THE DISCOURSE OF NEOLIBERALISM IN POLICY DOCUMENTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA'S YEAR 2000 EDUCATION REFORM

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a particular set of policy documents produced by the BC Ministry of Education between 1989 and 1991. These documents prefaced and accompanied the implementation of an unprecedented province-wide education reform attempted by the Ministry, entitled Year 2000. Researchers and educators have described the Year 2000 reform as favouring the individual learner with its emphasis on equity and diversity. However, the findings of this study show that the policy documents produced by government to define and marshal support for this reform favour a pro-corporate neoliberal perspective.

Of interest is the continuity of the grammatical resources used to describe the 'realities' of the period and to depict the Actors and Acted upon in terms of who (or what) has power (change, technology, the workplace) and who does not (schools, students).

This study found that various ideas are presented as 'givens' rather than as ideologically-based constructions. These depictions represent certain neoliberal ideologies that are privileged through representation, while contrasting ideologies are not. Moreover, certain discursive features are identified that promote and naturalize ideals typically found in the world of private enterprise. These ideological representations were further integrated into the discourse surrounding public education in BC as seen in various documents and programs following the reform. De-constructing these 'givens' is the first step in freeing the education debate from the entanglements of dominating ideological perspectives.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to –

My mother, Priscilla, who has never stopped believing in me;

My children, Nathan and Emily, who are my two greatest joys in life;

My husband, Jim, who is my forever love and soul mate and

with whom the flavours in life grow ever so much sweeter;

And my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, from whom comes every good thing.

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Introduction

Throughout the history of education governance in BC, the flurry of education policy documents issued by the government to the public in the late 1980s and early 1990s is unparalleled. While the issuance of policy memos and documents within the Ministry is routine, the publication of documents intended for widespread readership is much less common. More typically, press releases are provided by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of informing the general public of new Ministry directives for the public school system. These brief statements are also used as a means of responding to issues that arise over public schooling for which a response from the Ministry is deemed politically necessary or appropriate.

The Year 2000 education reform with which these documents are concerned was a reform that was instituted in BC schools in 1989 and, after a difficult process of implementation, was withdrawn by government in 1993. Most educators embraced the ideals represented in the reform (i.e. learner-centred with a focus on equality and on educating the 'whole' individual). However, I will argue that the ideological basis of the documents produced by government to justify and support the reform initiative was not learner-oriented. Rather the

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ideals represented in the policies that introduced and directed this reform were largely neoliberal in character.

In addition, with the rarity of this flurry of policy documents comes a unique opportunity to analyze the discourse substantiated by these Ministry of Education documents regarding BC's public education. This study takes advantage of that opportunity as it explores 'reality' as depicted by the BC government and the types of perspectives and voices that are privileged through representation within the documents. It also allows for an examination of who, or what, is presented as an actor and who, or what, is presented as the 'acted upon'.

An examination of actors in the discourse provides the basis for discussing relations of power in society. This power is typically wielded by those who are in a position to influence or determine the issues that comprise public discussion, often through television, radio or newspaper. It is not only the power to dominate groups in society that is at issue, but also the power to privilege and legitimate certain perspectives or ideals while others go without representation or voice.

One form of analysis concerning ideologies and imbalances of power has been termed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This newer cross-disciplinary model has begun to gain wider use. CDA provides a theoretical framework upon which to construct an analysis and discussion of the ideals represented within a body of text. This model analyses various structures of language in a text that are used by an author to portray a particular perspective of reality and to create or re-enforce relationships of power between different groups in society. But CDA is not limited to the written text. This theory of analysis also considers the socio-political context within which texts are produced and interpreted. For example,

the analysis of the corpus of texts with which this study is concerned incorporates factors relating to the social, economic and political realities of the time in which the documents were produced.

Chapter One begins with a description of the term *ideology* as well as working definitions of both *neoliberalism* and *discourse*. Following this is a discussion of traditional models of analysis and the ways in which these fail to address issues related to imbalances of power and to the 'ideological work' that is being done. This leads to a more definitive discussion of the merits and particulars of CDA.

Chapter Two provides an historical background of public education in BC. It includes a discussion of key figures and events in the history of BC education throughout most of the twentieth century as well as an explication of the socio-political climate in the decades that preceded the release of the education documents analysed in this study.

Chapter Three presents an analysis and discussion of the findings of this study. The Actors and the 'acted upon' that appear in the corpus are identified along with the dynamics that characterize these relations. An interpretation of the text is developed based on textual features, discourse types, and inter-textuality with other 'texts'. A discussion is further developed concerning the ideals that are promoted and the power relations in society that are reinforced by such.

Chapter Four provides a summary of the findings of this study which leads to a discussion concerning the ideological implications for the re-fashioning of educational discourse. Included are the findings of other researchers who have described an emerging neoliberal perspective in Canadian education policy.

Chapter One
Theoretical and Methodological Background

The credibility of the findings of a given study relies heavily upon the soundness of the method chosen and how well the method was adhered to as the study was carried out. For the purpose of this study, considerable time and effort were expended researching numerous accepted methodologies that have been well used in various applicable disciplines, such as sociology, linguistics, political science and psychology. An explication of that process for the sake of journaling such endeavours would prove not only uninteresting, but would challenge the most patient of readers. However, a brief account highlighting some of the more relevant findings with the resultant conclusions is noteworthy.

At this point, before proceeding with a discussion concerning theory and methodology, several key words must be described and defined in terms that are relevant to this research project. These words include *ideology*, *neoliberalism*, and *discourse*.

The Idea Behind *Ideology*

Various definitions have been ascribed to the term 'ideology', depending upon its use and context. From a sociological perspective, the term refers to a system of beliefs, norms and values held by members of a particular community or group (Fleras & Elliott, 1992, p.54). Such communities can vary in size and structure. They can be formal or informal and can range from that of an Alcoholics Anonymous group to one such as the worldwide Muslim community. The larger the grouping, the more likely there are sub-groupings, but generally, there exists a set of mores and norms that distinguish those who are members of the group from those who are not. These values are the ideologies that are espoused by the group's membership. Hill (2001) describes ideology as "a more-or-less coherent set of beliefs and attitudes that is regarded as self-evidently true, as 'common sense'..." (p. 8). For the purpose of this research project, the understanding of ideology as being value laden yet commonsensical is most relevant.

Ideology as related above performs a functional role within a group or society (Fleras & Elliott, 1992, p. 54). It conveys to members what is acceptable, desirable and necessary within the community. These norms, when well understood by the members, are thought to promote consensus and stabilize the social order and the relations of power that exist. These provide a standard against which to measure behaviours, attitudes, even new ideas. Participation and adherence to these norms confirms to members a sense of belonging, thus re-enforcing the overall social structure. In this sense, it is a group's common ideals, or ideologies, that help establish social structure and the manufacture of consent that maintains it.

While ideology, in general, plays a stabilizing role in society, it can, itself, be less stable. The ideology held by the dominant group in a society is often contested in some manner by members of subordinate groups. The group that is able to dominate the wider discourse is able to privilege their ideology as the standard against which other values and ideas are judged (Fleras & Elliott, 1992, p. 54). Depending upon the voice attained by dissenters, the dominant ideology may remain relatively unchanged. It may yield somewhat and embrace other ideas in order to remain dominant, and in this manner yield social change. It may be overthrown altogether along with the government that advocates the dominant ideology as when a new political party is elected into power, or when governments are overthrown by dominated factions. Karl Marx (as quoted in Fleras & Elliott, 1992, p. 55) has suggested that once an ideology is established, it can evolve in the most unexpected ways.

Within this theoretical discussion, members of a society are fit neatly into dominant and subordinate social groupings that exist within a social order. But, of course, all members of a particular social class do not necessarily adhere to an identical set of values and beliefs. Such groupings often have some blurring of boundary lines.

What is of particular interest is the way in which the dominant ideology is represented within the dominant discourse and further identified as 'normal'. The most potent form of ideology is the one that disappears altogether. It is the ideology that does not present itself as such but rather as simply being the 'natural order' of things, inevitable and without question. The work that is performed by this 'unseen' ideology as it reifies and reinforces power relations in society is akin to the notion of hegemony as articulated by Gramsci in which subordinate classes are integrated through consensus rather than being simply

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dominated (Fairclough, 1995, p. 76). In many societies today there has appeared this broad shift in the wielding of power from dominating through coercion to dominating by consent. It is the invisible nature of the ideologies that under gird society's dominant discourses as a means of manufacturing consent that makes an explication of such so compelling.

Neoliberalism

The term *neoliberalism* describes a new form of classical liberalism that has emerged in recent years. Neoliberalism is a politico-economic perspective. It is rooted in the belief that the dynamics of a free market that remains largely unregulated by government will achieve optimal economic growth and benefit for a society. It promotes the idea of reduced government intervention and expenditures. Neoliberalism favours the operation of free enterprise with little regulatory 'hindrance' in an effort to promote private investment for the provision of many services that would otherwise be funded by public monies.

The notion of 'the free market' implies the ultimate in efficiency, production, and flexibility for responding to changing trends and market demands, given its less bureaucratic nature (Torres, 2002, p. 369). This idea of flexibility is an oft heralded feature of private enterprise by proponents of the privatization of public services. It will be discussed further in terms of its use in the policy documents of this study in Chapter Three.

Neoliberalism contrasts with classical liberalism in one very important respect with regard to the individual. Concerning the state, both agree on minimalist government, but for very different reasons. Classical liberalism advocates the reduction in government regulation in order to preserve the

freedom and autonomy of the individual, whereas neoliberalism promotes deregulation for the benefit of private enterprise and the free market. The individual is seen as a potential resource for the free market, and it is the responsibility of government to help create these enterprising and competitive individuals who will respond to and participate in the free market (as cited in Apple, 2001, p. 414).

Interestingly, neoliberalism is not so much an organized political group as it is an idealism subscribed to by various groups including neo-conservatives, supply-side economists, and the new managerialists committed to accountability, measurement and deficit reduction (Apple, 2002, p. 410; Torres, 2002, p. 368). Neoliberal policies have comprised many of the administrative initiatives that were seen in the Thatcher, Reagan and Mulroney governments of Britain, the US and Canada, respectively (Torres, 2002, p. 368).

In Third World countries, numerous programmes based on neoliberal ideals have been initiated by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other financial organisations. The signature feature of these programmes includes the promotion of free international exchange of goods and services and the elimination of protectionist trade policies of governments (Torres, 2002, p. 368).

In Torres' (2002) critique of the welfare state versus the neoliberal state, he defines what he calls the "social contract" (p. 369) of the welfare state. It is an invisible but recognized contract between domestic labour and capital that government protects through regulatory initiatives. In contrast, no such understanding exists within a neoliberal government. Rather, government maintains a pro-business stance as it responds to and supports the demands of industry. The needs and concerns of the labour sector become subject to the

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devices of the free market in a pro-business structure of deregulation under neoliberal policies.

Discourse by Definition

Various definitions can be found for the term *discourse*. These often differ according to the way in which the term is used and the scope of analysis to which it is applied. The definitions for *discourse* that appear in Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1997) represent some of these varying approaches for understanding and applying this term. A brief exploration of these definitions will provide an opportunity to discuss some of the theoretical approaches that exist for studying discourse. In addition, this discussion is intended to show that these various definitions and theoretical approaches to discourse are too narrow for the study of relations of power and hegemony and the resulting struggles that develop within a society. Evidence of these struggles, it will be argued, can be seen within the wider social structures that exist, played out through such mechanisms as public policy. The following discussion will demonstrate the need for a broader understanding of discourse than is proposed by many of the theories of discourse analysis that currently exist.

The first of Merriam Webster's (1997) definitions for the term *discourse* states simply that it is "a linguistic unit (as a conversation or a story) larger than a sentence" (p. 331). This resembles the approach of structural linguists, who view discourse simply as "a particular unit of language above the sentence" (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 20). Structural linguists analyse the ways in which various units of language (words, phrases, sentences) interact with one another. They view language as homogenous, or without variation across a speech community (p.

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21). This approach pre-supposes that language is autonomous in its use and development, and that it is relatively un-influenced by its social uses. It largely ignores the ways in which language is impacted by or impacts upon its social uses. For example, the structuralist approach explains the acquisition of language in terms of a child's natural capacity for learning language without considering the ways in which the communicative needs of a child within his or her social matrix may impact upon language development (p. 22).

A secondary definition defines discourse as "a verbal interchange of ideas, esp.: CONVERSATION" (capitals in original) (Merriam, 1997, p. 331). This meaning supports the ideas related to such methods as Speech Act Theory and Conversational Analysis. But this definition specifies *verbal interchanges* only, to the obvious exclusion of a more generalized version of discourse that involves the written communication of ideas.

A third dictionary definition is that of a "formal and orderly and usu. extended expression of thought on a subject" (Merriam, 1997, p. 331). In contrast to the previous one, this does not preclude written expressions. It suggests that there is a formal, predictable code of language that can be categorically studied; a structuralist perspective. This resembles Saussure's conception of *langue* wherein language is thought to be invariant (*formal and orderly*) across a community. Saussure's perspective of invariance also presumes that a community's language is ahistorical in the sense that it should be studied as a "static system" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 7) at some given moment in time. Moreover, this perspective assumes that all speakers have equal access to the same types of formal expressions of thought. It does not consider that variations in language may exist across a community, or that there may be differences in language use between groups (i.e. differing socio-economic,

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gender, or racial groups) within a community, or that struggles between dominant and subordinate groups may be reflected in these differences. In other words, this view of discourse makes no allowance for an examination of struggles of power that may have influenced the expressions of thought being studied.

The final dictionary definition for discourse is "connected speech or writing" (Merriam, 1997, p. 331). As opposed to the definitions above, here the inclusion of written communications is made explicit. This definition also provides one basic premise for most forms of linguistic analysis and, more generally, the analysis of discourse. It assumes the existence of identifiable coherence between various linguistic structures. *Coherence* defines a particular group of spoken or written words and phrases as being a body of *text,* as opposed to a series of unrelated units of language. [Given that speeches and conversations are generally reduced to transcript form for the purpose of analysis, in practice *text* includes both spoken or written forms of communication.] While this definition forms an important theoretical basis for analysis in terms of coherence, it stops short of providing a perspective that realizes how social structures or conventions may influence the speaker or writer.

The dictionary definitions of *discourse* provided above demonstrate a largely structuralist view of the term's meaning and application. The structuralist analyses language as a code rather than viewing it in terms of its use, as with the functionalist perspectives – the second of the two primary categories of linguistic study. Though theories of linguistic analysis are typically divided into either the structuralist or functionalist camps, in practice, most approaches do consider some elements of both structure and function in their analyses (Schiffrin,1994, pp. 353-354).

Given the emphasis that functionalists place on the *use* of language over language structures as discussed above, one might think that a functionalist approach would provide more applicable definitions of the term discourse than the structuralist perspectives. From this approach, discourse might be described as a "socially and culturally organized way of speaking through which particular functions are realized" (Schiffrin,1994, p. 32). But, how is this organization achieved? To what extent are participants advanced, accommodated, or constrained by this organized system? What inequities exist for those who do not share the ideals of the dominant group that controls the system? These types of questions are handled variously by functionalist-based approaches as described in the following section.

