INDIVIDUALISM IN ADULT EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

There is a line of critique within the adult education literature which remarks on the individualistic nature of the field, its theories, values, and practices. In addition to pointing out the abundant manifestations of individualism -- andragogy is held up as a typical example -- these authors also maintain that individualism is not so much a particular attribute of adult education as a reflection of modern Western culture as a whole.

In light of this general cast of the critique, the intent of this thesis was to examine the statements about individualism in adult education from the perspective of two contemporary philosophers, Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre, in whose works the concept of the individual is seen to be a crucial factor in the development of modern civilization. The question was asked: "How does the adult education critique of individualism measure up against Taylor's and MacIntyre's views about the key cultural and social role of the idea of the individual?"

The analysis involved three tasks: first an examination of the statements about individualism in the adult education literature to determine their central and thematic features; second, the construction of an analytic framework derived from pertinent elements of Taylor's and MacIntyre's work;
third, an assessment of the adult education statements from the perspective of the views presented in the framework.

Conclusions drawn in the analysis were that according to the views of these two philosophers, the adult education critique of individualism provides only a partial picture of the way in which the concept of the individual influences the workings of modern thought and sensibility (taking adult education as a microcosm of wider societal patterns). In addition to being a shaping factor of the status quo, as the adult education critics claim, the concept of the individual is also seen as a shaping factor of views which are most critical of the status quo; the same core values and beliefs underlie both affirmative and critical stances towards individualism, and towards society. For Taylor and MacIntyre, to understand the tensions of modernity requires viewing both stances together in terms not just of their differences but also their close relationship. Thus from their view, the adult education critique fails to adequately account a central ingredient of modernity related to the topic of individualism. The significance of this evaluation for adult education theory and research is that a deeper understanding is needed of the way in which the notion of the individual is woven into the contemporary social fabric, in order to come to terms with "what is really going on" not only in adult education but in the wider scope of human affairs.
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Although a thesis in the social sciences is far from poetry, when T.S. Eliot writes, in "East Coker", of "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings" there is a common bond between the poet's and the thesis-writer's experience. And, as with other kinds of wrestling, the show doesn't go on without an entourage of others who provide support and encouragement. In my corner, I would like to thank my family, the members of my committee, and my fellow students for their assistance, advice, and goodwill. Also, I would like to add a special word of thanks to Penny and Andrea who have helped me to learn that the wrestle is not about conquest but possibility.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: ADULT EDUCATION AND INDIVIDUALISM

A. INTRODUCTION

In the adult education literature, there are a number of writers (e.g. Keddie, 1980; Griffin, 1983; Rubenson, 1982; Youngman, 1986) who have remarked on the individualistic nature of the field. Their remarks about individualism refer to a number of different dimensions of interest, from educational goals, theories, practices, and modes of provision, to societal assumptions underlying how such key notions as "adult" and "education" are understood. Within this diversity, two themes stand out: first, that all the particular concerns about individualism ultimately stem from the predominant tendency within modern Western civilization to privilege individual over societal concerns; and second, that this tendency is a problematic one, with negative effects not just within the field of adult education but also within society at large. Thus, the statements about individualism tend to have a critical thrust, and pose a challenge to the prevailing individualistic ways in which adult education is conceptualized and practiced.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine those statements from the perspective of Taylor (1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1988a, 1988b) and MacIntyre (1971, 1981), two modern
philosophers who explore the concept of the individual within modern society from a broad historical and philosophical perspective. The views of these authors provide a framework whereby the adult education critique of individualism can be analyzed in terms of its acuity and completeness in dealing with the many complexities which lurk within the Pandora's box called "individualism".

B. APPROACH

There are many angles from which such an analysis could be undertaken. It could, for instance, involve detailed analytic scrutiny of the structure and content of each of the statements reviewed. Or it could involve a counter-argument from an opposing point of view. In the present instance, however, it involves the task of assessing the degree of relationship between two bodies of work which are concerned in some respect with similar issues, one in large scale, the other in small scale perspective. The views of Taylor and MacIntyre serve as a kind of (large scale) yardstick against which the (small scale) statements about individualism in adult education are measured. In taking such an approach, criticisms of opposition or specific detail, although valid ones no doubt exist, fall outside the parameters of the study.

The analysis has three main parts. The first is an account of the major statements about individualism in adult
education, as well as in selected additional works from the general education literature. Also included within this part of the analysis is a summary of the common views about individualism among these several works. The second part is an analytic framework derived from the works of Taylor and MacIntyre which provides a context wherein the statements about individualism in adult education can be located within a broader perspective. The third part is an analysis of the critical statements based on the views presented in the analytic framework. In other words, in this part of the analysis the question is asked, "How does the adult education critique of individualism look in the eyes of Taylor and MacIntyre?"

C. ON INDIVIDUALISM

Before going further, some words should be said on the meaning of individualism. It's a word marked by imprecision of usage (Lukes, 1973). Although defined neutrally in the dictionary (Webster's) as "a doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount," a study of the term by Lukes (1973) indicates that since its earliest usage in the late 18th century it has often tended to carry "a pejorative connotation, a strong suggestion that to concentrate on the individual is to harm the superior interests of society" (p. 7). However, it's negative implications are by no means consistent, as seen, for
instance, in Wilde's rhapsodic statement about "'true, beautiful, healthy individualism'" (Lukes, p. 35).

Lukes' main thesis is that the history of the meaning and usage of individualism is reflective of important historical developments and central conflicts within Western civilization. It is a nineteenth-century term with deeper roots in widespread changes in thought leading up to, culminating in and following from the Enlightenment. Central to these changes is a new ideal of human reason, also central are the core values of dignity, autonomy, privacy and self-development. "Individualism" has been used both in condemnation and in support of these changes -- on the one hand, as a rallying cry behind (for example) the Saint-Simonian "critique of the Enlightenment's glorification of the individual" (Lukes, p. 6), and on the other hand exemplified by a Whitmanesque celebration of "the progressive force of modern history --the singleness of man, individualism -- reconciling liberty and social justice" (Lukes, p.30). The equivocal usage of the term individualism is a reflection, Lukes argues, of core ambiguities within Enlightenment thought and culture and much that has been inherited from it (see also Misgeld, 1985; MacIntyre, 1981). These ambiguities are themselves central to the questions which the topic of individualism raises.
D. ON ADULT EDUCATION

Another point which requires preliminary clarification is the meaning of the term "adult education". One definition put forward, with the proviso that "no universally acceptable definition is possible" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 8), is that "adult education is a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9). The intention behind this definition is to avoid narrowly equating education and schooling. (It does not avoid reductionism between education and learning, which is one of the identified manifestations of individualism). However, the tendency remains firmly entrenched, at least among North American and British adult educators, to associate adult education with (primarily educational) institutions. Consequently, the focus of critique by the authors reviewed in the following pages is on adult education in the context of the formal education system.

E. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The topic of individualism in adult education scratches the surface of some very large issues which extend far beyond the scope of this enquiry. Questions about, for instance, the nature of individual identity, the
relationship between the individual and society, and the role of education are perennial; the feat of answering -- or even adequately asking -- them is by no means accomplished here. What is attempted is to open them up for fresh questioning, to have a look at them from a different perspective.

The objection could be made that the approach adopted here is far too wide; that to take such a broad view is to homogenize the issues of the day rather than to bring them into any sort of focus. Admittedly, notions such as modernity and its contrast, pre-modernity, which appear in the analytic framework, run the risk of making a false unity out of cultures, nationalities, philosophies, which are very different. However, a central premise of this study is that, valuable as such differences are, underlying them are unifying characteristics peculiar to the modern age, the extent and influence of which can only be seen in (inevitably sweeping) historic contrast.

F. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The aim of the present chapter has been to provide a general orientation to the concerns prompting the study, and the central questions addressed. Here is a synopsis of the chapters to follow:
Chapter Two provides an overview of the methodology and framework, indicating the adult education sources consulted, and the perspectives used to develop the analytic framework.

Chapter Three is a review of the critical statements about individualism in the adult education literature and in selected works from the general education literature. It consists of a discussion of each of the sources, followed by a summary of the thematic points of critique common to all of them.

Chapter Four is a presentation of the analytic framework. It discusses the views of philosophers Taylor and MacIntyre concerning the nature and problematic features of the notion of individual identity associated with modern Western civilization.

