages, waste disposal, environmental projects, family history, industrial activity, commercial advertising, recreation services. Freedom of conscience and expression would germinate in their hearts and minds and the habit of critical thinking would be the happy outcome.

IT COMES DOWN TO FREEDOM. Freedom is not only a privilege but a continuing challenge. It calls upon the critical mass of the citizenry to sort out what is worth keeping, what needs to be swept aside and what needs to be built from scratch. In an ideal education system, every 16-year-old would have some worthwhile thoughts about those options. And in recognition of that capacity, he or she would have the right to vote in all elections and acquire some civic enthusiasm while still growing up.

There is an urgent need to change public education practices which delay the maturation process, which put a premium on conformity rather than diversity, which reward memorization more than imagination, which have turned marks into a false currency to be coveted above all else, which implicitly give competition a higher value than cooperation, which authorize a central bureaucracy to trump local preferences and which can be subverted to a political ideology by the turn of an election result. The tired cliché 'our future is our children' needs to be pondered more thoughtfully than ever. 

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display until January 2005
PM40012140 R08992



THE VICTORIA HUMANIST

THERE IS NO AREA OF HUMAN CONDUCT WHICH SHOULD BE SACRED FROM CRITICAL ANALYSIS, NO ASSUMPTION WHICH CANNOT BE QUESTIONED,
THE HUMANIST SHOULD VOLUNTARILY ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WORKING TO PERFECT HIMSELF AND THE WORLD IN WHICH HE LIVES.

This issue ends "The VICTORIA HUMANIST" under that name. Don't be alarmed! With the next issue it will be re-born as "The HUMANIST in Canada". Its size? Twenty pages instead of sixteen. Its price? No change for the present.

The new development is made possible by the co-operation of the Humanists in Toronto and Montreal.

In 1964, Lloyd Brereton published the first issue of The Victoria Humanist (appearing here on the cover of issue 7).

In 1967, Lloyd announced (in this excerpt from the issue 17 editorial) an evolution into a new magazine.

*Today, thanks goes to the readers of Humanist in Canada, who join us in celebrating **150 issues** discussing topics of human importance.*