Models of Analysis

Every definition for the term *discourse* embodies certain assumptions that one makes concerning that which constitutes data, which questions can be addressed, and which ideas the data might support. These differences are seen in the numerous models that exist to study language use. These include the functionalist approaches to language study, such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. I will briefly discuss these below, describing the ways in which each proves inadequate for studying struggles of power in a social context followed by suggestions for an alternative approach.

Pragmatics as a field of discourse study is broad in scope. Considered to be a branch of semiotics, it is concerned with the speaker's (or writer's) intended meaning and the recipient's ability to understand this meaning. It assumes a cooperative basis of interaction in which the participants have equal control of the

interaction and equal potential for contribution (Schiffrin, 1994, pp. 190-1).
Pragmatics focuses largely on the individual's use of various strategies to make
these intentions clear. However, it does not consider the constraints of social
convention and practice that influence the use of these strategies in
communication (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 9-10). What is needed is a theory of social
action that considers both the communication strategies that are used as well as
the conventions and practices that exist within the context of, for example, the
production and release of policy statements by the government intended for
general circulation.

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that places importance on the social
context in the study of language use. Language is viewed as a "socially and
culturally constructed symbol system" (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 102) used by members
of social and cultural groups. It is considered to be the means by which one
identifies with a group, conveying and understanding ideas through shared
resources. These resources are comprised of the beliefs, values, and
experiences shared by the group. The study of the social meaning of an
individual's adherence to or deviations from the group's normative behaviours
and the strategies employed in face to face interactions are the focus of
sociolinguists (p. 358).

This approach analyzes face to face interactions for the social meanings
represented within the context without exploring the reasons *why* only certain
behaviours are considered normative – behaviours that most likely represent the
ideals of the dominant group within a society. It does not consider why certain
behaviours are valued as ideal or normative, nor does it consider how this
impacts on members of subordinate groups within society who do not share the
same values but are constrained by social convention to respond in a manner

congruent with social norms. Sociolinguistics does not try to answer these types of questions. Though its emphasis on face to face interaction is not particularly useful in a study of public policy, sociolinguistics does establish the premise that language use is socially constituted in nature (Fairclough, 1989, p. 7). The acceptance of this basic assumption is highly significant for the development of a language use theory that will address some of the concerns related to 'normative values' that are presented above.

Another area of functionalist study, Conversation Analysis (CA), is a mode of research that grew from ethnomethodology, which is concerned primarily with the study of a member's social knowledge. This knowledge is represented by what is considered to be common-sense or common knowledge by the member's society. The way in which the member applies this knowledge is the focus of analysis in ethnomethodology. CA applies this model to conversations and examines the ways in which social order creates and is created by language (Schiffrin, 1994, pp. 232-3). A pre-condition of CA is that the speaker assumes the hearer will understand an utterance based on this common body of knowledge. This common knowledge gives rise to structures that guide social interaction, which supports the notion that social structures do exist and are realized in everyday interactions (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 11-12). However, CA does not consider that there may be viewpoints or ideas that oppose these 'givens' and that the acceptance of the 'common-ness' (or lack thereof) of certain ideas or beliefs may represent a site of struggle between the dominant and subordinate groups in society. It emphasizes the perspectives of the participants without considering how these perspectives might have developed. Essentially, CA fails to ask questions concerning why or how the givens came to

be (p. 12). It is an uncovering of these givens and their ideological underpinnings with which the methodology of choice would be concerned.

A more recently developed theory of discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis has been espoused by various researchers such as Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak and Stillar. It is intended to address some of the shortcomings in analysis of traditional methodologies surrounding issues of power, hegemony and the seemingly normative nature of value-laden givens in an area such as public policy. This theory is discussed more fully below.

Discourse Analysis Defined

In his 1951 book, *Methods in Structural Linguistics*, Z. Harris was the first linguist to use the phrase *discourse analysis* (as cited in Schiffrin, 1994, p. 24). In 1952, Webster's dictionary defined the phrase *discourse analysis* as "the study of linguistic relations and structure in discourse" (Merriam, 1997, p. 331), once again revealing a narrow view of discourse and, by extension, discourse analysis that is largely informed by structural linguistics.

Van Dijk (1985, pp. 1-2) suggests that discourse analysis has existed for a much longer time in the form of classical rhetoric. More recently, however, a cross-disciplinary approach of discourse analysis has evolved, being informed by such academic disciplines as linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, sociology and cognitive psychology. It is also considered to be one of the broadest yet least defined areas of study (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 5). Discourse analysis has been further termed a "new cross-discipline" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 11) approach to studying discourse, given its multi-discipline origin.

Critical Discourse Analysis Defined

The variety of definitions and uses of the term discourse exemplifies the division among academics with respect to the application of this word. Fairclough (1989, pp.13-14) suggests that drawing from several of these perspectives can produce greater theoretical and methodological tools for analyzing discourse; something he attempts in what he originally termed critical language studies but has since come to be known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough's use of the term *critical* implies "showing connections and causes which are hidden" (as cited in Piper 2000, p. 113). Moreover, his use of the term discourse is more broadly defined as "the use of language as a social practice that is determined by social structures" (Fairclough, 1989, p.17). It is the discursive practice of social interaction that is influenced by social convention and social order (pp. 28-29).

CDA addresses the socially constructed nature of language, as with structuralist methods, while also addressing the impact that language has upon the power relations within a society. Language is both socially shaped and socially constitutive, and it is the tension between these two with which CDA is concerned (Fairclough, 1995, p.131).

Linguistics has been criticized for its failure to consider the socio-political context in which texts are generated. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may be seen as a reaction to the largely asocial and apolitical methods of discourse analysis and research that were dominant in the 1960s and 1970s. It is not a method in its own right. Rather, for discourse studies, it provides a new perspective for theorizing and analyzing through the use of various types of systematic analyses (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Such analyses can include a focus

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on linguistic features of text, narrative structures, discourse strategies, or intertextual analysis to name a few (Fairclough, 1995, p. 190).

CDA is not so much a uniform method as it is about having a "common agenda" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 190) with respect to the main theoretical concepts. Fairclough and Wodak (as cited in van Dijk, 2001) have set forth the following as the main tenets of CDA:

> CDA addresses social problems.
> Power relations are discursive.
> Discourse constitutes society and cultures.
> Discourse does ideological work.
> Discourse is historical.
> The link between text and society is mediated.
> Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
> Discourse is a form of social action. (p. 353)

As opposed to other theories of discourse, CDA is preoccupied with the kinds of issues that are of interest in the study of this corpus of education policy documents. CDA focuses primarily on the relationship between discourse and power, or more specifically, ways in which various communicative structures are used to produce and reinforce a particular set of beliefs as being normative to the benefit of the dominant powers in society. The basic tenets listed above provide a theoretical framework from which to work toward uncovering reification strategies that may be found in the discourse of the corpus.

In these terms, discourse refers not only to the text itself, but also to the text's interpretation and to the implications for the social contexts in which they are produced and disseminated. With this understanding of the term *discourse*, an analysis and discussion can be developed concerning the nature of the dominant ideologies that are being presented as normative ideals, or common-sense, while identifying the cites of struggle or imbalances of power that the discourse reinforces within the social and political contexts in which they are produced and interpreted.

Discourse in Practice

> Symbolic power – as a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization – is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized* [italics in original], that is, misrecognized as arbitrary. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170)

Symbolic power as a tool for perpetuating relations of power and dominance can be recognizably useful as described by Bourdieu in the above quotation. The requisite 'arbitrary' quality gives that which is constructed the appearance of having not been constructed at all; it simply is. More specifically, the representations and perspectives presented in a text can appear as value-free 'givens' or common sense, rather than as value-laden opinions of an author or group. Consensus is marshalled without addressing, or even acknowledging the existence of opposing perspectives.

In a broader sense, social divisions within a society are legitimated as representations of reality rather than as products of the social agents acting within the dominant divisions. Failing to recognize this "constructedness" of representation is to see these representations as "unmotivated" and "natural" (Stillar, 1998, pp. 103-105) and entirely unrelated to the *habitus* of the social agents involved.

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* has become increasingly influential in studies of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2001, p. 364). *Habitus* is comprised of "a set of embodied cultural dispositions that social agents bring to bear in social practice" (Stillar, 1998, p. 95). These dispositions and principles are learned, exercised and reinforced through ongoing social practices within the social contexts in

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which individuals interact. But it is more than simply representative of the habits of an individual.

> [*Habitus*] generates classificatory schemes, ways of perceiving, and systems of classification through which it structures our representations of, our orientation toward, and our judgment of the social world. (p. 98)

Habitus plays a dynamic role in social practice, but it is the failure to recognize its work in the construction of 'reality' by social agents and the use and reinforcement of *habitus* in the interpretation of these symbolic acts that makes it of particular interest in discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Practice

Marshall & Peters (1999) suggest that education policy analysis has shifted away from the use of positivistic models toward "models influenced by hermeneutics, critical theory and, more recently, poststructuralism" (p. xxxi). This shift has resulted in the use of more "narrative" than "scientist"-oriented (p. xxxi) forms of policy study. But then to esteem positivist models as being more objective is to ignore the fact that the researcher makes subjective choices regarding what constitutes data and what merits attention and description. These choices will largely be informed by the perspective and biases of the researcher. Similarly, my description and analysis of the corpus had to be subjected to a reflexive approach in which I routinely examined my findings and discussion in light of the system of beliefs and ideals that I bring to the research process.

Following this shift away from traditional positivist models, and with heavy influence from critical theory, CDA proposes a three-step process for analysis.

These steps include the <u>description</u> of the text, <u>interpretation</u> of the relationship between text and interaction, and <u>explanation</u> of the relationship between interaction and social context (Fairclough, 1989, p.109). Each of these stages is more fully described below.

CDA: Stage 1 - Description

Certain grammatical tools popularized by socio-linguistics (see works by Fairclough, Wodak, Stillar, van Dijk, as well as Halliday) are indicated with CDA and have been used in this study. These tools are employed to conduct the first of three stages involved in CDA – the description of the text itself. In this first stage, certain formal features of a text are identified and labelled according to various types of linguistic and structural categories. For example, transitive verb structures, various modal verbs, and instances of collocation are identified as significant features of a text. These are each explained more fully below.

Language serves an interpersonal function in texts through the use of various linguistic resources that shape interaction between participants (e.g. writers, readers, participants within the text). These resources enable writers to assign roles to participants and to express their interpretations of reality (Stillar, 1998, p. 20). Transitive verb structures are one example of such features of texts that are used to shape these interactions.

The analysis of transitive verb structures provides an understanding of various processes that are represented in a text. For example, material processes are grammatical features that identify the Actors and those who are the 'Acted upon' along with the action that occurs between the two (Thompson, 1996, pp. 77-81). The interplay between these various participants is of interest

given that certain Actors may be portrayed as having agency, or as acting upon other participants who may be represented as being without agency. The Actor or agency may also be unclear, leaving causality unrepresented. This, too, can be of interest given the questions surrounding causal agents that such leaves un-addressed (Fairclough, 1989, pp.120-124).

Another type of transitive verb process is that of the relational process by which certain qualities or characteristics are attributed to persons, objects, or ideas (i.e. *She felt nauseous*), or by which one entity is identified in terms of another (i.e. *Her son's name is Nathan*) (Thompson, 1996, pp. 86-87). These processes provide an understanding of the attributes that a writer ascribes to participants as well how participants in the text are identified in terms of other entities. Relational values may also be expressed through the use of pronouns such as 'we', wherein a claim to consensus is implicitly made concerning the ideas represented in the text (p. 127).

Modality is another feature of text that is useful in CDA as it relates to writer authority. It finds expression in two distinct ways. First, modality can be used when identifying the function of various grammatical features that facilitate forms of interaction involving the writer and reader or participants within the text. The relationship is one involving authority and is typically defined by the assignment of obligation, permission, requirements, etc. These are often expressed in terms of modal auxiliary verbs, such as *must, should, can't, ought*. Such meaning potentials are termed **relational modalities** (Stiller, 1998, p. 35).

Modality can also be used when identifying the function of various grammatical features that are used to express the writer's opinion regarding 'truth' or 'the facts' by way of the assertions or propositions that appear in the text. The writer's authority with respect to these opinions or evaluations is

termed **expressive modalities**.(Fairclough, 1989, pp.126-127). Expressive modality can be understood as existing on a continuum having the terminal points "it is" and "it is not" (Halliday, 1994, pp. 88-89). The intermediary points represent various degrees of commitment of the author to the proposition being made and can be represented by various grammatical features – some 144 categories if Halliday (p. 359) is correct.

For simplification, these features can include adverbs, tenses, and adjectives, and involve either the *probability* that the information provided is 'true', or the *usuality*, or frequency with which it is 'true'. Consider the following in terms of probability; *the purse might be hers*, as opposed to *the purse is mine*. The commitment of the speaker/writer to the truth of the proposition is much higher in the second statement.

Usuality might be expressed in the following; *high school drop outs never find jobs*. The categorical commitment to the frequency of this being true is high, though the basis upon which this statement is made and the claim to authority concerning this knowledge are implicit. The writer makes this proposition as though the need for supportive evidence does not exist, further implying a position of authority concerning this knowledge. This demonstrates how categorical modalities support the idea that the world is transparent and self-evident; that 'facts' do not need to be phrased in terms of intermediate modalities (i.e. *high school drop outs can have difficulty finding jobs*) but exist categorically. Yet, in truth, it remains the author's proposition of reality (Fairclough, 1989, pp.126-127).

Modalities are grammatical features that are of ideological interest as they provide a means of uncovering the implicit relations and expressions of power and authority being represented within a text (Fairclough, 1989, p. 127).

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Expressive modalities, in general, can address such questions as, "Who is requiring what of whom?" or "How is reality being represented?" or "What are the uncontested 'facts'?"

Finally, collocation is a feature of text that is useful in CDA. It is defined as the tendency for words to co-occur with one another (Halliday, 1994, p. 333). It is based on the *registers* that are being realized in a text (Stillar, 1998, p. 51). Registers are "varieties of language use...that are deployed in response to typical, recurring situation types" (p. 54). They are lexical choice patterns and meaning potentials that are predictable and situation dependent. Thus terms that collocate, or those which might be expected to appear, within a text that describes a wedding procession could include *white, flowers, beautiful, regal, veil*, etc. Collocation creates an expectation for the reader involving the presence of items that have a greater than random chance of occurring with an item already presented in the text. From the outset, register sets this stage with an expectation of the types of lexical choices that will be present and the meaning potentials that are appropriate given the activity or situation.