Chapter Five consists of an analysis of the critique of individualism in adult education, in light of the framework derived from Taylor and MacIntyre. The central points of similarity and contrast between the critique and the framework are discussed, and an assessment is made of how the adult education critique looks from Taylor's and MacIntyre's point of view.

Chapter Six is a concluding discussion about the significance of the analysis, and its implications for adult
education theory and research in terms of present conditions and possible future directions.
CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the sources examined in this study. Moreover, it explains what the literature consists of and why these particular works were selected. "The literature" has two components: first, the education literature about individualism, and second, the works by Taylor and MacIntyre which comprise the analytic framework.

B. CHOICE OF LITERATURE

In choosing the adult education literature, the first step was to review an array of works for statements on the topic of individualism. Sources of material for consideration included graduate programme texts and handouts, recent North American and international conference proceedings, journal articles, and dissertations.

1. Sample Selection

Statements about individualism within this literature were infrequent, and many of the references that were made to the term were casual and unelaborated (e.g., Rubenson, 1982; Youngman, 1986; Freire, 1970). However, despite this lack of sustained attention to the topic, a few notable works were found which attended to it in some detail, and
which provided the basis of this analysis. Specifically, works by Tennant (1986), Keddie (1980), Griffin (1983), and Lawson (1985) were considered.

Additionally, some statements about individualism within pre-adult education were also considered, in view of the observation (Keddie, 1980; Griffin, 1983) that the individualistic nature of adult education makes it more like the rest of the education system than unlike it. In particular, statements about individualism by Hargreaves (1980) and Shor & Freire (1987) were included, the former because it is one of the few works which specifically addresses individualism as a focal topic, and the latter because it is a work that is known and often cited within adult education.

As the intention of this study was to examine statements about individualism in their critical aspect, no strong defenders of the individualistic view were considered. This is not because no such defenders exist (see Paterson, 1979); rather, that they fall beyond the scope of the present analysis.

2. Content Analysis

In reviewing the content of the selected literature, there were three central questions guiding the examination:
a. What aspects of adult education (or education generally) are considered individualistic?

b. What criticisms are made about these individualistic features?

c. What are the differences and similarities among these criticisms, i.e., how do the critiques of individualism vary, and, more importantly, what is common among them?

C. ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

1. Individualism and the Individual

The complex semantic history of individualism is not simply a reflection of the vagaries of language or the lax habits of language users. The changing meanings of words often reflect changes in cultural values on many levels. In the case of individualism, a central issue underlying its divergent meanings and usage is the changing view of the individual within society. As Lukes (1973) has noted, individualism is a modern term referring to a characteristically modern Western understanding of the individual and of society. Particularly since the seventeenth-century, the individual has gained a special status within society, which underlies many of the significant changes in recent centuries -- including such diverse developments as the industrial revolution, the secularization of society, and the birth of the novel. Some view such changes as a liberation of the human spirit;
others view them as a grave loss of societal integrity. Where one stands on this issue greatly influences one's assumptions and one's ideals about individuals, society, and, within that, what the role of education is or ought to be.

Thus, one way to provide a context in which to explore the question of individualism in adult education is through an exploration of the development of the notion of the individual with which it is so closely linked. It is from this perspective that the analytic framework of this study was developed. Although such an approach may appear to be simply putting the case of individualism more emphatically rather than locating it within a more sociologically informed perspective, the intention is otherwise. Beliefs about individual identity are themselves socially formed. It is the nature of these beliefs, their source, their influence, rather than the individual as a definitive entity, which is the focus of enquiry.

2. Sources: Taylor and MacIntyre

Two contemporary philosophers whose works inform this perspective are Taylor (1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1988a, 1988b) and MacIntyre (1971, 1981). Taylor's work, although it encompasses a wide range of apparently divergent topics, from distributive justice (1985a) to theories of language (1985c), is centered around a consistent underlying theme:
the interconnectedness between the distinctive features of modernity and the notion of individual identity. The characteristics of the modern age, its achievements and its dilemmas, he centrally relates to the growth of the notion of the single and autonomous individual. MacIntyre, although from a different angle, — considering what he sees as fundamental problems in modern moral philosophy — adopts a similar stance. Both see the major philosophical, theoretical, and societal issues of modern times to be inextricably bound up with the modern understanding of what it means to be an individual.

Both authors maintain that some of the great achievements of modernity -- personal rights, equality, rationality, freedom -- have not been achieved without costs. For Taylor these include such diverse ills as economic patterns of limitless growth, environmental exploitation, and the tyranny of the natural sciences in the conceptualization of knowledge within the academic community. For MacIntyre they include widespread conceptual disarray in moral philosophy and society at large. For both, these problems are reflected and entrenched -- not only, but primarily -- within the modern notion of individual identity; an essential step in coming to grips with them is to explore more thoroughly the relationship between identity and society, its underlying influence on our personal and societal dreams and dilemmas.
These views of course do not go uncontested; one criticism could be made that in addition to being too generalized they are also too limited, they credit individual identity with too causal a role, and minimally account for changes in social structure of which the concept of individual identity may merely be an effect. However, this skirts too closely a chicken-and-egg argument at which both authors would balk. Although their understanding of modernity has essentially to do with the individual, this is not to put the individual in front, running the show. The relationship between identity and society is seen as inextricably connected, regardless of one's focus on the beliefs about the former or the structures of the latter.

There are two main reasons for using the works of these authors as a basis for this analysis. First, the historical perspective used by both authors to contrast the modern view of the individual with pre-modern views brings to light some assumptions which are not so clearly visible in observations from a modern perspective alone. Characteristics show up in the contrast which are generally taken for granted. The modern notion of singular and autonomous individual identity is seen to be only one model of identity, quite different from earlier and other models where identity is a matter more of affiliation (my lineage, community) than difference (the "real me").
Second, their views provide a broad context wherein expressions of individualism and critiques of individualism can be seen together as joint aspects of the growth of modernity, rather than as separate and antagonistic points of view. From this perspective the presence of core values and beliefs which underlie both affirmative and critical attitudes towards individualism equally are brought to light.

3. Relevance to Adult Education

On the surface, there is no explicit connection between the works of these two philosophers and the adult education literature. Their names appear rarely within the pages of adult education scholarship; adult education is mentioned not at all within the pages of their own work.

Nevertheless, a central premise of this study is that an implicit connection exists, and an important one. Philosophical questions which frame the adult education enterprise, whether or not they are articulated, fundamentally include: "what is an adult?" "what is education?" Equally fundamentally, these questions are concerned with beliefs about identity, beliefs about how the institutions of society are formed, how they operate. Taylor and MacIntyre provide a perspective which makes some provocative assertions about the relationship between
identity and the structures of society characteristic — and maybe problematic — of modern civilization. These views, among others, are relevant to adult education as a microcosm of the society of which it is part.

4. A Multidisciplinary Approach

In drawing the contrast between the pre-modern and modern world, between pre-modern and modern versions of identity, both authors draw from a number of different disciplines, from a broad historical scope. The disciplines of philosophy, literature, history, theology and to a lesser extent sociology and psychology, are some of the sources from which they draw. While this makes it a challenge to locate them within a particular intellectual tradition, and provides rather a dizzying chase across a wide academic field to keep up, there is an important point underlying this apparent "grab-bag" effect. Life and thought have a way of not keeping inside the lines. Both authors maintain that day-to-day practice and academic theorizing are of a piece, sharing the same concerns, struggling with the common pursuit of trying to make sense of things. In this light, the separate disciplinary parcels into which intellectual traditions are too often isolated are not so separate -- from each other or from the social world in which they exist -- after all, and ought to be seen together in the interest of getting on with the struggle.
CHAPTER THREE
THE CRITIQUE OF INDIVIDUALISM

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, selected statements about individualism in the adult education and pre-adult education literature are reviewed. This is done in two parts: first, each of the sources is reviewed separately, in terms of its main views and points of critique; second, a synthesis is made of these works in relation to each other, indicating some of their differences as well as discussing four thematic features found to be common among them. The tone of the present chapter is synoptic rather than evaluative, since the analysis of these statements is to be taken up in a later chapter.