CDA: Stage 2 - Interpretation

The second level of analysis in CDA involves the interpretation of the text by discourse participants. This involves reading the text against a background of what Fairclough (1989, p. 11) terms MR, or members' resources. Interpreters of a text do not simply 'decode' a text. Rather an interpretation of text is arrived at by matching features of text with a body of representations that the interpreter brings to the interpretive event. MR may include such things as letter recognition, expectations regarding the structure of a narrative, typical properties

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of various objects and person, the likelihood of certain terms occurring together in a text, and so forth. It further includes the expectations of what comes next in a discursive event. It involves the values and beliefs held by the individual (p. 24). Many of these aspects of MR have been constructed through social interactions and have an ideological basis, but these elements have become the 'common sense' assumptions that comprise an interpreter's MR (p. 11). It is the unconscious influence of prior experiences influencing a readers understanding of a text. In this respect, MR is closely related to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as being socially constructed dispositions through which individuals create and interpret their communicative processes.

An interpretative stage of analysis is set forth by Fairclough (1989, pp. 141-144) and involves six particular domains of interpretation, each of which builds upon the other, helping to reinforce or change previous interpretations as the text is being read. The first four domains include letter/word recognition; the assignment of meaning to constituent parts of a text, or utterances; the assignment of meaning through connecting utterances (coherence of the text); and comprehending text structure and the overall 'point' of a text using known patterns of organization (schemata) associated with different types of discourse.

The fifth and most influential domain of interpretation involves situational context, such as the social or institutional context which might include the reading of a government policy document or a conversation between doctor and patient, respectively. In addition to being influenced by the first four domains, the expectation of the interpreter is influenced by the interpreter's MR relative to the situational context (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 151-152). Expectations regarding schemata (types of activity), frames (topics, or referents in an activity), and

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scripts (subjects/relations) that are relevant to the situational context form a part of the aspects of MR used in these interpretive processes. (pp. 158-159).

Each situational context has its own set of conventions of communication, or discourse type, that dictates the norms of social interaction. The discourse type that is unique to various social/institutional situations might be understood as "the set of underlying conventions belonging to some particular order of discourse" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 149). *Orders of discourse* is a Foucauldian term defined as the expected types of discourse that accompany various practices in social spheres and situations (p. 28). Moreover, this expectation concerning a type of discourse helps to shape the MR that people bring to the production and interpretation processes (p. 25). A *discourse type* is identifiable by certain contents, subjects and relations (pp. 29-31). Observe the following fictional example:

Person A: ...I don't know why...

Person B: (interrupts) So you've had headaches for how long now?

Person A: For...oh, about 5 weeks, I'm not even sure...

Person B: (interrupts) And you say it's right behind your eyes?

The contents of this brief dialogue regarding person A's headaches is one interpretive clue to understanding the situational context. Another clue regarding who the subjects or participants are becomes more clear as we realize that person A is most likely not talking casually to a friend as much as talking to a 'fact finder' of sorts. As the relationship between persons A and B becomes clearer (person B is in control of the conversation – control exercised through interruptions and agreed to by person A through compliance to the interruptions and the questions posed) the discourse type bears a closer resemblance to that

which is expected to be found between a doctor and patient. An examination of more of the interaction would likely confirm this notion.

An understanding of discourse types provides a "meaning potential" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 149) for text interpretation. MR are used as interpretive resources to identify various features of the text and make sense of them as socially operational, and discourse types further inform or constrain the application of the interpreter's MR.

Dominant ideologies and power relations reinforce and are reinforced by the social matrices in which they exist. The conveyance of this reinforcement is discourse. These relations and ideologies influence and are influenced by the orders of discourse that are considered conventional in the social institutions and structures, and in wider society as a whole (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 31-36). It is the ability of institutions and groups with social power to effect control over orders of discourse that is a significant factor in the maintenance of power and the manufacture of consent (p. 37).

Finally, the sixth domain of interpretation relates to the intertextual context and, by extension, the presuppositions that can be assumed for participants in the production and interpretation of a text. "Discourses and the texts which occur within them have histories" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 152) and, as such, exist in an historical context. This context defines a set of presuppositions concerning what the writer intends for the intertextual experiences of 'the ideal reader' to be. The tools with which an author connects certain discourses with others varies. They do not consist as particular properties of a text, but are "cued" (p. 152) in texts by a number of formal features, such as use of the definite article and subordinate clauses imbedded in compound sentences, both of which present certain notions

that are expected to be taken as givens. Look at the following sentence as an example:

> The recent explosion in knowledge, coupled with the proliferation of powerful new communication and information processing technologies, has had significant social and economic impact throughout the world. (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6)

This sentence was extracted from the corpus of this study. The subordinate clause that describes changes to knowledge and technology makes definite propositions concerning the nature and force of these changes. There is a general appeal to a kind of 'background knowledge' related to this discourse that presupposes an understanding with regard to such changes – a common knowledge of the nature and scope of these changes, treated as givens, that leads readers to accept the proposition that such has had both social and economic impacts throughout the world. This concept of inter-textuality provides a basis upon which to analyze texts from an historical perspective, which is important for the third stage of analysis.

CDA: Stage 3 - Explanation

The final stage of analysis after *description* and *interpretation* is *explanation*. This step focuses on how the discourse processes that become socially operative through MR (the subject of analysis in *interpretation*) ultimately serve to reinforce existing relations of power or to reinforce struggles involved in these relations.

An important process that occurs during interpretation is the reinforcement, or reproduction, of aspects of MR that were drawn upon in the process. The use of various constituents of an interpreter's MR during the

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interpretive process serves to unconsciously reinforce or subtly refashion those aspects of MR in the interpreter. *Explanation*, the third and final stage of analysis, is concerned with the reproduction and/or change of MR as it relates to the social processes and practices of discourse. This is the ideological work done by language with respect to discourse as part of a social practice that is determined by social structures, or relations of power. These relations are ultimately reinforced or changed by the cumulative effects of the discourses that are produced and interpreted. The impacts that occur between social structures and discourse are mediated in both directions by MR (Fairclough, 1989, pp. 162-163). In other words, social structures and experiences in them contribute to the formation of MR which, in turn, contributes to the shaping of discourse. Likewise, discursive events contribute to the shaping of MR which, in turn, influences the shaping of social structures. Thus, the effects upon MR through the discourse process are of primary importance in both the maintenance of and challenges to existing relations of power.

MR that is reproduced and validated through a discourse process must, at this point, be viewed specifically as being ideologically formed – as having been socially constituted by existing social structures and as contributing to the struggles over maintaining or changing these relations of power that are found in social and institutional structures in society (Fairclough, 1989, p. 166). It is on this basis that the explanation stage is constructed.

In *explanation*, an examination of the interpretive processes occurs through the lens of three primary arenas of social practice; situational, institutional, and societal. With respect to the analysis of the corpus in this study, situational (which readily refers to a conversation between two people) will feature much less prominently than the other two arenas. Fairclough (1989, p.

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166) proposes key questions that might be asked in this stage of analysis. First is a question regarding the social determinants of the discourse process. What relations of power at the three levels of social practice have helped to shape this discourse? Second, what ideologies are represented by the various aspects of MR that are drawn upon in the discourse process? The third inquiry relates to the social effects of the discourse process. Does the process help maintain or transform existing power relations? Does it relate to struggles (overt or covert) in the three primary arenas of social practice (situational, societal, institutional)? Addressing these three areas of inquiry comprises the primary portion of the *explanation* stage of CDA.

In the *interpretation* and *explanation* stages, the analyst differs little from other interpreters of text as far as using MR comprised of the cultural experiences and social and institutional practices that have influenced the development of his or her own MR. As the researcher, the difference between myself and other participants of the text (producers and interpreters) is that my intention is to uncover assumptions and explain the processes that are effected by these ideological bases. Those that I do not uncover are likely those that are integral parts of the construction of my own MR, so much so that they disappear from my analytical view. Hopefully, through vigilant reflexivity and exposure to the many facets of ideology, even the most hidden assumptions of MR will come to light. But this still remains the ultimate limitation of my analysis.

Chapter Two
An Historical Perspective

The debate over what should or should not be taught in public schools is not new. It is likely as old as formal schooling itself. The kinds of study that should be administered by schools may, at first glance, seem somewhat self-evident. However, when speaking in terms of what will provide the best education for children, simply defining the word 'best' becomes problematic. Determining what should fall under the auspices of 'education' is also debatable depending upon one's ideas concerning what should constitute educational materials and experiences.

These ideas are value-laden with respect to one's beliefs concerning education, particularly with regard to what one believes should be the objectives of a public education system. For example, does the 'best education' for children mean preparing them for effective participation in a democratic society as creative independent thinkers? Does it mean educating them in terms of creating a unified, accommodating workforce of tomorrow that can strengthen our national production capacity? Should education be valued according to the intrinsic worth it affords an individual's life, or should it be valued in terms of the social or economic benefits that such tends to bestow on the society in which these

individuals live? Are these ideas mutually exclusive? The values and beliefs that come into play in responding to each of these questions highlights some of the issues that are of interest in the analysis of the corpus of education policy documents with which this study is concerned.

This research project asks questions concerning the ideals that are represented by a particular set of policy documents that were issued in BC in the late 1980s and early 90s. In the following chapter, I will discuss this corpus of documents in terms of the ways in which these ideological perspectives are effected in the discourse, of which these texts are a part, the potential for impact upon the interpretive resources of participants in the discourse, and the ultimate affect upon relations of power with regard to these ideologies. But first, this chapter provides a brief overview of education reform, in general, highlighting significant events and people of BC's public education experience for most of the twentieth century. This will provide a social and political context in which to situate the analysis in the following chapter.

The Constructed Crisis

The phrase 'education reform' is familiar to most. It often involves a sort of tug-of-war between progressive education programs and traditional programs. Progressive education focuses on adapting instruction to meet the various learning styles of individual learners. Progressivism has not existed so much as a neatly fashioned pedagogical theory but as a set of ideals regarding the learning process of the child and equality of education for all children. According to John Dewey, whose efforts were foundational to the success of the movement, children held within themselves the raw capital necessary for the educative

process. Instruction must be tailored to draw out and build upon these resources (Cremin, 1964, pp. 118-119). This child-centred orientation toward providing greater choice for individual students while focusing on individual learning needs has remained a hallmark feature of progressivism (pp. viii-x)

This perspective contrasts with the traditional education program that is based on a group-oriented approach to education with an emphasis on all students meeting specific levels of accomplishment, or well-defined standards, at each grade level. This type of instruction with an emphasis on high standards, competition and rigorous testing is often espoused by the right-wing business community whose interests lie in producing the workers of tomorrow.

While education reform would seemingly be concerned with what goes on in the classroom, many would agree that discussions concerning education reform are largely influenced by political agenda and issues of power that are often unrelated to classroom events. For example, it is not unusual to hear promises of reform and action during the familiar flurry of pre-election campaigning. School reform is an oft heard battle cry, encompassing a variety of conditions and ideas being fought over.

There is also the notion of a 'manufactured crisis' used by one political faction or another in order to marshal consensus surrounding an imagined crisis in an effort to wield power or influence in a political arena. Berliner & Biddle (1995) describe the ways in which government and an accommodating media can fuel the perception that the public school system is utterly failing, though evidence may exist to the contrary. For example, a 'crisis' in education can be manufactured in order to divert attention from government's inability or unwillingness to address the real needs at hand.

For the past several decades in most western countries, public education has been the site of much debate. Education reform has become a much bandied-about phrase as vested groups (i.e. teacher associations, politicians, voters) argue over the relative success or failure of school systems. There have been calls for new and innovative teaching methods based on the findings of studies concerning the learning processes of children (e.g. the works of Piaget and of Montessori). There have been many calling for a 'back-to-the-basics' approach, usually fuelled by adults who feel that the traditional education program they received as public school students has served them well, and thus advocate such for the next generation.

Amid the debate over the 'crises' in public education, the usefulness of heightening the concern over the ineffectiveness of the school system has not been lost on some. Kiewe (1998) describes the use of crisis as a discursive tool in American political discourse.

> Crises are sociorhetorical constructs that call for extraordinary
> action and resources. A crisis situation frames an issue, an event,
> or an occurrence as urgent, unusual, and in need of a quick
> solution for the resumption of normality. Crises are communicative
> entities because they require adherents for a given perception to
> prevail and to legitimate action. (p. 80)

One example includes the 'literacy crisis' that has reportedly plagued many Western public school systems for the last few decades. Some researchers (see Lankshear, 1998; Luke, Lingard, Green & Comber, 1999) suggest that much of the purported literacy crisis has been used by state education departments to develop a sort of panic over status quo in order to implement sweeping changes in education policy. It creates a sort of *carte blanche* environment in which reform of some kind, any kind, must be made. The emphasis is even placed on *change* itself as being the solution for the perceived ills of the system.

This concept of change has been carried over into the enticements used to draw business into education investment. Robertson (1998) cites a 1996 report that was distributed to Canadian investors regarding this potential, entitled Investment Opportunities in the Education Industry. In portraying the education system as the newest best-sector-for-investment, rivalling even healthcare, the report states that "private companies will benefit strongly from a climate that emphasizes change" (p. 5), an idea that pervades the reform analyzed in this study.

Critics of the ubiquitous cry for education reform do not advocate taking an uncritical approach to evaluating the education system. Rather the challenge lies in disentangling the need to adequately educate students from that of the rhetoric of government that pushes hard for sweeping changes which primarily serve a political agenda.

In her book, No More Teachers, No More Books: The Commercialization of Canada's Schools, Robertson (1998) cites a statement made by Ontario's Education Minister, John Snobelen, during a speech on July 6, 1995. He suggested that in order to effect changes in provincial education, "we need to invent a crisis" (p. 36). The launch of the Tory education reform that followed was considered to be unprecedented in scale or speed and oriented around serving a right-wing agenda, though Robertson suggests that such had already occurred in other parts of Canada and the world (pp. 36-37). This reform began with re-organizing and centralizing the structure of school government, heralding an education crisis (much to the contrary of polls showing high levels of overall public satisfaction), and the passage of hotly-contested legislation that would pave the way for private interests to enter public education (pp. 37-49). As will be discussed later in this chapter, the first two of these processes occurred

several years before the Year 2000 reform in BC, while new legislation accompanied its implementation.

In the US, a national education reform was undertaken in the 1980s. Two reasons for this reform agenda are posited by Berliner & Biddle (1995). One, the social ills and economic woes that predominated in the US during the 1980s were, by government and the media, largely attributed to the failures of the public school system. Second, the ties between the White House and industrial leaders were particularly strong during this period. Industrialists are strong proponents of public expenditures that boost economic resources, such as providing a population of labourers for industry. It is likely that neither Regan nor Bush were willing to move contrary to this persuasion. A crisis in education was declared and changes that aligned the interests of public education with big business became part and parcel of the national reform effort that ensued (pp. 144-148).

Many of the decisions and statements made by government are heavily influenced by what is perceived by them to be politically appropriate. This is an assumption that I make with respect to my approach in this study. It is assumed that government decisions are not made on purely objective data with the simplistic intention of bettering society in general. Rather government is in the business of remaining in power. So, of necessity, there exists a need to improve upon, or appear to improve upon, the conditions that existed when power was taken. Those in power generally seek to maintain that power and such is accomplished by maintaining public support. However, the ways in which reality is portrayed, the 'bad guys' are identified, and solutions are discussed leaves significant room for what some have called 'political spin' and others have referred to as ideological work, as explained in the previous chapter.

In democratic societies, power is most often wielded by the use of manipulative or persuasive mechanisms rather than by threat of force. Privileged access to various forms of public discourse provides one means of reinforcing this social power that is often institutionalized in society's social matrix (van Dijk, 1996, p. 85).

This exposes an important aspect of government's ability to create and disburse policy documents. As the producer of such documents, the opinions and ideals of the governing body are represented within the documents. The government controls the issuance of policy documents and the discussions presented therein. This can provide a particularly effective means of directing public discourse concerning an issue by strategically ignoring opposing ideas, presenting the issue only from a particular perspective, or describing 'the facts' in self-evident terms as though the facts as presented are not debatable.

The control of access that limits representation of dissenting voices in public communication is important for the generation and continuance of consensus concerning dominant ideologies. Moreover, a particular issue can be presented as representative of the opinions and ideals of wider society. The ability to control the communicative event assumes as well as reaffirms and supports the "social power" [1](p. 88) of the producers of the communiqués.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a brief synopsis of some of the key people and events that are found in the history of public education in BC during the better part of the twentieth century. It will provide a sampling of the kinds of attitudes and perspectives that have played a role in directing the

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[1] van Dijk (1996, p.84) defines social power in terms of the "control exercised by one group...over the actions and/or minds of (the members of) another group, thus limiting the freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies."

education system, which will later contrast with many of the ideals that are found in the corpus. Finally, a brief summary of key features of the socio-political history for the years that prefaced the enactment of the Year 2000 reform is described.

Education in BC from the 1920s

During the 1920s, significant pro-child reforms had been made in the national legislature as well as in the education system of BC that reflected similar reforms occurring in the US and Europe. The nature of these reforms were likely reflective of the changing sentiments concerning children in general, which placed greater importance on the individuality and developmental stage of the child. The 'progressive' reforms of this period were based on the idea that learning is a progressive act for children as they build upon what they already know, as described in an earlier section. It also espoused the idea that children should be treated with dignity and respect (Crawley, 1995, p. 38).

Many of these progressive changes to BC's education system in the 20s were either reinforced by or attributable to the Putnam-Weir Report of 1925. This Report was produced in response to the BC Department of Education's request for a thorough inquiry into the province's educational system. The Minister of Education chose two commissioners for the undertaking, both of whom were reputable professional educators, and liberal or progressive in their philosophies. They were Dr. J. Harold Putman, the senior inspector of schools for Ottawa, and Dr. George M. Weir, head of UBC's Department of Education (Johnson, 1964, pp. 101-102).

The progressive reformation of BC school programs in the 20s included new ideas like child-centred curricula that fostered individual development and vocational training for academically-challenged students (Kilian, 1985, p. 30). These ideas were largely supported by both Putnam and Weir. But with the onset of the economic hardships of the 1930s, BC's Tory government began looking more closely at the rising costs in the province. George Kidd, a Vancouver businessman, was appointed to study the province's financial situation. The Kidd Report was produced in 1932 with recommendations for severe cutbacks to the education system, more specifically, education administration costs, including 25% teacher salary cuts and the elimination of all school board entities. It further suggested that fourteen-, fifteen- and sixteen-year old students should pay for half the costs of their education while those older should pay for it in full (pp. 30-31).

This instance wherein the BC government directly commissioned a member of Vancouver's business community to study the province and provide recommendations is somewhat unique. The government's intention was to have input regarding the province's financial situation. The education system, however, became one of the most specific targets in the recommendations for change. Influence from the business community regarding the development of new directives in the education system has likely existed in BC's history and similar perspectives are represented in the corpus of this study. But this is the only instance found in which this type of pro-business influence regarding policy directives in the BC public education system occurred in such a conspicuous and direct manner.

Similar to the opinions expressed in the Kidd Report, The Education Minister of 1932 believed that the completion of Grade 6 was sufficient for the

education of most children and that vocational training should be done in the

workplace, not in schools. He set about to eliminate the vocational programs that

had been developed in many BC schools, but he encountered staunch resistance

from within the system. In an effort to overpower school districts that would not

relinquish these programs, he threatened to give municipal councils the authority

to impose his decision. However, before sweeping changes could be enacted,

the Tory government was ousted by the Liberals in the general election of 1933

(Kilian, 1985, pp. 31-32). The radical changes to education that were put forth in

the Kidd Report and by the Tories were never carried out.

Unlike the short-lived influence of the Kidd Report, The Putnam-Weir

Report became highly influential in shaping the school system for the following

three decades (Johnson, 1964, p. 109). One significant issue discussed in the

Report that functions as a flagship for any educational system was the

identification of the school's primary objective. The authors stressed that the

ultimate function of the school system was to facilitate the individual growth and

development of each learner. They also stressed that the value of this individual

growth should be weighed within the context of wider society. More specifically,

the authors state that

> [a]ny well rounded system of education, while emphasizing
> individual development, should stress in greater degree the
> paramount duty and importance of harmonizing such development
> with social needs and obligations. The development of the intellect
> for the service of others as well as of self...the appreciation of one's
> duties to one's fellow-men and the body politic – these aims of
> education are neither ephemeral nor ornamental." (as cited in
> Mann, 1980, p. 95).

This quote makes apparent the authors' intention to situate the value of an

individual's education within the context of how well it enables the individual to

serve his own interests as well as the social needs of the community in which

he/she lives. The obligatory nature of these social needs resting upon each

individual describes a society in which all are expected to contribute to its harmonious continuance by considering the needs of others as well as self. This depicts a type of social capital that is produced when each of society's educated members is both expected and deemed able to contribute to their own needs as well as to the needs of the whole.

The perspectives presented in the Putnam-Weir Report continued to be influential through much of the 30s and 40s, due in part to Weir's political successes during many of those years. Weir ran as the Point Grey candidate and was elected into office during the Liberal win of 1933. He was appointed the Minister of Education by the Premier, a position he held until 1941 when the Liberals were defeated in the election. He returned to office in 1945 after winning the Burrard constituency and remained as Minster of Education until 1947, when failing health forced his resignation (Johnson, 1964, pp. 109-110).

In the years that Weir spent working for the education system, he was described as a powerful orator filled with "a consuming fire of passionate protest, [with] the zeal of a real reformer" (as cited in Johnson, 1964, p. 113). He had a strong vision for schools that were largely defined in Deweyan terms. This vision regarded the school's primary function as that of stimulating and "direct[ing] the growth of each pupil, physically and mentally, morally and socially, so that the continual enrichment of the individual's life and an improved society may result" (p. 114). He advocated the use of more 'modern', or progressive methods of instruction and curricula development that focused on developing the whole child. He further valued this development in terms of its wider benefits to the all-around health and enrichment of the society in which he or she lives.

The Chant Commission

By the late 1950s, concern over the quality of the education system, in the US, and concomitantly in Canada, had grown. The western world had regained its composure after a second world war and many changes in technology and within the social fabric of society were emerging in North America. Critics within the education systems of both countries were raising questions regarding the quality of education being provided. The Russian launch of Sputnik was a defining moment as the scientific and technical prowess of North America was incontrovertibly challenged: public opinion swelled, demanding an accounting of public education (Johnson, 1964, p. 255). On the heels of four other provinces, BC called for a Royal Commission that would thoroughly review the provincial education system, the first critical examination of the academic side of public education since the Putnam-Weir Report of 1925.

The terms of reference for this Royal Commission were set forth in 1958 and included a review of the education system to university level. This review involved four main areas: 1) the organization and administration of the public school system, 2) teacher training and development, 3) the economics of the education system, and 4) the "...adequacy of the basic educational philosophy of the British Columbia educational system...in light of world conditions..." (Province of, 1960, p. 1).

Three commissioners were chosen to conduct this review. The Commission's chairman was Sperrin Chant, UBC's Dean of Arts and Sciences. The other two commissioners were less affiliated with the education system and included Riley Walrod, general manager of BC Tree Fruits Ltd., and John Liersch, executive vice-president of the paper company in Powell River and

former head of UBC's Forestry Department. Johnson (1964, p. 270) suggests that the selection of the commissioners represents government's intention to avoid developing a Commission comprised of professional educators, as with the Putnam-Weir Report. Rather the commissioners were selected as intelligent, educated laypeople having little to no professional experience with the K-12 education system who might best understand, articulate, and prepare a response to the concerns that would be heard during the public hearings and submissions that were to follow.

The Chant Commission read over three hundred and sixty briefs submitted by various individuals, community/business organizations, parent/teacher associations and school boards. These submissions were received during a one year period of public hearings that were attended throughout the province by the three commissioners from mid-1958 through mid-1959 (Province of, 1960, p. 6).

The Chant Report was released in 1960 and, in the first pages, immediately addressed the issue of the general aim of BC's public school system. The Report summarised the primary goal of education as being "that of promoting the intellectual development of the pupils, and that this should be the major emphasis throughout the whole school programme" (pp. 17-18). Though two of the three commissioners were considered to be leaders in industry, the Report reflects a student-oriented approach to the evaluation of the school system and to the overall purposes of education.

In her historical review of education in BC from the 1960s through the 1980s, Savage (1988, pp. 9-10,16) describes the main goal of education in policies of the 1960s as having been a conservative one that focused on maintaining social order and harmony for the public good. Though often elitist in

nature, the overall intention was to protect the common good. The value of public education, in general, was defined in terms of social capital.

From the report of the Chant Commission in 1960, Savage describes the overarching purpose of education as that of conveying an accepted body of knowledge and values to the next generation to perpetuate social stability (Savage, 1988, pp. 9-10; Province of, 1960, p. 16). She describes the report as expressing a well-defined "mission" for public education; one that "invites the acceptance and accommodation of received values, known solutions and customary mores" (Savage, 1988, p. 10). The writers of the Chant Report seemed to believe that the future of society and humanity, in general, depended upon how successfully each generation fosters the intellectual development of the one that follows. Savage refers to this as a pastoral role that emerged from a "well-defined sense of social responsibility" (p. 10).

Social Capital vs. Human Capital

Since the early 1960s, a change in focus begins to appear concerning the production of this kind of social capital toward a focus on the production of human capital in various policies put forth within Canada. In Human Capital Theory, public expenditures for education are justified as a type of investment with an expected return, and a population is regarded in terms of its economic potential for strengthening the economy (Berliner & Biddle, 1994, p. 141). This contrasts with social capital in which public expenditure is intended to invest in the potential for a healthy social existence for individuals and, by extension, society. Savage describes such a transition as first appearing in the mid- to late-60s. It is most observable in two key documents, the first of which is a federal

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government report on education and economic growth produced in 1965 by the Economic Council of Canada. The second key document is a 1968 British Columbia Teachers Federation's (BCTF) commissioned report entitled Involvement: The Key to Better Schools. These documents appear to be some of the first in Canada to suggest that the primary purpose of schooling is that of training a labour force to ensure economic growth and stability (Savage, 1988, p. 13). This goal of education follows along the lines of Human Capital Theory as it justifies support for public investment in education essentially for the purpose of producing greater economic security.

In addition to the appearance of Human Capital Theory in the educational arena, the private sector model of fiscal accountability began to appear in BC politics in the mid-70s with the policies issued by BC's Social Credit government. Premier Bennett, when elected to office in 1975, set out to reduce the size of the public sector and promote conditions that would encourage growth in the private sector and in the economy, declaring that BC was "open for business" (Stanley, 1988, p. 19).

The public education system of the 1970s had become increasingly politicized in BC as government demanded accountability in response to teachers' cries for smaller class sizes and facility improvements (Savage, 1988, p. 15; Giles, 1983, p. 32). In 1972, the BCTF had thrown its weight behind the New Democratic Party, helping to 'de-throne' the Bennett government, which had demanded a "no frills" education system (Giles,1983, pp. 32, 84). This blatant partisan move was not later forgotten when the Socreds returned to power in the following election. Animosity between educators and the Socred government became more apparent in the years that followed.

In 1979, Education Minister Patrick McGeer stated that financial accountability within the education system was a top "educational objective" (Stanley, 1988, p. 20). This was the first time that the financial aspects related to supporting the education system were described by the Education Minister as being an educational objective. This statement presented a new perspective regarding educational objectives as defined by the BC Ministry of Education, as opposed to previous objectives that focused on providing an education for the benefit of the learner and, by extension, wider society. It also demonstrates the extent to which the private sector model was gaining ground in the governance of the public sector, including public education.

In 1975, an OECD team examined Canada's education sector which likely provided some background impetus for nation-wide reviews of education policy, in general. The OECD, or Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, assists countries in developing and coordinating strategies for economic development. Given the economic development objectives upon which this body focuses, it is not surprising that education is primarily viewed by the OECD from a human capitalist perspective as a means of securing economic stability for the future of underdeveloped nations. The team's report found that, unlike other industrialized countries, Canada lacked educational reforms that were rooted in a vision of the best interests and future of the country (Calvert, 1993, pp. 94-95). Moreover, the report denounced the differences noted between the US and Canada's education practices, stating that such appears to be rooted simply in a "desire to demonstrate that Canada marches to a different drummer" (as cited in Calvert, 1993, p. 95). These various events were likely instrumental in paving the way for the changes seen in provincial governance in the 80s as described in the following section.

Federal Restraint Comes to BC

By the 1980s, the federal government began to work more 'forward thinking' policies into federal education policies. Calvert (1993) suggests that the federal government of the 1980s pushed for education reform that was rooted in a "transnational corporate conception of the country's interests" (p. 95). He suggests that these efforts are most notably found in the inclusion of education as it relates to free market solutions provided within the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (p. 90).

The federal government entered a policy period known as Restraint, featuring significant cut-backs in government expenditures . In like manner, the provincial government made Restraint official provincial policy in February 1982. Education became one of the primary targets for cutbacks. Before the end of the year, Bill Vander Zalm had acquired the position of Minister of Education and began a campaign of what some have called unprecedented teacher-bashing along with the spread of public misinformation regarding the school system. In the name of Restraint, government began reducing education services and decentralizing the decision-making powers in the education system by severely delimiting the authority of school boards and administrators and by overthrowing teacher collective agreements (Kilian, 1985, pp. 55-59; Magnusson & Langer, 1984, pp. 243-253; Kesselman, 1986, p. 125).

Shrimpton (1984) argues that the Socred government's policy of Restraint was, effectively, the New Right coming into power with the primary objective of "making it easier for business to make money" (p. 272). With the policy of Restraint, government is downsized, and decision-making and control is concentrated in the hands of the few (Kesselman, 1986, p. 78). In addition,

downsizing of the public sector is thought to free up resources for the private sector. "Regulatory burdens" (p. 79) are also lifted from the private sector through government deregulation in order that peak efficiency might be reached. This bears a strong resemblance to features of neoliberal policies as discussed in the previous chapter.