B. ADULT EDUCATION SOURCES

A first observation about the critique of individualism in adult education is that it is not an abundantly documented topic; the literature is sparse. However, this situation is to be expected. If, as is the claim, the nature of adult education is individualistic, it is not likely to be labelled as such by its proponents, given the critical implications often associated with the term.

Of the works which do refer to individualism, it is often the case that the term is used more as a slogan than
as a topic discussed in depth (e.g. Chene, 1983; Law, 1982; Freire, 1970; Rubenson, 1982). This literature is largely oriented within a critical pedagogical tradition which associates individualism with other "isms" of the Western world, such as liberalism, capitalism, consumerism. Typical is a marxist critique of adult education by Youngman (1986), which mentions individualism as the "prevailing ethos" (p. 67) of capitalist society but takes the discussion of individualism no further than this. Rather than exploring individualism more deeply, this literature takes the alternative tack of looking at education from a more broadly societal perspective.

Nonetheless, a small selection of works does exist in which the topic of individualism has been pursued at greater depth, in which specific critiques of individualism in adult education have been made. These works will be discussed individually below. Despite their scant number, they provide a representative spectrum of views on current issues within the field, whether "individualism" is specifically at issue or (as is more often the case) not.

1. **Tennant**

One critique of individualism in adult education has been made by Tennant (1986), in an evaluation of the notion of andragogy popularized by Knowles. Andragogy, described by Tennant as a "theory of adult learning" (p. 113), enjoys
wide appeal among adult educators. Despite some strong criticism of its fundamental assumptions (Griffin, 1983; Hartree, 1984), its general "popularity remains undiminished" (p. 113).

Tennant, drawing partially on Lukes (1973), maintains that "Knowles' theory of andragogy contains within it the core ideas of the ethic of individualism" (p. 120). This ethic is one which "places the individual at the centre of a value system which relegates the 'group' to second place" (p. 120). Its core ideas include: "the dignity of the person, autonomy and self-direction, and self-development" (p. 120). These aspects of individualism, for Tennant, "underlie the value system implicit in Knowles' theory" (p. 120).

An obvious reason why Tennant calls andragogy individualistic is its central concern with certain widely held views about the individual. These are largely derived from the humanistic and existentialist philosophy and psychology of Rogers and Maslow. For these theorists, all human beings have a need to become more autonomous, more "authentic" and "self-actualized" as we grow up and grow older. Self-actualization, "is something, we are told, towards which we are propelled. This tendency is . . . a constituent part of our physiological endowment; it is
something which characterizes us as uniquely human" (Tennant, 1986, p. 113-4). The principles of andragogy directly relate this view of individual development to adult learning. Its practices "are designed . . . so that the learning processes of adults are congruent with their need for psychological growth" (Tennant, 1986, p. 114).

Tennant observes that an effect of andragogy's indebtedness to the psychological theory of Rogers and Maslow is a psychotherapeutic orientation towards teaching practice. The teacher is viewed as a facilitator in the learning process and strong emphasis is placed on establishing trust and "goodwill" between teacher and learner. The primary task of a facilitator is to value the personal worth, and respect the ideas and feelings of each individual learner (p. 118-9).

A related observation is that from an andragogical perspective adult learning is viewed primarily in terms of process, rather than content. Content is given a distinctly lower priority; the most important aspect of learning (hence, for Knowles, education), is the psychological growth and well-being of the individual learner.

Tennant's objections to the individualism of andragogy are numerous. First, he takes the point from Keddie (1980) (whose work will be taken up further below) that the view of
the individual implicit within andragogy reflects a middle-class bias and "reproduces middle-class values and styles" (p. 120) which are not societally balanced or just. Also, andragogical teaching practices "can serve to highlight the gap between the rhetoric of individualism and the reality of social control and conformity" (p. 121). The realignment of responsibility and control from educator to learner can be as "restrictive and alienating" (p. 115) as more clearly authoritarian teaching practices, and much more confusing than when the balance of power is more overtly in the educator’s hands.

Tennant’s further critique of individualism points out an ambiguity concerning what the fundamental attributes of human beings are or ought to be. In some instances, "self-direction" is deemed a defining characteristic of adulthood; in others, it is a state to be achieved, which andragogical techniques must foster. In other words, it is not at all clear whether self-direction is an ability or a need. As Tennant states, "Knowles is elusive on this point" (p. 114), and the reason for such elusiveness, he concludes, is that Knowles is dealing only in ideals rather than reality. The picture of the individual portrayed by andragogy is as mythical as the unicorn. What Tennant claims is needed is to abandon some of the myths about adult learning which have general currency and which Knowles supports: the myth that our need for self-direction is rooted in our constitutional make-up; the myth that self-development
is a process of change toward higher levels of existence; and the myth that adult learning is fundamentally (and necessarily) different from child learning. (p. 121)

Tennant's critique of the individualistic nature of andragogical theory raises some pertinent questions about assumptions about the individual which are widely accepted within adult education. However, the scope of his critical observations do not extend beyond matters of educational technique and educator-learner relationships. Broader societal, political, and philosophical questions about adult education's "ethic of individualism" are not addressed.

2. Keddie

A more incisive critique has been made by Keddie (1980), in an analysis which, according to one commentator, provides "one of the most significant insights into the individualistic impulse in adult education" (Law, 1982, p. 17). There are two main thrusts of Keddie's thesis. First, despite rhetorical claims to the contrary, adult education's "ideology of individualism" makes it "more like the rest of the education system than unlike it, [in] both its curriculum and its pedagogy" (p. 45). Second, "the individualistic ideology of adult education functions to obscure the contradictions inherent in the adult educator's role" (p. 45).
The aspects of adult education which Keddie finds individualistic are the same ones which make a notion such as andragogy so appealing. They include the widespread emphasis on meeting individual needs as a primary pedagogical objective, as well as the related "emphasis on student-centredness and the development of the whole person" (p. 47) as chief pedagogical principles. These concerns, plus the additional oft-stated claim that "the education of adults requires distinctive teaching skills" (p. 45) because of the distinctive psychological characteristics of adulthood, are what supposedly make adult education unique and special, and distinct from the rest of the education system.

Keddie takes exception to this claim to distinctiveness. In her view, such a claim is a way of justifying adult education's marginality and lack of status within the rest of the education system. Further, she notes a strong similarity between adult education and primary education, which also occupies a low status position in the formal education system and prides itself on the distinctiveness of its student-centred approach. However, the only difference that Keddie sees is that instead of focusing on individual achievement as in "the high-status elitist tradition of higher education and the academic streams of secondary schools" (p. 49), the focus is transferred to individual need. The effect is not to
differentiate adult or primary education from the individualistic formal system, but to include them as low-status kin.

In Keddie's view, there are many adverse consequences of individualism throughout the education system, regardless of age group primary or adult, regardless of status high or low. First of all, it fosters a middle-class bias in terms of how human nature is understood. The "notion of individuality as a desirable personality goal is not universal, but tends to be found in those cultures where high status is obtained by competitive individual achievement" (p. 54). Second, she notes that there are certain restrictions influencing how individuality ought properly to be expressed; ironically, "individualism tends to produce uniformity rather than diversity" (p. 46).

In addition, the needs-meeting, person-centred orientation of much adult education ideology leads to a market-oriented manner of provision for the middle-class and a treatment-oriented approach towards less privileged classes. To meet the needs of the middle-class, adult education courses are marketed, cafeteria-style, and curriculum development follows the whims and tastes of popular consumer demand. However, to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged, adult education is provided as a treatment of individual deficiency (e.g. ABE) rather than
a matter of individual choice. In the latter case, the "problems presented by individuals [are separated] from the social and political order which creates these problems" (p. 57). The conditions which promote individual achievement create the obverse "individualization of failure" (p. 57). Thus, in adult education as in other dimensions of the education system, the "concepts of individual need and student-centredness are used to legitimate an ideological commitment . . . to the status quo" (p. 62) -- a status quo, in Keddie's view, riddled with class bias, inequalities and imbalances.