By the mid-80s, tensions between the BC government and an ever-strengthening teachers association (BCTF) had blossomed into what came to be known as the "School Wars", as documented by Kilian (1985) in his book by the same name. The economic downturn of the 1980s coupled with outcries over the education system from both camps heightened public discontent as taxpayers found the buying power of their wages dwindling. With the increasing unemployment rate and recession of the 1980s, public concern over the economy grew. Taxpayers were demanding more accountability from public institutions and for the spending of their hard-earned tax dollars. In this climate, movements criticizing the school system reached terminal velocity (Crawley, 1995, pp. 13-15).

The Sullivan Commission

In 1984, under the leadership of Minister Jack Heinrich, the Ministry of Education extended what Crawley (1995) refers to as "an olive branch" (p. 16) in an effort to end the school wars. Talks between educators, the public, and the government were officially opened with the establishment of a provincial review committee on education. The ensuing public inquiries resulted in the release of a document in 1985 entitled *Let's Talk About Schools.*

Though relations between educators and government continued to remain rocky, new ground was broken in 1987 with the establishment of the first BC Royal Commission on Education since the Chant Commission and its Report of 1960. The Sullivan Commission, as it was called, travelled throughout the province hearing the opinions of educators, parents and community groups, ultimately garnering strong public support. The Sullivan Report was based on a review of almost 2,350 written and oral submissions and a one year tour of the province holding 143 public hearings, teacher meetings and student assemblies.

The Report of the Sullivan Commission, entitled *A Legacy for Learners,* was released in 1988 and bore strong resemblance to the *Lets Talk About Schools* document of three years earlier. The following may explain why. Tom Fleming was credited as having largely written both documents, Arthur Kratzmann was information line coordinator for the first project and served as deputy commissioner to Barry Sullivan in the second; and, the director of research for both reviews was Todd Rogers (Crawley, 1995, p. 16).

It should be stated at the outset that several of those who were involved in the Sullivan Commission's research process found significant dissimilarities between the commission's findings/recommendations and the first or successive documents of the Year 2000 reform that were developed by the Ministry of Education in response to the Commission's report (Crawley, 1995, pp. 48-50). The reform was touted by the Ministry as being a fulfillment of nearly all of the 83 recommendations made by the Sullivan Report. However, it has been suggested that, more accurately, the government initiated a reform that fulfilled its own agenda (p. 49).

The Socred approval of the Sullivan Commission's recommendations was likely not so much an assent to an educational ideology as it was a response to

polling results that showed voters wanted an end to government cuts in education. Decima Research had produced a report in 1988 recommending that government distance themselves from the contentious recent years of education bashing. It further recommended that government take a positive, pro-active, leadership-oriented approach to education by promoting a reflexive, consultative process of reform; a reform initiative that would demonstrate a real commitment to change by virtue of its size and scope (as cited in Crawley, 1995, p. 32).

Regardless of the reasons discussed behind closed doors, the Socreds did initiate a reform effort rarely undertaken on such a large scale. Officially, the Year 2000 reform initiative began in the school year of 1990 (Crawley, 1995, p. 67). Full implementation of the three main components of the reform, referred to as the primary, intermediate and graduate programs, were to begin the following year. However, days before the provincial election was called in September 1991, the Education Minister Stan Hagen announced a delay of implementation for the upper two of the three grade levels of reform until the 1992-1993 school year (pp. 70-71). The Socreds were removed from office in the 1991 election and the NDP inherited the turmoil that existed with reform implementation.

The ultimate failure of the Year 2000 reform has been largely attributed to bureaucratic challenges. The NDP government announced the withdrawal of the Year 2000 reform two years after assuming leadership due to several key failings of the implementation process. For example, the policy documents that had been issued by government were vague and ambiguous without offering any clearly defined methods for implementation. There was an utter lack of communication between the Ministry, educators, and the general public. A significant change in teaching practices was required, but there were no long-term plans in place for this kind of professional development. There was an

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apparent lack of commitment from the bureaucracy to deal with issues that arose and for backing the costs of full implementation. Finally, the Ministry itself had undergone significant internal changes that had disrupted leadership during the implementation process (Crawley, 1995, pp. 107-108). With the public clamour that ultimately resulted from the reform efforts, it made good political sense to abandon ship. NDP Premier Mike Harcourt announced the elimination of the Year 2000 reform in September 1993.

The policy documents that are analysed in this study include three that were published by the Socred government and two that were published by the succeeding NDP government. Despite the changes in the government leadership and structure during this period, these five policy documents that were intended to support Year 2000 are significantly contiguous in nature as described in the next chapter. Thus, together, the documents that were produced immediately before and during the implementation process have been included in this study. The following chapter provides the details and discussion of this study's findings.

Chapter Three
Year 2000

Between the years 1989 and 1991, a number of documents were published by the BC Ministry of Education concerning the Year 2000 reform in the school system. Several were intended for use by educators within the system and relate specifically to reform implementation. However, five documents were published by the Ministry during this period that were directed toward a wider audience and, in general, appear to be intended to garner public support. These documents were 'public relations' in character and contain numerous statements concerning the reasons that reform measures were necessary and the ways in which the Year 2000 reform was intended to address such needs. Together these five documents comprise the corpus that was examined in this study. (See Appendix 1.)

The first two documents, <u>Mandate for the School System</u> and <u>Policy Directions</u>, were published in January 1989 in response to the findings of the Sullivan Royal Commission (according to the sub-title of the second document). New policy directives for reform (the Year 2000 not yet being mentioned by name) were addressed in <u>Policy Directions</u> while <u>Mandate for the School System</u> focused on identifying a new mandate.

The primary document that was, according to the Ministry of Education, designed to set forth the philosophies and principles that under-gird the Year 2000 education reform was published in 1990 and is entitled Year 2000: A Framework for Learning. It is the third document of the corpus. It was intended to establish a framework upon which "all program development, student assessment and evaluation, and reporting activities" (Province of, 1990, p. v) would be constructed. This document refers back to the first two documents mentioned above which are said to provide background information for the reform initiative.

As might be expected, certain phrases that appear in this document are repeated in Ministry documents immediately prior to and following its publication. Repetition is a lexical feature used by writers to establish textual cohesion and continuity within a text or a series of texts (Stillar, 1998, p. 51). Moreover, this repetition re-affirms that these documents published by the Ministry as a part of the preliminary and implementation stages of Year 2000 comprise a series of texts, or a corpus, even though the provincial government leadership changed from the Social Credit party to the NDP in 1991, before publication of the final documents.

The fourth and fifth documents of the corpus were released by the Ministry after the NDP came into power in 1991. The fourth is entitled Changes in Education: A Guide for Parents. This was most likely published in an effort by government to address the clamour of parents who found themselves caught up in what had become a confusing implementation process.

The fifth and last document, entitled Education Reform in British Columbia: Building a Sustainable School System, summarises a cabinet review of the Year 2000 reform as the NDP government continued with the reform

initiative set forth by the Social Credit party. This document also refers back to the first three documents as forming part of a continuum of government action that provided "leadership for education reform in British Columbia" (Province of, 1991, n.p.). In addition, it states, "[in] the spirit first established in Policy Directions and A (*sic*) Mandate for the School System, government remains responsive to the needs and concerns voiced by the people of British Columbia" (n.p.). In yet another place, support for the Year 2000 changes are "reaffirmed" (n.p.).

Each of the policy documents in the corpus follows a somewhat similar format, beginning with an introductory section. This section typically contains background information, a description of today's 'reality,' and why this reality 'demands' education reform. Sections that follow the introductory sections vary in content, depending upon the overall purpose of the document. These sections include various items such as particulars on system governance and organization, teacher education and certification, broad descriptions of school programs and curricula, and financial matters. Concluding remarks or concluding sections exist in some documents, generally re-iterating ideas that are presented in the introductory sections. Other documents contain no concluding remarks.

For the purpose of this study, the most significant material was typically found in the introductory and concluding sections where the reasons behind the reform initiative are most prevalent. Much of the text in other sections (e.g. teacher education and financial matters) were found to be less useful. However, there are portions of text within these other sections dealing with curricula and school programs that addressed some of the ideas presented in the introductory sections and are included in the discussion that follows.

The remainder of this chapter involves the discussion of the findings from this study. For the most part, the words in this chapter that are italicized, unless otherwise indicated, are those that have been drawn from the corpus in order to elaborate on a point or to provide useful examples. Participants in the text that are portrayed as having agency are examined first, followed by those participants who are not generally portrayed as having agency. These discussions include an analysis of the attributes that each are given within the corpus.

Relational Processes: Characteristics of *Change*

As discussed previously in Chapter Two, relational processes are grammatical features of a text that portray a person, object or idea as having certain qualities or characteristics. One example found in the corpus concerns the use of the word *change*. Various types of *change* are presented in the corpus. It is ascribed certain attributes through the use of relational processes of transitivity. For example, *Change* is said to *include dramatic social and economic changes* (Province of, 1990, p. 2). A few uses of the word change involves social changes, such as *family structures are changing* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 2) and *changes in the role of women in our society* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 2). However, *change* most often collocates with lexical terms that are of an economic, employment or technological nature. It is represented by *the recent explosion in knowledge, coupled with the proliferation of powerful new communication and information processing technologies* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 2).

The descriptors that accompany *change* in relational processes are worthy of comment. Lexical choices, or word choices, are made by an author in order to

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more fully express the characteristics of an Actor in a relational process

(Halliday, 1994, pp. 119-20). These choices also represent the use of expressive

modalities wherein the 'facts' are presented as categorical truths concerning the

nature of what exists, rather than as an intermediate modality that suggests

something might be true, or at least true in some cases. Words such as *powerful*

(Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 2), *rapid* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 7),

and *major* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6) are used to characterize various changes,

ascribing a certain overwhelming irresistibility to the *changes* that are spoken of.

This is echoed by the explosive nature that is attributed to the *changes* in

knowledge. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Mish, F. et.al. 1997)

explains the meaning of explosion as "a large-scale, rapid, or spectacular

expansion or bursting out or forth" (p. 410). Certainly a force of that capacity

would seem irresistible. The lexical values of these descriptors reinforce the idea

that the very nature of the *changes* described are commanding a response, and

quickly, given the *rapid proliferation* of the *changes.*

Dramatic (Province of, 1990, p. 2) and *new* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6;

Ministry of, 1991, p. 2) are additional terms used to describe the *changes* these

policies are designed to address. These lexical choices use expressive modality

to suggest that the *changes* are like nothing that has been before. It could be

argued that something unknown and unfamiliar requires a departure from

tradition to meet the challenge. The increasingly obvious answer to the reality of

the *changes* as portrayed appears to be the new and reform-oriented approach

to education that is being presented in the text.

Change is further said to include changes in *society* (Province of, 1990, p.

2), *changing world* (Brummet, 1989b, pp. 6, 10), changes in *the structure of BC's*

economy (Province of, 1990, p. 2), *changes in job and business opportunities*

(Brummet, 1989b, p. 6), *changing demands of society* (<u>Province of</u>, 1991:n.p.),

rapid change which our society and economy have experienced (Brummet,

1989b, p. 7), *changing social and economic factors* (<u>Province of</u>, 1990, p. 29),

changes in *the workplace* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 5; Brummet, 1989b, p. 6),

changing *demands for skills* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; <u>Province of</u>, 1991, p. 2), the

changing *educational demands of the economy, changing family structures*

(Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; <u>Province of</u>, 1990, p. 2), *changing roles of women*

(Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; <u>Province of</u>, 1990, p. 2), and changing *age structure of*

the population (Brummet, 1989b, p. 7; <u>Province of</u>, 1990, p. 2).

As has been noted, the majority of *changes* that are described in the

corpus as reasons for education reform are generally economic in nature. In

fact, the changes spoken of in BC's economy are not just to a sector, but to the

'structure' of the BC economy as well as to the global economy. The ubiquitous

nature of these changes as they are portrayed presents the notion that this is an

all-encompassing change affecting not only the entire financial system of the

province, but the rest of the world as well. Certainly these forces of change, as

depicted, are inescapable as these changes are presented as being in a position

to make requirements and demands, as discussed in the following section.

There is also an appeal made to the use of historical texts or 'background

knowledge' related to the increase of knowledge and changing technologies that

can be seen in the statement below:

> The recent explosion in knowledge, coupled with the proliferation of
> powerful new communication and information processing
> technologies, has had significant social and economic impact
> throughout the world. We must begin to ensure that schools
> provide young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that
> will be needed to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.
> (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6)

The use of the definite article in describing the force and pervasiveness of these changes suggests that such is already understood by the reader. This is a tool used to develop inter-textuality with other 'texts', written or otherwise, as a means of linking this discussion of changes impacting on education with other changes *throughout the world* (p. 6) that are along the lines of the nature and magnitude being described. It is a means by which a tacit knowledge of the wider discourse types related to technological change, in general, is joined to the discourse at hand – that of education reform in BC. It is this linking of discourse types that must be questioned. Rapid and prolific changes in technology around the world are not necessarily a point of dispute, but the relationship and impacts of such changes to the education system of BC is less clear, though they are presented as having obvious impact – as being 'given'.

Material Processes: *Change* as Actor

A material process of transitivity is a grammatical feature that is used to develop a dynamic between two 'players' in a text. One player is generally presented as the Actor while the other is the 'acted upon'. In the corpus, *change* is presented as an Actor with agency.

Interestingly, in everyday language, *change* is usually thought of as a process. In the corpus, however, *change* appears often as a noun, or is nominalised, rather than being used as the verb that it is (Fairclough, 2000, pp. 26, 28). Through metaphor, this allows *change* to become an Actor in a process having very specific characteristics and a specific impact on the 'acted upon'. In the corpus, *change* is not only presented as an Actor but as a potent participant.

Change is depicted as an Actor that is demanding and making

requirements and is described as performing several important actions. *Change*

is said to *have placed new demands on our schools* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6;

Province of, 1990, p. 2) and to have *created new expectations for our schools*

(Brummet, 1989b, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 2). Certain types of *changes* are

also presented as Actors, such as *new structure of the economy* (Brummet,

1989b, p. 6), and *the workplace* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 5; Ministry of, 1991, p. 2).

There are several notable results that are achieved through nominalising

change. C*hange* itself becomes the responsible party that is making demands

and requirements of schools, students and tomorrow's workforce. But it is an

impersonal, abstract force that cannot be confronted face-to-face or required to

give an accounting of itself. Rather than representing a complex set of

processes, *change* is represented as a causal agent with the power to require

that certain processes occur (Fairclough, 2000, p. 26), the first being the reform

of the school system, and the second being the accommodation of students and

workers to the demands being made of them.

This construction of *change* also presents it as something that is separate

and distinct from 'us' – something that impacts on 'us' without our having any

agency (Fairclough, 2000, p. 27). The 'us' that comprises schools, students,

parents, wider society, and even the Ministry of Education are depicted as being

objects of the efficacy of change, rather than as participants in a process of

change who can affect its direction. Representing *change* as an impersonal

force further alleviates the need for government to account for decisions they

have made or are making that have influenced the background processes related

to the changes spoken of (p. 26). For instance, international agreements that

facilitate the mobility of goods, services and capital can induce significant

changes to economic structures within a society. The support, regulation and incentives that government affords industry also have some effect on the types of changes that are referred to in the corpus. *Change* is influenced, to some degree, by the types of decisions that are made by government concerning processes that are not simply immutable or inevitable. But this kind of participation by government, or groups, in the types of changes described disappears from view with the construction of change as an irresistible, impersonal force as depicted in the corpus.

The Portrayal of *Society*

The term *society* (and its adjectival form, *social*) frequently collocates with economy, as in *dramatic social and economic changes* (Province of, 1990, p. 2), *new social and economic realities* (Province of 1990, p. 2) *contribute to society and the economy* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 10), *the rapid change which our society and economy have experienced* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 7), *major changes...in British Columbia's society and economy* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6), *improvement of society and the economy* (Province of, 1990, p. 4), *development of a healthy society and prosperous economy* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6), *contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 3; Brummet, 1989b, p. 8; Province of, 1990, pp. ii, 3), *continued progress toward our social and economic goals* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 4), *contribute to society generally, including the world of work* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 4; Province of, 1990, p. 3). These collocations create contextual clues for the reader from which to develop an understanding of what significant ideas the author intends to link with the term *society*. This is a feature that helps to subconsciously build for readers

a rationale for including previous texts, or discourse types, in the discussion at hand. For example, in the corpus, when the term *society* appears, it is most often linked to notions of the changing economy and the needs of the economy. This situates an understanding of *society* within the context of the economy, almost as though the two are inseparable. It further places these within the context of a discussion of education, delimiting the readers perspective of education and society to those within an economic context.

There are statements in the corpus that place *society* within a non-economic context through such phrases as *changing family structures* and *cultural diversity* (Province of, 1990, p. 2). For example, it is stated that *many different cultural traditions and expectations enrich our social environment* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6). In addition, an imperative is placed upon students who

> must develop an understanding and appreciation of this cultural
> mosaic and, at the same time, they must learn about the cultural
> traditions that have shaped Canada's social and political institutions
> over the years. (p. 6)

This provides a non-economic context for the *society* that is spoken of in the corpus, but these ideas are presented briefly and are overshadowed by grammatical features and statements that situate society within an economic discourse type.

Some conjoint references to *society* and *economy* are situated within economic contexts that appear to have little to do with society beyond the specific use of the word. For example, an educated citizen is described as being *skilled and able to contribute to society generally, including the world of work (in order to help support the society and economy)* (parentheses in original) (Province of, 1990, p. 3). The only subset that is provided for the meaning of *contribute to society* is that of *the world of work*. There are no subsets here to describe other contributions to society such as democratic participation or social

responsibilities. *Skills* are further defined in the corpus to include *thinking,*
communicating, quantitative reasoning, information processing, problem solving,
decision-making, interpersonal skills, and *life management skills* (p. 14). Several
of these skills (communicating, problem solving, interpersonal) are described at
various points in the corpus as being important in the workplace. Others, such
as information processing, are valuable in the workplace by their very nature.
The importance of acquiring *life management skills* is qualified as being essential
in order to *function productively in the everyday world, including the world of work*
(p. 14). Again, the qualifier is employment-oriented and is the only subset of the
everyday world that receives honourable mention. Just as the goals of education
have been defined in terms of having economic value for the economy, a healthy
society is consistently presented within an economic context as well.

A discussion of *society* begs the question, Who is society? In the corpus,
the term generally applies to the people of British Columbia since several uses of
the term make reference to the social and economic history and conditions of the
province. Through relational process, the corpus states that *our society is global*
(Province of, 1991, n.p.). Here, the proverbial 'we' is invoked through the use of
the word *our*, suggesting that the demands made by *change* being presented in
the same paragraph are also addressed to the members of all societies around
the world; all of whom must now succumb to the reality of living in a global
community – at least 'reality' as depicted by the Ministry of Education. Defining
society in this manner creates an additional imperative for response to the
demands presented – a condition, portrayed as 'given'; one that all people face
and to which all must respond.

The effects of being in this global society are further articulated by the
relational process that follows this statement in which there is described a *greater*

sense of competition with students from academically advanced countries such as Japan, Germany and Korea (Province of, 1991, n.p.). It is unclear how students in a junior high classroom in Surrey, BC are competing with students in a similar classroom in Hamburg, Germany, for example. But the 'fact' that they are competing is made explicit. Moreover, the relational modality constructed with the term *must* positions this new imperative of competition as having the authority to require that students as well as the school system respond to these expectations being described.

In reviewing the selected corpus and various older Ministry of Education documents, changes in the roles of Actors in the overall education process can be seen. In the Minister's report of 1981, *society* appears as a participant in this process. *Society* is portrayed as having entrusted the education of its children to schools. The responsibility of *society* is then defined, in general terms, as being that of providing "adequate educational opportunities for all individuals" (Province of, 1981, p. 8). In broader terms, *society* is also charged with the overall education of children through such partners as the home, church, "cultural and artistic institutions" and "recreational and health agencies" (p. 8).

In these older documents, *society* plays a role that contrasts with that found in the corpus. Through material processes, *society* as depicted in older documents is also described as having "placed demands" on and having made requirements of schools. However, these demands are said to have led to "institutional overload" (Province of, 1981, p. 7) in schools and are portrayed as having had a negative impact as schools attempted "to be responsive to all the emerging needs and demands of society" (p. 2). A clear voice is given to the idea that society's demands are too much for the school system and that the

educational system is not intended to meet all of the demands necessitated by changes to the social and economic structures of society.

Contrasting this description with that found in the corpus, the Year 2000 schools in the early 90s were unequivocally required to meet and be transformed by the demands resulting from changes in society. The onus was placed upon schools to accommodate these demands while the voice representing the difficulties that such imposed upon schools, as heard in the Minister's 1981 report, become silent.

The *Workplace* Imperative

In the corpus, the workplace establishes new imperatives for learners and the school system as a whole. It is portrayed as the locus of expression for the many *changes* that are described in the corpus. Through forms of relational modality, *workers today* are described as needing *to be creative and adaptive*, and to be *lifelong learners* as *demands for skills change and new employment opportunities arise* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6). Through relational modality, the workplace is given agency to place the imperative upon students to develop these attributes in order to meet the demands of their future employment market.

The *workplace/learner* dynamic is a relationship that can be further extrapolated from the relationship depicted between *change* and the *learner*, in which *change* is given agency as an Actor in the discourse, placing imperatives upon *learners,* while *learners* are depicted as the acted upon in relationship to *change*. In the clause, *the workplace itself has changed and will continue to change* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6), the changes referred to are qualified in the text as having resulted from *challenges and opportunities* produced by *new markets*

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in the Pacific Rim and elsewhere in the world (p. 6) – *new markets* that represent

an economic (or workplace) imperative. Moreover, *change* is often presented in

terms of new technologies that have been developed. These technologies are

never portrayed as technologies in the home that might, in contrast, have

significant impact upon the social or domestic life. Rather the inference through

collocation of various terms is that of technologies impacting upon global markets

and industry, and so, by extension, places of employment. The agency ascribed

to *the workplace* is further reinforced through this ongoing dialogue in the corpus

concerning new demands and changes brought about by new technologies.

The new workplace is portrayed as resulting from the changing economy,

or marketplace, as well as changes in technology. These changes that result to

the labour force are presented as natural, or neutral, and entirely unrelated to

political strategy or policy. Rather, success in the labour market is presented as

being governed by an individual's willingness to prepare for and compete in the

workplace. The implication follows that those who are opposed to these changes

and the demands made by them are also opposed to the ideas related to

individual "effort, preparation and merit" (Apple, 2002, p. 413).

By portraying these changes to the workplace as being normative and

neutral, questions related to causality and agency become irrelevant. This acts

as a powerful tool in the effort to normalize processes that, in reality, have

definite causal relationships with leadership decisions that are being made, such

as those that deregulate industry and leave labour markets to fend for

themselves. Moreover, this reinforces the aspects of the interpreters' MR that

support the idea that these changes are neutral and automatic and that success

in the workplace might somehow be guaranteed by one's preparedness and

achievements. Reinforcing this perspective ultimately supports the pursuit of the

neoliberal agenda by garnering a consensus surrounding the need to accommodate and not question these changes.

Schools as the Acted Upon

In the corpus, the onus is placed upon schools to accommodate the demands of the changes being described. Through a relational process, schools are identified as having *a critical role to play in the growth of human potential in the province and in the development of a healthy society and a prosperous economy* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6). These identifiers resonate with the role that is prescribed for students as contributors to these same activities and goals. Schools are largely presented as the acted upon, and are expected to accommodate the demands being made by society without there being any representation in the corpus of the difficulties such demands place upon these schools as described previously.

Parents in the Discourse Process

Parents are named as participants in the groups that were consulted in preparation for reform. They are given specific tasks of *providing the healthy and supportive environment that is necessary for their children to learn* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 6; Province of, 1990, p. 5)) and *helping children to develop a positive self-concept, so that they can have a greater chance to realize their potential* (Province of, 1990, p. 3). There are no specific elaborations concerning what *their potential* might include. From the overall emphasis within the text

concerning economic viability and constraints of new markets, *their potential* is likely that which can be realized within these parameters.

Given that the reform initiative is said to have resulted in part from the desires of parents which helped *to shape the schools system's goals* (Ministry of, 1991, p. 3), the goals are portrayed as representing the primary concern of parents regarding the education of their children as that of preparation for the world of work. Parental cooperation in *supporting those goals* (p. 3) is now expected. It appears that parental concerns over public education and the roles of parents in the reform process are rather narrowly defined.

Students (or *Learners*) as the Acted Upon

In the corpus, *learners* is more commonly used than *students*, though both appear throughout the corpus. The learner, or student, typically appears in the corpus as being without agency. The instances in which the learner is presented as an Actor involves a material process linked to a relational modality that places an imperative upon students to develop a particular quality, for example, *in order to help support the society and economy* (Province of, 1990, p. 3), or *in order to ensure the improvement of society and the economy* (p. 4). In this sense, the action is to be completed by students, but the agency is with those who have determined what the action must be. Students are expected to develop in order to be *contributing members of society and the economy* (p. 1).

The persistence of the economy within the context of these imperatives represents a growing position of governments that requires each individual to be continually enterprising (Olssen as cited in Apple, 2001, p. 414). This view is perpetuated by the neoliberal view of the individual in which the state takes on

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the responsibility of forming individuals that are suitable to the needs of the market. This is most readily done when a meaningful and productive existence is defined primarily in economic terms that include a variety of processes from one's educational pursuits to one's role in society. By linking discourse types related to national economy, neoliberal policy and globalization with the discourse of public education, the value system of the latter is subrogated by the value system of the former as people, ideas and activities related to public education are assigned value according to their economic participation.

The implications for portraying the goals and objectives of a provincial education system as existing largely within an economic paradigm is significant given the constitutive role that governments and education policies play in the arena of public discourse. Normalizing a view of a student's education, or for that matter a view of the important activities of adult human existence, that assigns value according to economic benefit subtly promotes and reinforces the idea that the free market is the pre-eminent arena and purpose of human activity.

In addition to placing imperatives upon students, several key characteristics are described in the corpus as being requisite for what is defined as the *educated citizen* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 4; Province of, 1990, pp. 3-4). In the Mandate document of the corpus, the description of the educated citizen is prefaced by three paragraphs that include ideas such as tolerance of differences, democratic participation, and the development of human potential (Brummet, 1989a, p. 4). The provincial goals are stated as being both social and economic and appear to be treated somewhat even-handedly, though historically, economic goals have not featured with equal prominence to goals concerning the needs of the individual or of society.

The Year 2000 document details the same characteristics without a similar set of introductory paragraphs. In contrast, contributing to a *healthy society* and to a *prosperous and sustainable economy* feature as the prominent goals of the educated citizen that are identified in preface to the list of an educated citizen's characteristics (Province of, 1990, p. 3). Such ideas as *democratic participation*, *pursuing personal objectives* and *making choices confidently* (p. 3) are each mentioned, while ideas of contributing to society and to a prosperous economy are reiterated several times. However, the lengthy discussion involving the needs of the economy and global changes in the introductory portions of these documents further emphasizes this economic context in which the remainder of the texts are situated.

Creative and *flexible* are included as aspects of an educated citizen in both of the documents described above. The Year 2000 (Province of, 1990) document supports the need for such with clauses like *to make choices confidently* and *to take advantage of opportunities as they arise* (p. 3) without making explicit the kinds of choices and opportunities being referred to. However, the need for these qualities is more specifically defined in Policy Directions (Brummet, 1989b) in the corpus. Creativity and adaptability are *required* in order to adapt to the changing *workplace* and to take advantage of *new employment opportunities* [that] *arise* (p. 6) . These appear in a lengthy paragraph concerning what appears to be the characteristics of the educated worker, rather than the educated citizen. This also provides a more specific idea (i.e. worker-oriented) of what is represented by the *new opportunities* that appear under the heading of an Educated Citizen.

Flexibility is described as an important characteristic of the educated citizen. *Well-educated people* who are able *to adapt to change* are critical to the

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continued progress toward our social and economic goals as a province
(Brummet, 1989a, p. 4). In addition to intellectual development, *flexibility* is a
quality deemed necessary *to deal with change in the workplace* (Brummet,
1989a, p. 5; Province of, 1990, p. 4). This instance appears in the Mandate
document and the Year 2000 document, where the goals of education are
defined as *intellectual development, human & social development,* and *career
development* (Brummet, 1989a, p. 5; Province of, 1990, p. 4). The only category
in which *flexibility* is specifically named as a desirable quality for development is
in relation to dealing with changes in the workplace under the career
development category. Using the phrase *will need to,* the development of
flexibility is also presented as an imperative for all students, *regardless of their
immediate plans following school* (Province of, 1990, p. 2) (i.e. university bound,
or not) alongside other imperatives such as developing *creative and critical
thinking skills* and for being *lifelong learners* (p. 2).

Flexibility and adaptability (and its forms) appear to be used
synonymously in the corpus. As described above, it appears as an important
quality for *educated citizens* to have in order that they may *take advantage of
opportunities as they arise* (Province of, 1990, p. 3). The only elaborations of the
kinds of opportunities that might be involved is found in the clause *as new
employment opportunities arise* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6), and as *opportunities*
arising from *new markets in the Pacific Rim and elsewhere in the world* (p. 6).

This idea of flexibility for responding to opportunity is very similar to the
discourse type found in private enterprise – more specifically, privatization of
public services, an idea that is esteemed for the limited bureaucracy and greater
efficiency that exists in the private sector as compared to the public sector.
Success in the free market is often directly related to the ability of business to

respond to market trends and rapid changes in technology in order to maintain or

gain in market share. In economic terms, flexibility is described by neoliberals as

a key feature of free enterprise to respond to markets – a characteristic that

helps achieve the ultimate goal of allowing the private sector to operate to its full

potential in order to provide services that would otherwise require public monies.

Through the assimilation of discourse types, that of neoliberalism and of public

education, the economic goals of neoliberal policy converge with the objectives

of education for producing flexible workers in order to meet the needs of a

flexible market-governed economic structure.