Keddie goes on to point out that in theorizing about education, as in practice, a further problem with individualism is the manner in which individual identity it conceived. The individual is abstracted from social and historical context and understood as an autonomous monadic entity. Not only is this understanding culturally specific, as mentioned earlier, and therefore not as universal as it is made out to be, it is also false. It masks the true manner in which identity is socially constituted and embedded in the language, practices, politics, of human communities. This masking is, in itself, politically significant, since it serves the status quo to safeguard the powerful and to keep the powerless isolated and unaware.
To change this situation, in Keddie's opinion, would require further efforts to radicalize the nature of the adult education enterprise, beginning with critiques, such as her own, which "examine its practices critically" (p. 63). Her views have been associated with the "new" sociology of education (Law, 1982), whose authors (e.g. Apple, 1980; Young, 1971) hold that education typically has a reproductive rather than transformative function within the social system, and thus unwittingly perpetuates societal problems which it is supposedly working to ameliorate. However, through radical approaches to education, the potential for societal transformation exists. "The issue is not whether individuals have needs nor whether they should be met but how those needs are socially and politically constituted and understood, how they are articulated and whose voice is heard" (Keddie, p. 63). The starting place for radicalization is critique, critique of the forms and influences of individualism being first and foremost.

3. Griffin

Like Keddie's, Griffin's (1983) critique of the "ideology of individualism" focuses primarily on the institutional provision of adult education within the British education system. However, the orientation of his work is more broadly theoretical than Keddie's, within a broader scope of educational alternatives. Griffin's focus is not on individualism per se but on curriculum theory in
adult and lifelong education; his discussion of individualism is not prolonged, but it is central to his thesis.

In Griffin's analysis, "mainstream" (i.e. institutional) forms of adult and lifelong education are individualistic on three dimensions. On a philosophical dimension, adult education "turns out to be concerned primarily with the self-development of the individual, a prescription heavily reinforced by the scientific contribution of psychological learning theory, which is itself so much concerned with concepts of the self" (p. 92). This concern is expressed in the predominance of what Griffin calls "adult characteristics" approaches to adult education theory, which are "based on the attempt to establish a view of adult education as a distinctive category by virtue of philosophical, psychological, or organisational characteristics of adulthood" (p. 47). Andragogy is a typical example, in its view of adulthood "as essentially a category of individual development" (p. 54) and its reduction of the "social functions of adult education . . . to the sum of the purposes of individual learners" (p. 60). This approach to theory is, for Griffin, very short-sighted, and fails to adequately account for the role of cultural and social forces such as ideology, and power in shaping pedagogy and curriculum. Further, Griffin echoes Keddie in calling adult education's claims to
distinctiveness erroneous. Rhetoric to the contrary, "adult education reproduces, rather than transforms the categories of schooling" (p. 202).

On an administrative dimension, individualism is reflected in the emphasis on needs, access, and provision in the way in which adult education is organized, without attending to how these things are socially and politically constituted. Accordingly, "curriculum development in adult education becomes synonymous with the process of ascertaining need" (p. 79) driven by a market-oriented model of commodity consumption. Griffin's criticism is that although a needs-meeting organizational approach may be the most economically and institutionally convenient, there are deleterious consequences. Curriculum content is impoverished, and the social forces which cause needs and delimit access and provision are not addressed or dealt with.

The third dimension on which adult education is individualistic is that of practice. Regarding methods, he claims that "the dominant methodological paradigm of the 'adult learning characteristics' approach seems to be one of extreme individualism" (p. 60). Educational objectives focus on individual outcomes, and educational techniques focus primarily on the learning processes of individuals,
with little reference to cultural determinants and social consequences of learning.

What "brings philosophy, administration and practice into relation" (p. 92), for Griffin, is an overriding "ideology of individualism" which affects the entire education system, and which arises from the particular cultural conditions in which education is located. "In Western industrialised societies individualism has a cultural distinctiveness" (p. 93). It is this ideology which underlies the prevailing reductionism within adult education between education and schooling on the one hand, and education and learning on the other.

From Griffin's view, adult education largely reproduces rather than transforms the forces of individualism and tends thus "to defeat the larger claims sometimes made for its social and political potential" (p. 204). In order for this potential to be realized, what is needed is for the emphasis in adult education curriculum development to be shifted from its organization around matters of "technique, methodology and administration . . . [to] be organised around the problems of redefining, redistributing and reevaluating knowledge in social, cultural and political conditions" (p. 203). To this end, Griffin argues, in the same vein as Keddie, that a wider sociological perspective against a background of more radical critique is required in order for
adult education to be more adequately conceptualised and less anachronistically practiced.

4. **Lawson**

Lawson's (1985) analysis of individualism begins with the statement that "a philosophy of individualism runs through liberal adult education" (p. 219), expressed in such educational goals as self-development and "the idea of developing 'autonomous man'" (p. 219). He goes on to remark that critiques of individualism, such as those of Griffin and Keddie, "must be taken seriously as a challenge at the theoretical level" (p. 219). For Lawson, alone among those in adult education who take up the question of individualism, this requires a historical and philosophical analysis of the changing view of the individual exhibited by historical changes in politics and thought.

Lawson's specific concern is with "liberal" adult education (although he makes no mention of what specific modes of adult education this means), and he states that there has been a movement away from older "utilitarian" forms of liberal adult education "towards a 'deontological' type of liberalism which is highly individualistic in character" (p. 219). The significance of deontological liberalism is its foundation "upon the idea of justice and rights rather than upon a conception of a good society" (p. 220). A core thesis of this view is that society is
composed of a plurality of independent, individual persons. Individual rights are given priority to the societal good, and the primary right of all is the "right to choose".

Lawson traces the early expression of these views to the 17th century writings of Locke, restated in modern form in the works of Rawls and Nozick. The signal contribution of Locke is the notion that "'rights' possessed by all individuals . . . are antecedent to the establishment of society. These rights are the product of social contracts agreed by individuals of equal status" (p. 222), and the role of the State is to look after the rights of individuals. Correspondingly, justice is a matter of individual liberty; the 'good' is a question of "personal rather than collective concern" (p. 223).

Rawls and Nozick both pick up the same theme of "robust defence of the individual" (p. 223), in which rights and justice are equated to personal autonomy and the defence of individual self-interest. Personal autonomy is an intrinsic virtue which exists prior to any notion of collective good. Thus, in terms of education, a goal such as self-development is of self-evident importance. It is an end in itself and is, in the furtherance of individual growth, intrinsically worthwhile. Further, the whole enterprise of education is of value for what it does for individuals, rather than what
it contributes to society. "On this view 'education' is a 'good', not something which furthers the good" (p. 223).

Within contemporary adult education, Lawson introduces as an example of the influence of deontological liberalism, "andragogical theory", and its emphasis on individual learning processes. "'Learning', which is an undifferentiated concept, has tended to emerge in preference to the value-based and normative concept of 'education'. It is regarded as more important that individuals should learn what they choose, than that they should learn something important and worthwhile" (p. 226). Worthwhileness is lodged in the process of choosing rather than in what is chosen. According to the general trend, "it is fashionable to say that adult education is about process not content. This is eminently a deontological view" (p. 227).

But, Lawson goes on to ask, "is it an adequate one?" (p. 227). Clearly, in his view, it is not. He voices concern that such a philosophy could lead to social disintegration rather than liberation. Deontological liberalism, "as a tradition produces societies which no longer debate or seek 'the good'. It is a philosophy suited to a society which has no vision. Its clearest manifestation is in a free-enterprise monetary economy" (p. 227) wherein monetary values come to be the only values. In adult education, as in society as a whole, questions of
purpose, worthwhileness, and intrinsic societal good are overridden by questions of personal gain and institutional profit and loss.

Lawson's critique of individualism is from a quite different perspective than the above authors. Tennant's analysis lacks a political dimension. Keddie and Griffin are critical of individualism as an intrinsic aspect of liberalism which they oppose equally, and lean towards alternatives informed to some degree by marxist theory. Lawson's approach tackles individualism as a problematic offshoot of a liberal philosophy ("non"-deontological?) which he, in the main, upholds.

C. EDUCATION SOURCES

A point that recurs in the works of the above authors is that individualism is not unique to adult education and that, at least in this regard, it is something which links adult education to the formal education system rather than the contrary. For this reason, it was thought fitting to include some reference to the critique of individualism within the educational literature at large. However, since adult education remains the primary focus of the study, only two works have been selected for consideration. Further, it should be noted that this is to some extent to fall in with the pertinacious tendency to consider adult education only in its narrowly institutional forms, and to ignore its wider
non-formal and alternative manifestations. The only excuse for this is that the views cited above require a consideration of the education system to be brought in, and constraints of time and space require the manifold other dimensions of adult education to be left out.