As mentioned earlier, *the development of human potential* (Brummet,

1989a, p. 4) was emphasized in preface to the list of educated citizen

characteristics. In Policy Directions (Brummet, 1989b) the new curriculum reform

is introduced as focusing on *the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners will*

need in order to develop their potential and to contribute to society and the

economy in the future (p. 10). Again, economic interests are included in terms of

valuing human potential. The *attitudes* referred to are likely those that are

frequently specified, such as *flexibility, adaptable, lifelong learners*, which have

each received specific importance in the corpus according to the benefits these

supply in the workplace.

Another frequently occurring theme in the corpus is that of the *lifelong*

learner. It is presented as an imperative of all students in the clause *will need to*

be lifelong learners (Province of, 1990, p. 2). In the corpus, *intellectual*

development is identified as the primary goal of public schools, and is then

qualified to include the development in students of *a lifelong appreciation of*

learning (Brummet, 1989a, p. 4; Province of, 1990, p. 4). The corpus states that

workers today need to be creative and adaptive and that *lifelong learning* is a

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necessity *as demands for skills change and as new employment opportunities arise* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6). In just a few instances, *the desire for learning that will last a lifetime*, or *lifelong learning* itself is presented without elaboration as though it holds self-evident value made apparent by virtue of its inclusion in the text. The only instances that attribute value to being a *lifelong learner* are those in which the phrase appears in relation to *change* in general and the demands of the workplace in particular. This reinforces the idea that the attributes of an educated citizen acquire value according to the demands of the labour market. It also underscores the notion that agency is with both *change* and the *workplace* and not with the *learner,* except insofar as the learner is willing to accommodate these *demands* that will be placed upon them throughout their lives.

Lifelong learner is not a new phrase, but has appeared in New Right education reforms, reports, book titles and conference proceedings throughout the US, Britain, Europe, Australia and New Zealand (Piper, 2000, p. 115). One British researcher studied the prevalence and inter-textual meaning of the phrase 'lifelong learner' in a number of government and quasi-governmental documents. She found that *lifelong learner* is closely linked to individual responsibility, and that economic life describes the most pervasive of collocations with respect to the representations that are made regarding the working out of *lifelong learning* by individuals (p. 138). As Coffield suggests, the intention behind such policies is to assign individuals the responsibility of creating this learning society in order to produce economic "growth and efficiency from inside the workplace" (as cited in Piper, 2000, p.138). This perspective features a shift in the responsibility for cultivating a stable economy from government regulatory efforts to the individuals of society as they compete and perform at market driven levels of efficiency.

In Olssen's (1996, p. 340) elaboration of the contrasts between classical liberalism and neoliberalism, the relationship between the state and the individual is seen to have undergone transformation. In classical liberalism, the individual is autonomous and requires a minimal non-interventionist statehood in which to practice his or her freedoms. This individual, behaving out of self-interest, will by extension fulfill the wider interests of society. In neoliberalism, the state is viewed as the power necessary to provide optimal conditions for the free market and through the creation of policies, institutions, and laws, the state must produce individuals who are both enterprising and competitive to operate within the dynamics of the free market. Not unlike competitors in the free market, individuals are encouraged to be "perpetually responsive" (p. 340), or flexible and adaptable to change. It becomes the work of the state to see that we, as individuals, make "a continual enterprise of ourselves" (p. 340).

This neoliberal solution to the welfare state for re-inventing individuals that are conducive to the needs of the market can be likened to the idealized learner that is described in the corpus. The idealized learner is flexible and adaptable to changing demands in the workplace. These changing conditions are attributed to changes in market trends and developing technologies that require changes in businesses seeking to 'stay abreast' of market conditions. Securing these attitudes and skills becomes the responsibility of learners if they are to participate fully in the economic functions of the province.

According to the corpus, one of three goals of development includes *career development* wherein students are prepared *to attain their career and occupational objectives* (Province of, 1990, p. 4). In this respect, there is agency attributed to students in so far as they are given the responsibility of choosing their occupational objectives. However, given the lack of agency that is afforded

learners in most instances within the corpus, self-determination is not a key feature in the new world being described. Acting as an agent with choice is confined to the parameters prescribed by the social and economic structures of power that are privileged within the wider market-oriented discourse established by the corpus. Participation in this new economy and new reality, according to the Ministry, is not only a right of each individual, but an obligation of every individual. However, the parameters for participation are being determined by the needs of business and the marketplace.

Finally, in the context of a discussion on the high rate of school *drop outs*, the text states that *dropouts, unemployment, under-employment, delinquency and illiteracy are all intertwined and exact heavy financial and social costs to the province* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 9). As Hatim & Mason (1990, p. 193) discuss, authors make choices that are designed to fulfill their specific communicative intentions. The implicit connection that is constructed in collocating *dropouts* with *unemployment* and *under-employment* is plainly stated in the phrase *all intertwined*. The value of the expressive modality of this statement also demonstrates a high degree of commitment to the relationship being described. There is a clear association being made between the school drop out rate and un- and under-employment.

During the 1980s, BC experienced a high jobless rate. This came as an off-shoot of the recession of the early 80s, and it continued on into the 90s. Public dismay with the jobless situation had grown and pressure was on government to do something about it. Drawing this close association between the rate of unemployment and underemployment and the drop out rate provided a scapegoat of sorts for government, who had as yet been unable to facilitate the creation of jobs that had been lost during the recession. It further ignored the

numbers of people who had lost jobs due to downsizing, company closures, the out-sourcing of production, and displacements due to technology, to name a few. Rather, this statement in the corpus places them in a category with drop outs who *exact heavy financial and social costs to the province.* The implication is that the drop out rate would decrease with the Year 2000 reform, thus decreasing the rates of unemployment and underemployment. At the least, this reductive view of the jobless rate in the late 80s and early 90s was as salt in the wounds of the many who were already unemployed or underemployed.

Torres (2002, p. 377) makes reference to the ability of dominant institutions, for example, the Ministry of Education, to establish the dominant discourse with respect to the ways in which 'reality' will be described. He argues that the use of the phrase 'drop out' is one means by which government shifts the blame for individuals who have fallen through 'cracks in the system' in order to assign blame for failure to the individuals. There is no mention concerning government policies or initiatives that might work to mediate these problems, only the expectation that individuals will work harder to be more enterprising.

Participants in a Global Community

A recurring leitmotif in the corpus is that of the global economy, or the global community that is emerging worldwide. It appears in such relational processes as our *society is global* (Province of, 1991, n.p.). More often the idea of global community is reinforced by information provided that is assumed to be true, or given. For instance, the new technologies described are said to have had *significant social and economic impact throughout the world* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6). No clear supporting evidence is provided that shows this statement

to be true, other than it being represented as 'a fact' in the corpus. Nor is a description of the worldwide impacts that are spoken of developed in the texts. We are to assume that these impacts are roughly equivalent everywhere to those that are being described for our province.

This is a highly reductive perspective of change, in general. While this statement fails to describe to any degree the nature of these social and economic impacts that are said to be occurring, it does locate these within a global context, reinforcing the idea that all peoples are faced with these challenges which, consequently, are inescapable.

The world in terms of studentship is also enlarged to a global perspective in the corpus. The competition that is normally thought to exist between students, say, within a classroom or a school, or even on a national level, has been expanded to include students from around the world. It is described in this relational process, *there is a greater sense of competition with students from academically advanced countries such as Japan, Germany and Korea* (Province of, 1991, n.p.). As mentioned before, it is unclear from the corpus how this competition is facilitated. But from the themes presented in the corpus, it would likely relate to the new economic challenges being presented that affect the world of work. This is consistent with the global challenges described in the clause *the challenges of a rapidly changing world* (Brummet, 1989b, p. 6).

Phrases like global community, global economy, and globalization all presuppose that such already exists. It is, as Bourdieu writes, typically portrayed as already existing by those who are supporting its creation, be they multinational corporations or neoliberal political factions (as cited in Fairclough, 2000, p. 27). The discourse surrounding globalization presupposes its existence, which is one

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means by which language performs ideological work on behalf of those who are perpetuating and will benefit from the development of globalization.

While I suggest that globalization is not a completed phenomenon, there do appear to be forces in the economic and political arenas that are working toward that end. The phenomenon of globalization has been described as being a politico-economic event associated with the spread of neoliberal policies that encourage trans-national free markets and movement of capital (Torres, 2002, p. 368). Economic globalization involves the world-wide economic restructuring through multi-national agreements and deregulation to permit the merging of economies, technologies and cultures (p. 370). Globalization results from the impact of new technologies in the world of work as labour is radically re-organized to accommodate these changes (p. 370). These restructurings to the economy and labour result from the neoliberal policies that enable these processes and changes to occur. These are likely the forces that have received obvious omission in the corpus where one is left to wonder who or what is causing these drastic and overwhelming changes that are referred to.

Education Policy as Economic Policy

From the corpus, it appears that education policy in BC is inextricably linked to the province's economic goals. This is most apparent in the publication of the Mandate for the School System (Brummett, 1989a) by the Minister of Education. The mandate, or mission statement, as stated therein is

> to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to
> acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to
> a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. (p.
> 3)

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This appears to be the first instance in the history of BC education in which government, within the context of the mandate of public education, makes an explicit connection between education policy and economic policy.

Prior to this, the mandate of the school system, being most recently set forth by the Chant Commission (Province of, 1960), was simply "that of promoting the intellectual development of the pupils" (p. 17). According to the Chant Report, intellectual development is deemed essential for the survival of both individuals and, more generally, the human race (p. 18). It is defined as literacy in both words and numbers; an understanding of the heritage of human knowledge and achievement; and an appreciation for "the values and principles by which the affairs of life are judged to be worthy or otherwise" (p. 18). The one economic concern raised in the Chant Report's discussion of the aim of education relates to illiteracy within a population, which is said to generally lower the standard of living (p. 18). Otherwise, the provincial economy was not directly connected with the goals of education reform or policy.

Similarly, in the Education Minister's report of 1981, the primary goal of public schooling was intellectual development; "the cultivation of minds" (Province of, 1981, p. 8). Broader purposes included "social, ethical, cultural, and emotional development" (p. 8). These goals were to be met by "teaching students to read, to write, to think clearly, and to understand those things necessary for them to become productive citizens" (p. 8). There is no mention of fulfilling an economic role in society. Students are not depicted as economic resources of tomorrow's economy as they are in the mandate found in the corpus.

The 1998 Sullivan Report produced by the BC Royal Commission on Education also addressed the issue of a school mandate. The Ministry

documents of the corpus cite the findings and recommendations of this Royal Commission with frequency. The Sullivan Report on BC's education system was considered by many to be fair and balanced and was well-received by the public, educators and government alike. In many respects, the report appeased both the right and left-leaning camps. It was intended by the writer, Tom Fleming, to be a "slightly left of centre" document that esteems accountability, excellence, and liberty for the right, while supporting demands for equality, diversity and nurturance on the left (as cited in Crawley, 1995, pp. 25, 27).

The Commission found that the term 'mandate' is used by educators, administrators, governance officials, and parents alike, but that it refers to widely varying ideas concerning education. The scope of issues that are included in discussions of 'mandate' ranges from scholastic goals, to the social responsibilities placed on schools, to the general development of the children entrusted to them by society (Province of, 1988, p. 21). This spectrum has been defined by Labaree (1997) as including three primary perspectives, or goals for education. These differing perspectives focus on the cultivation of either "democratic equality", "social efficiency", or "social mobility" (p 42). These can be viewed respectively in terms of either 1) developing competent citizens for their democratic roles in society, 2) investing in human capital for industry, or 3) providing education as a commodity that individuals desire in their pursuit for greater social position in society. Labaree suggests that a shifting emphasis between these three ideals has typified American reform efforts that have persisted since the mid-nineteenth century (p. 57). Similarly, these three perspectives seem to define the greater arena in which arguments surrounding the goals of education in BC have existed.

Ultimately, it is concluded in the Sullivan Report (Royal Commission, 1988) that a clear mandate must be articulated by the BC government. A suggestion for a four-part mandate for schools is described in the report as follows: 1) cultivation of the mind, 2) preparation for vocational life, 3) moral and civic development, and 4) individual development (p. 23).

While this mandate includes the idea of preparing students for vocational life, the Commission contextualises such in the following manner:

> The cultivation of the intellect and the acquisition of knowledge associated with it are noble educational ends in themselves. Education has its own intrinsic worth; it is better, we believe, to be well educated than to be poorly educated. The cultivation of the intellect is also seen by society to have considerable social and economic value for the individual. A person can convert a good education into higher earning power. Substantial research supports this claim; the world of work rewards those who can think flexibly and solve problems in creative ways. (Royal Commission, 1988, p. 23)

Though vocational preparation is mentioned, it is not from the same perspective as that of the mandate set forth by the Ministry (two years following) in the corpus of this study. The Commission acknowledges the attainment of education as being valuable in itself. It then extends this value to say that there are, potentially, social and economic gains for *the individual* (italics not in original). In contrast, the Ministry's mandate of 1989 is clearly oriented around enabling learners to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. The Commission did not couch the value of education in economic terms relating to wider society or in terms of maintaining provincial economic stability as has been done in the Ministry's mandate.

In this respect, I find that the Ministry did not adopt the Commission's recommendations (repetitiously mentioned in the corpus), though the report received almost unanimous support in both the education and public arenas, but it adapted their findings to serve the government's political and economic

agenda. The Education Ministry responded with the creation of policy initiatives purported to implement the recommendations of the report that were distinctly neoliberal in nature.

Chapter Four
Concluding Remarks

This study was conducted in order to address several key questions regarding the corpus of Year 2000 Ministry of Education documents that were examined. Various formal features of text were analysed in order to discuss dynamics between the Actors in the text, the respective characteristics ascribed to each, and the nature of 'reality' as it is depicted. In addition, the text was interpreted in terms of textual features, discourse types, and the development of inter-textuality with other texts that contain tacit knowledge as intended by the authors to be used in the process of interpretation. Finally, these ideas were discussed with respect to the various beliefs and ideals that are being normalized and the relations of power that are reinforced by such.

The guiding questions that directed this study include the following:
- Who is requiring what of whom?
- How is reality being represented?
- What are the uncontested 'facts'?
- What relations of power are reinforced/challenged?

It has been shown that these policies depict *change, new technologies*, and *the workplace* as Actors with agency. These are placed in positions to require that the education system and students, Actors without agency,

accommodate their demands. In so doing, the Ministry of Education confers power upon these Actors as they appear to operate as primary forces of change in our education system. Moreover, society is presented as an Actor placing imperatives upon learners and workers to accommodate these forces of change, at times presenting society as representative of 'us', the readers to whom the documents are directed. Society is also referred to as comprising the global community, suggesting that the forces of change and demands for education reform are ubiquitous, transcending international boundaries.

Within the corpus, the goals of education are frequently expressed in terms of the needs of the workplace. This suggests that skills and competencies like critical thinking, problem solving and effective people skills are not deemed valuable according to the ways in which they directly enhance an individual's life. Rather such acquire worth according to the demands of the workplace. In pure capitalist fashion, these qualities are valued according to one's ability to 'sell' them to an employer for a wage.