1. Hargreaves

Hargreaves (1980) opens his critique with the statement that the "education system is so deeply imbued with and obsessed by . . . the cult of individualism that the social functions of education have become trivialized" (p. 187). In his opinion, education has become overly concerned with the personal development of individuals, and attends too little to the creation of a better society; it encourages an emphasis on individual achievement, at the expense of societal integrity and solidarity.

Individualism is categorized by Hargreaves into three distinct forms: developmental individualism, meritocratic individualism, and moral individualism. Developmental individualism is an outgrowth of "Rousseauian romantic" traditions including the "now widespread belief . . . that education must be centrally concerned with the growth and development of the individual person" (p. 187). Meritocratic individualism has "roots in the Protestant ethic and in our conceptions of a democratic society" (p. 187), modernly expressed in the concern for equality of
opportunity, and efforts to overcome "social-class-related barriers which stand in the way of individual progress" (p. 188). Moral individualism is a result of the decline of affiliation between education and religion, from which has arisen "a new emphasis on the acquisition by pupils of a rational ethical stance" (p. 188). All three of these forms of individualism constitute "the unquestioned and taken-for-granted assumptions of most contemporary teachers and our education system" (p. 188).

The ways in which Hargreaves perceives individualism to be manifested in the education system are various. They are reflected, for example, in aims of education which strongly emphasize the development of certain kinds of personal attributes. "When teachers talk about their aims, the rhetoric is replete with concepts such as 'individual development', 'personal growth', and a whole host of concepts -- independence, autonomy, self-reliance, initiative -- which can all be prefaced with the word 'individual'" (p. 193). Correspondingly absent from the working vocabulary of teachers are collective or corporate concepts such as "team spirit", and "esprit de corps". Collective experiences are not sufficiently provided in the classroom; hence, students "must satisfy their collective needs outside school" (p. 194).
Educational individualism is not just restricted to the language of educational aims; Hargreaves also sees it reflected in the role of the teacher in the classroom and the relationships of teachers amongst each other. There is, in particular, a "high valuation placed by teachers on the autonomy of each teacher in his or her own classroom" (pp. 194-5). The teaching force, in prizing privacy and independence, is "progressively socialized into a severely defective capacity to co-operate with one another. . . . Collaboration in joint enterprise, the strong sense of cooperation, is notoriously absent among teachers" (p. 195).

Individualism within the teaching profession extends beyond the classroom and the school. Emphasis on teacher autonomy also serves to discourage rather than encourage professional solidarity. Teachers "remain fragmented in their professional associations and unions; . . . any collective voice of teachers on the great educational issues of our day is prevented from expressing itself" (Hargreaves, 1980, p. 195).

The orientation of Hargreaves' critique of individualism in education is based on a sociological tradition informed largely by Durkheim. He disagrees with other (notably marxist) sociological perspectives which link individualism to capitalism and assert that once "the distorting structural constraints are removed, educational
individualism can follow its true course and realize its ends in a marxist utopia" (p. 189). On his -- Durkheimian -- view, the problem is not one of distortion but excess. His "argument is that our educational system is excessively individualistic and that even if it were transplanted into a non-capitalist order it would continue to be excessively individualistic" (p. 189).

Hargreaves summarizes Durkheim's view of individualism as follows:

In essence Durkheim believed that the lack of solidarity and integration in modern society sprang from an excessive individualism -- from what he termed 'egoism' and 'anomie' which arise when private interests and greeds burst forth beyond social regulation and group controls. (p. 190)

In order to regain social solidarity, concern for individual interests must be replaced with a concern for individual rights. Hargreaves refers particularly to the later work of Durkheim, which proposes education as the social institution with the most potential to effect societal change, particularly with respect to moral education. Hargreaves concludes on the Durkheimian note that the answer to the challenges facing education and society today lies in the realization that the "primary purpose of education is moral education, and . . . moral education is crucially a corporate enterprise" (p. 198). If education is to help change society, this is where it must begin.
2. **Shor & Freire**

With the exception of Tennant (an Australian), the authors mentioned above have all been British. By contrast, Shor & Freire (1987), in a "talking book" of dialogues on educational transformation, provide a critique of educational individualism within a specifically American (U.S.) context. In Shor's words, American culture has "deep roots in individualism" (p. 110), historically and currently: "We have a Utopian devotion to 'making it on your own' . . . . This is a culture in love with self-made men" (p. 110). Shor sees individualism, pedagogy, and economics as closely intertwined. The pedagogical "emphasis on the 'self' is the educational equivalent of the capitalist infatuation with the lone entrepreneur" (p. 110).

For Shor, the growth of individualism in America is tied to the historical development of the United States as a nation. "Individual dreams of freedom and prosperity in slaves and immigrants as well as in slaveholders and captains of industry molded this society" (p. 113). Given this founding ideal, social movements have had limited success in American historical experience. Although in times of political upheaval, such as the 60s, social movements have had some influence, the overriding ideology in American culture has been one of self-help and private interest.
A major problem which Shor connects with American individualism is a national spirit of self-absorption which "serves the system's need to divide and conquer among people" (p. 111). It creates a conformist culture, displaces class solidarity with mass identity, and contradicts the very individualism it presupposes. American culture becomes "enveloped into a mass exercise for improvement via the appeal to individualism" (p. 113). Collective efforts for social transformation are obscured, and solutions to societal ills are sought instead -- in the boardroom and in the classroom -- in "quick fixes, dynamic changes, fast cures, practical methods, manageable remedies" (p. 112).

Freire's contribution to the dialogue provides a South American perspective on American life and thought. He sees a tendency among American pedagogues to think of the notion of "empowerment" as an "individual or psychological event" (p. 112) rather than as a question of "how the working class ... engages itself in getting political power" (p. 112). As with Shor, he views individualism as a peculiarly American phenomenon, deeply embedded within the American social and pedagogical systems, making it difficult (but not impossible) to adapt his revolutionary pedagogical techniques from a third to first world setting.
The strong identification of individualism with Americanism exhibited by Shor and Freire is not an issue that falls within the scope of this study. However, one can extrapolate from their specifically national interpretations of individualism a general orientation that aligns them with the critical pedagogy of Keddie and Griffin in adult education. Indeed, Freire especially has been a central figure in both pre-adult and adult education in emphasizing the potentially transformative function of education both inside and outside the education system.

D SUMMARY

Taken as a whole, what can now be said about this collection of statements about individualism in education? First of all, it is evident that among the half dozen authors reviewed above, there is a range of interpretations of what individualism means, how it is manifested in education, and why it is of concern. Different authors highlight different features in their discussions. For some, the emphasis is on individualism in the pedagogical (or andragogical) setting. Tennant, for example, examines student-centred principles and practices of andragogy, and Hargreaves looks at the predominance of individual rather than collective experiences between and among students and teachers in the school. For others, notably Keddie and Griffin, the emphasis is on individualism in the organization and provision of adult education services. For
these authors the individualistic needs-meeting orientation of much adult education perpetuates the existing inequities and class biases of the status quo, masking them in the rhetoric of "student-centredness". A third area of emphasis is found in the works of Lawson and Shor & Freire, who are most interested in the philosophical and historical background of individualism within society at large, as expressed in the notion of "rights" in liberal philosophy (Lawson) or the ideal of the "rugged individual" in the American Dream (Shor).

However, underlying these variations in emphasis and detail, there are unifying features which link the above works together. These have been grouped into four themes, as presented below:

1. **Individualism and Society**

   One common theme is that the individualistic nature of the education system is a reflection of the social system within which it is located. Although they acknowledge (and in some cases stress) that education is by no means restricted to schooling, it is here where the thrust of the critique of individualism is focused in terms of how formal education reproduces existing societal conditions. Individualism is for the most part portrayed as a broadly societal rather than a strictly educational concern.
Griffin expresses this most clearly in his statement that . . . for a variety of reasons to do with history, culture and politics an ideology of adult education will obviously be relative to social conditions, where ideology will equally find reflection in administration and practice. The 'individualism' of adult education only arises in societies relative to a socially-determined notion of 'individualism' itself. (1983, p. 93).