The health of society is also situated within an economic ideal. Human activity, in general, is valued in economic terms with individuals acquiring value according to their ability to 'serve' society and the economy. The health of society and the economy are repetitiously connected in the corpus.

Through nominalization, change is given authoritative status concerning the education system and students. By portraying change as such, the processes that occur to facilitate the changes described are back- grounded along with the causal agents. For example, governments act somewhat as causal agents of the changes that are seen in labour markets with respect to new technologies through trans-national government agreements concerning trade and by de-regulation of industry. This includes the reduction of protectionist

structures for labour and an increase in protection for the dynamics of the free market.

By portraying change as a normative, neutral force that is incontrovertible, powerful, and irresistible, questions concerning causality are rendered mute and non-sensical. This reinforces the structures of power in society that promote and benefit from an education system constructed to serve the needs of private enterprise when these concerns are given a dominant voice in the discourse surrounding education. It further reinforces the dominance of those in society that are best served by the reduction of government regulation and by the reinforcement of the power of private enterprise (i.e. corporations and political movements that espouse neoliberal policy).

In the corpus, government is silent on these issues related to the causality of change. It further ignores the impact of de-regulation as well as the reduction of public investment upon the labour market. The Socred government had made apparent its distaste for the interests of labour with the assaults it levied on collective agreements in the 1980s. These policies for education reinforce the view that supports the reduction in protectionist structures for labour markets. It further relegates labour to a role of unquestioning service to the free market.

Within the corpus, education is valued according to a neoliberal perspective of economy and free markets. The value of education is expressed in relation to 'market forces' and 'supply and demand' of the economy. This critique leads to concern for the way in which the life of a person has been devalued. People without jobs, whether due to corporate downsizing or displacement by technology, are considered to be burdens that society cannot afford to bear. This supports a sociological perspective that marginalizes these members of society while ignoring the intricacies of their plight. Moreover,

individuals are expected to be flexible, creative, and accommodating to the demands of a changing labour market. This absolves government of any responsibility to 'manage' change or to mediate the interests of labour and the interests of big business, which at times, run in diametric opposition.

An inter-textual analysis regarding the registers or orders of discourse that are found in the corpus helps to situate the findings of the linguistic analyses (e.g. transitive verb structures) within the social and institutional context of text production. The order of discourse associated with public education policy typically involves such words as citizenship, achievement, and excellence. While these words are not necessarily absent, a revised discourse type more readily associated with that of the corporate world emerges within the discourse of public education. In the corpus, we now find such terms as *flexible, adaptive,* and *accommodate* that might more typically describe the model employee rather than the model student. This hybridized form of education/corporate discourse acts as a means of placing education as a subset of the corporate world domain wherein the former exists within the expectations and needs of the latter.

If the depictions within the corpus are to be taken at face value concerning explosive changes and the re-fashioning of society and the workplace as we know it, then the best form of education that might prepare students for such challenges may be more aligned with what Hammond (1991) has referred to as the "sophisticated conversationalist" (p. 66).

Hammond (1991) suggests that simply listing various learner descriptors in an effort to provide a picture of the ideal learner is akin to describing parts of the human anatomy when what is needed is an understanding of how the human body moves in space. He argues that

> the fullest development of self-understanding, and thus, the ideal education of the individual, may only occur if the person learns to

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freely and critically express herself in speech and other forms of symbolic action. (p. 66)

He further suggests that real learning is the process through which the individual learns to engage with the many voices that speak to her from her culture and traditions, and yet, find her own emancipation in the midst of that conversation (p. 68).

This more closely follows the ideas re-iterated by the Chant Commission in their recommendation for two primary areas of development – that of the individual's potential and of citizenship. They suggested that the two were not only closely linked but relatively inseparable. Together, these aspects of development meet the needs of the individual as well as the needs of society as "the abilities and talents of the pupils" are developed to "the fullest extent" and as students acquire "such qualities of character as are requisite for assuming the responsibilities of good citizenship" (Province of, 1960, p. 14). Similar to the journey described by Hammond for the attainment of other- and self-realization, self-development as well as competence in participating in the community and society at large are fore-grounded in the Chant Report as key features of an optimal education experience. These ideas contrast sharply with the learner as pictured in the corpus; one who is flexible and accommodating, becoming that which is needed to meet the demands and expectations of society, change, and the marketplace.

Language can be described as a "socially and culturally constructed symbol system" (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 102) used by members of social and cultural groups. It is considered to be the means by which one identifies with a group, conveying and understanding ideas through shared resources. These resources, as presented in the first chapter, are termed members' resources (MR) in CDA. These form the 'habitus' of individuals in society. If we are to accept the

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proposition of CDA that describes the activating of aspects of MR through interpretive application as being the power to reproduce and sustain those aspects of MR, then the discursive events as discussed in the preceding chapter reproduce value structures in MR that define education, and participants in society, in economic terms. The potential for the discourse that is propagated by these education documents to reinforce the circles of power that favour the corporate world is highly significant. To allow policies issued by government, which evaluate human activity according to economic worth, to go without contest or critique is to permit these ideological structures to reinforce such ideals within the MR – the shared resources – of members of society, further substantiating and empowering this perspective.

In an examination of language as it performs ideological work, Sauer (1989) analyses the language used in the occupied Holland of 1940-45. In his writings, he explores the use of various linguistic forms found in the nation's newspapers that contributed to public receptivity of the Nazi occupation. He suggests that the success of the Nazi occupation was not so much attributable to a reign of terror or to conquest as it was, through the use of language, the result of a re-fashioning of ideological forms that were already in existence in Holland. These strategies effected a new reality that amalgamated the ideologies of Nazism with ideological structures already in existence, making their occupation more acceptable to the public (pp. 4-5). Sauer further states that

> the way in which one formulates something, and the way in which
> the choice of a particular formulation excludes other formulations
> and experiences lies at the heart of the exertion of ideological
> influence. (p. 4)

This type of pro-active ideological influence appears in the use of language found in the corpus of this study. For example, a re-formulation of the value of education in terms of economic advantage is part of the ideological re-

fashioning that is being done. The overarching goal of education is no longer one of simply providing for the intellectual development and citizenship skills of the learner.

Instead, the goal of intellectual development is situated firmly within the context of establishing an economic future for society. The 'formulations' that are down-played in the corpus are such ideas as individual empowerment or individual development for effective democratic participation or for meeting non-economic social responsibilities. There is little to no emphasis placed on there being an intrinsic value to education as far as it provides for the development of the learner's potential as a thoughtful, creative individual who will be better prepared to meet the many (non-economic) challenges that life will bring. The idea of citizenship is not fore-grounded to any significant degree that would conflate the overall economic thrust of the corpus. Rather a new belief system emerges that assigns value according to marketability and worth in the free market. In this respect, the pursuit of a high school diploma or a college degree is deemed worthwhile according to the wage it can secure for an individual in the labour market rather than according to the value it adds, for example, to an individual's thought life.

Harvey (as cited in Torres, 2002) suggests that globalization is the result of "a world-wide economic restructuring which involves the globalization of economies, science, technology and culture" (p. 370). It is this latter item of culture, as a system of beliefs and values, that is being challenged and re-formulated to accommodate the neoliberal perspective of globalization as described in the previous chapter.

The intention to address the needs of business with the Year 2000 reform becomes apparent in the way in which the workplace is given agency and

influence with respect to the school system. This makes promoting the dynamic between business and education a point of concern. In the Cabinet Review of the Year 2000 reform (<u>Province of</u>, 1991) of the corpus, Education Minister Hagen introduced his plan to form a new committee for the purpose of *reflecting the broadest possible social and economic perspective in the new Intermediate and Graduate programs* (n.p.). Entitled the External Advisory Committee on Education Reform, this committee was chaired by Edgar F. Kaiser, Jr., a prominent businessman of Vancouver whose resume´ included Chairman and CEO positions with the Bank of BC, Kaiser Steel Corporation, and Kaiser Resources, Ltd. The primary committee members were to include post-secondary representatives as well as representatives from the business community. In light of the emphasis that the Year 2000 places upon meeting the needs of business, this committee likely acted as an additional means of providing a voice for business needs given the over-representation of members from the corporate world.

In hindsight, the creation and implementation of the Year 2000 has been viewed as a political strategy for securing voter confidence and as an effort that appeared to address the social and economic issues that the province faced throughout the 80s and into the 90s. Education reform was an obvious choice of action for several reasons. First, since the early 80s public dissatisfaction with the economy and jobless rate had grown. This sentiment was fuelled by the rhetoric of the Socred government's policy of Restraint, discussed in Chapter Two. As Minister of Education in the early 1980s, Premier Vander Zalm had taken "education bashing" to a new level (Crawley, 1995, p. 32). He consistently portrayed the school system as a costly, ineffective behemoth draining the economy and teachers as ill-productive workers responsible for graduating

students that were unprepared for the challenges of today. However, by the time the Sullivan Report was released, it was in the Socred's best political interest to 'get on board with education' and promote a radical new reform; which they did – Year 2000 (p. 32).

The Post-Year 2000 Experience

The Year 2000 has persistently been described as a reform designed to benefit individual learners. As detailed at the end of Chapter Two, the reform essentially failed due to a lack of clarity, communication and commitment on the part of government. However, I suggest that the reform did not fail with respect to the intentions of government to re-fashion the discourse of public education in terms of combining both education and economic interests. In this regard, I find that the Year 2000 policy documents were successful in helping to establish a voice in education discourse for economic and business concerns. The residual of this impact has remained much longer in the policies of BC education than did the Year 2000 reform effort.

Similar to the Year 2000 reform, policy directives that were released subsequent to its cancellation were also found to emphasize the needs of business. For example, employers and the workplace are each assigned roles as Actors with agency while students are simply expected to accommodate. In addition, society appears as Actor in relation to learners as society is personalized through making "new demands and as requiring co-operative, principled individuals" (The Kindergarten, 1994, p. i). These material processes identify an even stronger relationship between society and learners than was seen in the corpus. Learners are further expected to accommodate the new

demands that are being placed on them, not just by change and the workplace, but by society.

In addition, the qualities ascribed to the idealized learner in the policy documents of 1993 and 1994 continue to be valued according to the needs of employers and the demands of the workplace, limiting the intrinsic value of such to the notion of employability. There is little mention of how these attributes might serve students in the development of fulfilling and satisfying lives beyond the world of work or in their roles as active participants in a democratic nation. Moreover, the mandate for public schooling continues to be re-iterated with respect to the goal of providing for a healthy society and prosperous and sustainable economy. In this one phrase, the economy is immutably linked to the goals of education in BC, much to the chagrin of education critics (see Crofton, 1991).

The seeds of the Year 2000 reform period appear to have yielded an environment ripe for the establishment of a new dialogue in education – one that engenders the formation of 'mutual alliances' between business and education in British Columbia. This found immediate expression in the 1994-1996 NDP initiative, the Skills Now program for BC high schools. Lackey suggests that this program represented the NDP's effort to "negotiate an arguably neoliberal agenda" for public education in BC (Lackey, in press). It provided a direct means for addressing the needs and concerns of business in the public education arena. The sound bite, "real skills for the real world" (British Columbia, 1994, n.p.), was used by the Ministry to sell the idea to the public – a program that emphasized skills training in order that the province of BC might "compete in a changing global economy" (as cited in Lackey, in press). In this respect, the Year 2000 reform was successful in re-fashioning education discourse in order to include

the interests of business, even across party lines as the NDP government enacted and carried out their own programs during this period.

The apparent process of revising the education system to meet the needs of business has been criticized by several Canadian researchers. Easton (1999) states that neoliberal ideologies are dominating Canadian education policies and promoting the development of a new "industrial-education complex" (pp. 22-3) designed to provide new workers for industry.

In a study surrounding skills training and employability, Hyslop-Margison & Welsh (2001) argue that the basic assumptions found in the education arena in BC concerning job training initiatives that were developed in order to secure national or global competitiveness are flawed. Reviewing various BC school programs, such as the Career and Personal Planning curriculum of 1995, the Employability Skills for BC initiative of 1996, and the Business Education curriculum of 2000, the researchers propose that skills training for the labour market has become a persistent feature of BC education policy (p. 5). However, their findings suggest that a highly trained workforce (human capital) will not necessarily secure a bright economic future for the province.

In contrast, they argue that labour market forecasts for Canada and other industrialised nations pinpoint growth markets as being entry-level service positions requiring minimal skill or training (Hyslop-Margison & Welsh, 2001, p. 9). They further cite the 2000 report of an Industry Canada panel along with the findings of other researchers that suggest there is no shortage in skills among the Canadian population causing unemployment or labour supply deficits (p. 9). They contend that the real benefit for the corporate world in merging the goals of business and the goals of education is two-fold. First, business receives a more compliant work force trained to accept the attitudes associated with competition

and supply and demand, rather than workers who focus on issues of equality, criticisms of free market practices, or alternative ideological views (p. 14). Second, business benefits from a larger highly skilled labour pool as supply-side pressures for providing lower wages and fewer benefits to skilled workers enhance profits (pp. 12-13). The authors "conclude that career education seems little more than one key cog in the machinery of neo-liberal ideology" (p. 15).

With respect to the overall changes to education discourse that have been seen in the pre-Year 2000 Reform period as compared to the post-Year 2000 Reform period, the findings of this study are highly significant for articulating the series of discursive events that facilitated such. Most significantly, these changes involve the inclusion of neoliberal ideals in the description and justification of the goals of education. A critique of the events and documents that are related to the Year 2000 initiative are important for discovering the reasons for the success with which concerns about the needs of business and skills training have become commonplace themes in BC's education discourse. While similar events have occurred in other nations, the experience in BC is a unique story as has been explored in this study. The Critical Discourse Analysis conducted in this research effort has helped to articulate this experience as far as identifying significant discursive events related to a period during which this re-fashioning of education discourse broke significant ground in BC.

The securing of a neoliberal perspective in education discourse further represents a provincial, national and even international trend that has developed over the last two decades of the twentieth century. It is one that has been experienced by those outside the influence of BC's economic challenges and beyond the animosity found between BC's educators and politicians. It appears to be a perspective that has surfaced in beliefs about education in a number of

countries, such as Great Britain, the US, Australia, and New Zealand (see Magnusson & Langer, 1984; Olssen, 1996) . The most often cited reasons for implementing sweeping educational reforms have included those that are found in the corpus – changing economic times, new information technologies, and global competitiveness.

Fairclough (1995) argues that "from analysis and critique arise possibilities of empowerment and change" (p. 83). It is incumbent upon all citizens of a democracy to question decisions made by leadership and to ponder the articulations of government rhetoric. The critique presented in this paper is significant for the ongoing struggle that exists between competing ideologies. A society must reflect on the assumptions and notions that appear simply as 'given', guarding the wider discourses of public interaction and imagination lest we succumb to the version of those ideals that ultimately, at the expense of the many, profit the few.

APPENDIX 1

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