This observation is what also both Lawson and Shor are getting at -- although from quite opposite directions -- in their discussions of individualism not in terms of education per se, but in terms of political philosophy (Lawson), and popular American culture (Shor). These are simply different ends of the same societal spectrum, reflecting the same basic theme that education is individualistic because that is the nature of the society in which we live.

2. Individualism and the Individual

A second unifying theme is that individualism is very closely related to how the concept of the "individual" is understood within the context of contemporary civilization. In other words, within the modern social fabric there are certain normative assumptions about what constitutes good or bad, normal or abnormal individual human characteristics.

For the adult education authors the general tenor of these assumptions is captured by the notion of andragogy. Andragogical principles reflect widespread beliefs in the importance of such attributes as self-direction, internal motivation, personal responsibility and autonomous choice in
human development and in the learning process. The individual is (or ought to be) a unique and autonomous entity, for whom psychological growth involves the discovery and release of one's "talents, capacities, and potentialities" (Tennant, 1986, p. 113). The two following quotes cited by Lawson (1985) represent statements with which many in adult education would concur:

'Education' according to Paterson (1979: 15) 'directly touches us in our personal being, tending our identity at its roots and ministering directly to our condition as conscious selves aspiring in all our undertakings to greater fullness and completeness of being. (p. 219)

For Wiltshire (1976: 139) 'individuation' is the goal of adult education in the sense of 'self-discovery and self-development voluntarily undertaken.' (p. 220)

Although the term andragogy is unique to adult education, the values and assumptions about individual growth and identity which underlie it are not: The Rogerian and Maslovian aims of "personal growth", "self-direction" and "self-actualization" flourish as much in the pedagogical literature as in the andragogical literature.

3. What's Wrong with the Individual

A third theme, arising directly out of the second, is that this way of understanding the individual may be very fundamental to the modern Western view of "the way we are", but it is in several ways problematic.
a) It contains, first of all, an unacknowledged socio-political bias. For Keddie this bias reflects a middle-class value system, closely related to middle-class notions of individual competitiveness and achievement. For Shor the bias is characterized as particularly in tune with American culture. For Lawson it reflects peculiarly modern and Western beliefs, in contrast to cultures such as China, where "it is the commonality rather than individuality which is the major concern" (Lawson, 1985, p. 220). Regardless of these variations in where the expression of individualism is considered most acute, the suggestion runs through all of the sources that, as Lawson puts it:

'Individuality' and 'self-identity' are not simply empirical facts. They represent implicit claims for a certain kind of status and they are ethical concepts. . . . The idea of a freely choosing 'autonomous self' is at the centre of much of our thinking. The integrity of a unique self and a concern for its preservation, literally a concern for 'self-interest', are important values. But there are other ways of seeing things. . . . (p. 220)

b) A second critique is that this view of the individual is one-dimensional. The individual is conceived in terms of the priority of the "authentic self" without fully acknowledging the social and historical dimensions by which the self is constituted. For Hargreaves, "individual identity has a social and corporate component" (1980, p. 197) which is overlooked by a pedagogy committed to educational aims highlighting individual development and achievement and de-emphasizing the importance of collective
and corporate learning experiences. For Keddie and Griffin, the concern is more political than pedagogical: The prevailing view "of the learner 'as an abstract and universal individual' rather than as 'a person situated in a historical, social and existential context'" (Keddie, 1980, p. 47, citing Gelpi) is not only one-dimensional in itself but also fails to recognize the implicit connection between the person and the forces of power within society.

c) Third, the challenge is made that within this particular notion of the individual there are contained some contradictions. A recurrent point of criticism is that individuality seems to lead more often to uniformity than difference. Freire points out about self-improvement programs that, "on the one hand, they intensely stimulate individualism. On the other hand, they are consistently prescriptive" (p. 113). Keddie too suggests that expressions of individuality are often sanctioned and proscribed and she includes a quote from King about the student-centred ideology of primary education that "an ironic consequence of defining children as individuals were attempts to reduce individuality" (as quoted in Keddie, 1980, p. 52). Thus, there is a thematic question about how truly individual the individualistic notion of personal identity actually is.
d) A fourth criticism is that the individualistic "concept of the 'self' is itself a fiction" (Lawson, 1985, p. 226). It is an idealistic vision of a certain kind of self-concept which is not a realistic picture of human identity. For Tennant this is characterized as a collection of mythical beliefs about the individual and about adult learning. What is needed in his view is a closer alignment between ideals and reality. For Lawson what is needed is to ask harder questions about whether or not the ideals themselves may do more harm than good. In all the sources there is a theme that education theorists and practitioners need to become more aware and more critical of the false universality of the notion of the individual within education and within society in order to better understand "what is really going on", in order for education to be better attuned to the real workings of society, and in order for society itself to better diagnose and remedy the sources of its own malaise.

4) What's Wrong with Society

The fourth theme, as hinted by the concluding statement above, is that contemporary society indeed suffers from an internal malaise. The view common to these authors is that there are serious problems with an education system and a culture that fosters such an individualistic view of the person and of the way society is organized.
The problems touched on are many and wide-ranging. For Hargreaves, after Durkheim, they concern "the threats to solidarity in advanced, industrialized society. . . ." (p. 190) and are found in such fruits of excessive individualism as "corporate egoism" on the one hand, and "alienated and isolated individuals" (p. 197) on the other. For Keddie, there is a "severing of the connection between the political nature of social problems and the individual who presents problems" (p. 57), and those on the down side of the power balance suffer the consequences and often take the blame. In Lawson's view, the problem is of a society unpinned from any sense of intrinsic value or societal good, "a society which has lost its way" (p. 227).

These concerns about the present state of society and its hopes for the future are connected for these authors with further concerns about the role of education in either perpetuating existing conditions or somehow contributing to change for the better. For all of them, education has been a source of problems, yet has the potential to contribute to the process of societal transformation. Although none of the sources provide a clear picture beyond "change from", of what might be entailed in "change to", change is consistently urged as a necessary and pressing thing. Change for the most part is equated with an initial change in awareness: to become more critically aware first of the conditions of individualism and second its limitations are
the first steps in meeting the problems for society which individualism is seen to pose.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

A. INTRODUCTION

One way of examining the statements about individualism in the adult education literature is to locate them within a broader context. To this end, an analytic framework was developed. The purpose of the present chapter is to give an account of that framework. It includes a discussion of the structure of the framework and its intent, as well as the presentation of its main components and features.

B. THE FRAMEWORK

There are many kinds of analytic schemes, depending upon the nature of what is to be analyzed and the aims of analysis. Turner (as cited by Kastner, 1988) isolates two basic typologies:

naturalistic/positivistic schemes which try to develop a tightly woven system of categories that is presumed to capture the way in which the invariant properties of the universe are ordered; and descriptive/sensitizing schemes which are more loosely assembled congeries of concepts intended only to sensitize and orient researchers to certain critical processes. (p. 40)

The orientation of the present framework follows the latter scheme, in keeping with the abstract nature of the topic under study, and the aim of bringing to light (or "sensitizing" the reader to) some of the underlying issues implied by the term individualism but often not examined in depth.
The framework was organized around the three following assumptions, which were thought to be essential to the meaning of individualism: 1) Individualism concerns the nature of the individual, particularly in regard to the relationship between the individual and society. Basic to the definition of individualism is that individual interests are separable from societal ones, and take some priority. 2) Individualism has a peculiarly modern derivation, closely tied to the development of contemporary Western civilization. 3) The individualistic nature of contemporary Western civilization has many problematic aspects for those who espouse different values. To talk about individualism is for many an occasion to talk about the ways in which modern society is seen to have gone wrong.

To construct a framework for exploring these assumptions -- in and of themselves as well as in their expression within the adult education literature -- the works of Taylor and MacIntyre were used as primary resources. The reasons for drawing on these particular authors have already been touched on in Chapter Two, but a brief recap may be helpful here. Mostly the value of their contribution lies in the perspective they provide concerning the points above. With regard to the first point, both Taylor and MacIntyre explore the connections between the
individual and society, not simply in terms of social behaviour, but in terms of how individual identity is reflected and entrenched on all societal dimensions, including language, morality, aesthetics, epistemology to name just a few. Of course, in exploring these connections there are different ways one could go, focusing more sharply on either the individual or on the societal side of the coin. Both Taylor and MacIntyre opt for the former, owing to the central importance they place on the belief in the priority of the individual as a characteristic feature of modern culture.

With regard to the second point, both take a wide historical perspective, and maintain that the concept of the individual of contemporary Western civilization is a cultural and historical creation, "intelligible only as the end product of a long and complex set of developments" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 30). Third, they both start from the premise that there are troubles in our times, and that the nature of these troubles and the nature of individual identity are closely related. The modern world is in "a state of grave disorder," says MacIntyre (1981, p. 2), and the modern individual stands in its midst. For both authors, any progress towards correcting the former requires facing clearly and unblinkingly the central position of the latter. Thus, the concerns taken up by Taylor and MacIntyre were deemed to have a bearing on the present study in terms
of placing adult education concerns regarding individualism within an encompassing perspective.

On these matters there are other, and at times very different, opinions (see, for example, Foucault, 1988a, 1988b; Rorty, 1976; Strawson, 1959); however with the purpose in mind of keeping the study within manageable bounds, it was considered that these lie beyond the scope of the present work.

Following from the above three points, in structuring the framework the views of Taylor and MacIntyre have been organized around three thematic questions: 1) What is an individual? 2) How is the concept of the individual in the present different from in the past, and what historical developments are associated with the transition into modernity? 3) What are the problematic aspects of the modern concept of the individual and how do these relate to broader societal problems?

The views outlined below take a very wide historical and multidisciplinary perspective; the interests of synthesis involve some sacrifice of detail. Further, these views are not value-free. They articulate the position that not only is the modern world in grave disorder, but that modern theory largely fails to even acknowledge much less account for or begin to come to terms with the problems of
our time. Such a stance is bound to invite disagreement and debate. It is held by these authors and the author of this study that right answers remain a long way off, but that the only way towards them is by taking on and taking up whatever debate ensues.

C. WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL?

The "conception of the individual," Taylor claims, "is an historic creation" (1985b, p. 257) particular to modern times, involving views about the uniqueness and autonomy of individual persons which are rather different from the views of our cultural ancestors, different from other (non-dominant) cultures existing today. Thus, a first point in considering the question of "what is an individual?" is that it is a particular kind of something. It involves the particular way in which some human beings may define themselves (a unique, autonomous, and separate person) -- but not all of them.

A more generic term to describe this is "identity". As Taylor (1985c) puts it, the concept of identity involves the manner in which human beings define themselves, how we know who and/or what we are:

To define my identity is to define what I must be in contact with in order to function fully as a human agent, and specifically to be able to . . . discriminate . . . what is really of worth or importance both in general and for me. To say that something is part of my identity is to say that without it I should be at a loss in making those discriminations which are characteristically human. . . .
[Identity is what] helps constitute the horizon within which these discriminations have meaning for me. (p. 258)

Within this statement, two particular words are noteworthy. They are: discriminations and horizon. Some further elaboration of them shows more clearly the significance of each. The former has an evaluative dimension; in fact, Taylor (1985c) uses discriminations and evaluations synonymously:

Our identity is defined by our fundamental evaluations. The answer to the question 'What is my identity?' cannot be given by any list of properties . . . about my physical description, provenance, background, capacities, and so on. All these can figure in my identity, but only as assumed in a certain way. (p. 34)

Identity, as these quotations suggest, clearly, isn't something that can be easily pinned down. It involves biographical facts, of course, but more elusively it involves the manner in which the facts are interpreted and valued, the manner in which they matter.

This is where horizon comes in. Taylor uses it as a metaphor, similar to its use in contemporary hermeneutics (e.g. Gadamer 1975, 1982), in reference to that aspect of meaning which is so central to our understanding of things that it is hardly acknowledged as meaningful at all. It is background landscape, as it were, which goes unseen, but provides the contours by which we know where (or in this case, who) we are. "This horizon is, of course, never fully
Identity is therefore something more than personal characteristics and circumstances; inseparable from these are background evaluations by which they gain significance. The horizon of identity shapes the way in which certain actions are deemed worthy or unworthy, certain qualities are valued above others. These evaluations "are so integrally part of me that to disvalue them would be to reject myself" (Taylor, 1985c, p. 34).

Thus, in Taylor's view, the individual is a particular species, to adopt a biological metaphor, within the genus identity, whose natural habitat is the world of modern times. Maclntyre (1981) holds a similar view, also seeing the individual as a particular variant of identity, a uniquely modern invention (p. 59) (a nefarious invention, in MacIntyre's eyes, centrally implicated in the ethical and epistemological decay of contemporary civilization. But to this we will turn later).

Towards a definition of identity, MacIntyre draws on Parfit's distinction between "either/or" criteria of strict identity, and "psychological continuities of personality which are a matter of more or less" (1981, p. 201). (Am I Jane Dawson? Yes or no. Am I the same person now as I was
ten years ago in terms of aptitudes, interests, etcetera? More or less.) MacIntyre's point is that both of these matter in defining identity, but are insufficient to define it wholly. What's missing is something like Taylor's notion of horizon; the word MacIntyre uses is "background" (1981, p. 202).

Background, in MacIntyre's sense, is related to what he calls "narrative unity" (1981, pp. 190-209) which involves, along with the discriminations, or evaluations discussed by Taylor, the further dimension of "membership in communities" (p. 203). Thus, in addition to the necessary psychological continuities, identity also requires moral, historical and social continuities. To jump ahead slightly once again to MacIntyre's critical appraisal, where the modern position of the individual within society goes wrong is in privileging the former, and insufficiently attending to the latter three; in other words, "when man is thought of as an individual prior to and apart from all roles . . . 'man' ceases to be a functional concept" (1981, p. 56).

A related term, which MacIntyre uses more frequently than identity, is "self". The self is a bearer of identity, again influenced by historical and cultural context. The distinctly modern self -- the individual -- MacIntyre characterizes by the epithet "emotivist". This is the term
he uses to encapsulate his critical views; what is meant by this will be explored at greater length later on.

To sum up, in response to the question "what is an individual?" both Taylor and MacIntyre would claim that it is a particular cultural and historical variant of identity. Identity is a difficult concept to define because it consists not only of the biographical facts of a person's life, but also of the rather shadowy evaluative criteria (metaphorically in the background or on the horizon) by which these facts gain (or do not gain) significance. What is distinctive about the modern individual, how it differs from identity in past time, and how it developed hand in hand with modernity, are taken up further below.

D. THE INDIVIDUAL: MODERN AND PRE-MODERN VIEWS

1. The Historical Context

For both Taylor and MacIntyre, the concept of the individual is only understandable as an historical development, and the only way to gain perspective on this concept is by showing an historical contrast. In the "transition into modernity" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 58) which took place, for Taylor, "perhaps pivotally in the seventeenth century" (1985c, p. 258), for MacIntyre a century later, there was a corresponding shift in location of the horizon of identity. Taylor (1985c) summarizes the nature of this shift in the claim "that for the modern, the
horizon of identity is to be found within, while for the pre-modern it is without" (p. 258).

What is entailed in the difference between outer and inner horizon, between the pre-modern and modern identity, can be shown more graphically by means of rough comparative sketches of each identity type. For the sake of simplicity these are necessarily very abstract, ideal representations: stick figures, rather than true-to-life human forms. The intention is not to give a lifelike representation of reality, but rather to highlight essential characteristics in illustration of some basic contrasts.

2. The Pre-modern Identity

If my identity were of the pre-modern type, I would be inclined, according to Taylor (see especially 1985c, pp. 248-288) to think of myself along these lines: The question "who am I?" would be answered in terms of my roles, relationships, beliefs, and affiliations. I am an artisan, for example, of this lineage, of that faith. My identity would be derived largely from these conditions of my existence. I would gain fulfillment in my identity by performing well in my proper duties, by taking my proper place within the household or community. Generally speaking, knowing my identity would be a matter of fitting into an ordained pattern with cosmological, societal and ancestral dimensions. This pattern would define my world;
without it, I would have no place, no meaningful existence, no identity.

MacIntyre reinforces Taylor’s picture with a similar portrait of the pre-modern identity (1981):

I am brother, cousin and grandson, member of this household, that village, this tribe. These are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover ‘the real me’. They are part of my substance, defining partially at least and sometimes wholly my obligations and my duties. (p. 32)

The horizon of identity in this depiction is an outer, relational horizon because it is inclusive of the community and traditions which are not mine by choice but by ascription.

Both authors draw their examples of pre-modern identity from a variety of different cultures and historical epochs. Taylor (1985c, 1988b) makes particular reference to Plato and Aristotle as influential pre-modern protagonists, and refers as well, somewhat anecdotally, to how the pre-modern identity is reflected in medieval and Renaissance thought and doctrine. MacIntyre also draws on ancient Greek, medieval, and Renaissance sources and introduces heroic societies such as the old Icelandic and Irish. Of course, there are many differences among the epochs and cultural traditions collected here under the wide "pre-modern" umbrella. Their unity is by no means harmonious, and is only a unity in terms of the manner of which they contrast
with the (equally cacaphonic) "unity" here called the "modern identity".

3. The Modern Identity

As the holder of a modern identity¹ my response to the question "who am I?" differs from that of my pre-modern ancestor. I have an occupation, a family, and possibly a faith, as before, and these figure in my identity, but there is an essential difference. Social roles and relationships give shape to my identity, but don't constitute it. They are, or ought to be, subordinate and derivative, subject to personal choice. The question "who am I?" is a matter for private reflection, answered by separating myself from outside influences, and realizing what is unique about me in terms of emotions, aptitudes, creative potential. To fulfill my identity requires freeing myself from imposed expectations, and establishing myself as a person capable of autonomous and independent thought and action. It is up to me to draw upon my own inner resources to find meaning and fulfilment. However, to gain insight into and control over my authentic identity isn't easy, it is a lifetime effort — it takes, as Taylor says, "courage, and vision . . . or else education" (1985c, p. 265).

¹ The sketch of the modern identity here is essentially a sketch of the modern man. As Midgely has pointed out, the "whole idea of a free, independent, enquiring, choosing individual, an idea central to European thought, has always been essentially the idea of a male . . . "(1984, p. 51).
This quick sketch is a composite of many contemporary notions, including snippets from (at least) utilitarianism, existentialism, and humanism. However, the common feature, and the point of immediate contrast with the pre-modern identity, is the focus on inner experience. The horizon of the modern identity is within; identity, in this light, is a matter of the uniqueness, difference and singularity of individual persons, prior to outer circumstances. The external "order of things" (Taylor, 1985c, p. 259) of the old view, wherein achievement of the good life, the successful identity, required living up to one's place within that order, has been overshadowed by a modern view wherein such an order appears tyrannical, such an identity inauthentic. The good life, the authentic identity, require freedom from externally imposed order. Taylor makes a palpable analogy to demonstrate the contrast: For the modern, an image of satisfaction is something akin to "the fulfillment of a felt desire for an object, like hunger or thirst; an image for the other would be rather that of approaching a source of light or warmth, for example getting close to a fire" (1985c, p. 259).

The shift from outer to inner horizon of identity didn't happen by itself, isolated from other phenomena of history; rather, it was part of a whole complex of changes in thought and sensibility pivotally, for Taylor, in the seventeenth century. Since that time there have been
massive changes in science and technology, art, religion, philosophy, morality, and everyday life. Underlying them all are two signal features, which particularly pertain to a new understanding of identity: "disengagement" and "interiority" (1985b, 1985c, 1988a, 1988b).

The notion of disengagement is associated with what has been called the "Cartesian turn" (Hollinger, 1985) wherein, after Descartes, an essential attribute of reason comes to be the capacity for thought to examine itself. Rationality is no longer found within nature (as it was, for example, with Plato), but requires separation from embeddedness in the physical world in order to think objectively and dispassionately.

Hand in hand with disengagement comes interiority. Reason, disengaged from the external order of things, comes to be located within the individual himself. "On the old view, there is a logos in things. But the modern view, rejecting meaningful order, understands thought as what happens within subjects. Thought is always in a mind" (Taylor, 1985c, p. 257).

The move towards interiorization is not just an epistemological one. Parallel shifts also occur in many other facets of human existence. Increasing interiorization is also reflected, for example, in significant changes in
artistic expression (Taylor, 1988a). In the case of poetry, prior to 1750 poetics followed closely to established canons and strictly observed formulae. After the mid-1700s (roughly), the rules become less regulatory; poetic achievement becomes more a matter of self-expression, "inner" creativity. With the Romantics and subsequently, the form and language of poetry become much more subjective and idiosyncratic, reflecting personal resonances within the poet himself. One can see clearly the difference between, say,

the formal symmetry of ancient rhyme
in metred rhyming couplets, line by line

and the

word-play; line-alignment and emotional EXPRESSIVITY!!!!
of someone like:

e.e.cummings

MacIntyre's (1981) view of the development and characteristic features of the modern identity dovetails with Taylor's to a great extent. However, for MacIntyre, the pivotal century is the eighteenth, with the most significant manifestation of the modern identity being a changed understanding of morality evidenced in both moral theory and in moral commonplaces of everyday life. Although he sees the impulses of modernity slowly gathering in the centuries prior to the eighteenth, it is at that time, in philosophical developments exemplified especially in the
works of Hume, Diderot, and Kant, when comes a "final break with the classical tradition" (1981, p. 56), and the concomitant birth of modernity. "What was then invented was the individual" (p. 59).

What is expressed by these writers and has such consequences for the modern identity is, underlying their many differences, the shared rejection of "any teleological view of human nature, any view of man as having an essence which defines his true end" (p. 52). With Hume, this takes the form of a new epistemological/moral principle wherein "no 'ought' conclusions can be derived from 'is' premises" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 56). For Kant, moral authority is grounded in appeal to practical reason, but "reason for him, as much as for Hume, discerns no essential natures and no teleological features in the objective universe available for study . . . " (p. 52). The project of eighteenth century moral philosophy generally was one of justifying morality as a product of human nature, related either to the passions (Hume, Diderot) or to reason (Kant), but no longer contextualized within "any public, shared rationale or justification" (p. 48).

The significance of this for identity is that the self comes to be granted moral agency prior to (or, as Taylor might say, inside) any ultimate moral criteria, principles or values, and thus owes them nothing more than honourary
allegiance. "Behind the fact/value split, which one sees emerging in Hume, and then becoming a dominant theme in our century, lies a new understanding and valuation of [individual identity]" (Taylor, 1988b, p. 2, re MacIntyre). Underlying manifold other modern developments in science, in politics, and so on, is a new conception of individual freedom and autonomy. The teleological "ought"s which were an essential part of the pre-modern identity, become constraints on these newly valued traits. The "peculiarly modern self, the emotivist self, in acquiring sovereignty in its own realm lost its traditional boundaries provided by a social identity and a view of human life as ordered to a given end" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 32).

MacIntyre's characterization of the modern identity as "emotivist" requires some further clarification. Strictly defined, emotivism "is the doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically all moral judgements are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (p. 11). It is associated particularly with the early twentieth century philosophers Moore and Stevenson. Although, MacIntyre admits, outright defenders of emotivist theory have, for the most part, had their day, he claims nonetheless that "to a large degree people now think, talk and act as if emotivism were true, no matter
what their avowed theoretical standpoint may be. Emotivism has become embodied in our culture" (p. 21).

In summary, the key difference between the pre-modern and modern identity is that for the modern, self-definition is in terms of singular, individual uniqueness (the horizon is within), whereas for the pre-modern self-definition depends largely upon one's connectedness within a community, within a larger, closed order (the horizon is without). For Taylor, two notions that are central to the growth of the modern identity, beginning in the seventeenth century, are disengagement and interiority, which have had a profound influence on academic theory in all disciplines, on artistic expression, as well as on taken-for-granted beliefs and values of the quotidian world. For MacIntyre, the fact/value split thematic to eighteenth century philosophy and subsequently, was a pivotal development in the history of thought in which the modern world largely rejected traditional teleological views, and replaced them with views which he characterizes, in their incommensurability, as emotivist. Although often historically celebrated as a gain, on MacIntyre’s view this change signals the grave loss of any context wherein moral utterance has coherence.

E. THE MODERN INDIVIDUAL: A "PROBLEM CHILD"

For both authors, the notion of the individual that was born with modern times is very much a "problem child",
associated with serious conditions of societal malaise.

Taylor (1985c) broaches his concerns in an exploration of "the question of whether we can speak of a 'legitimation crisis' in Western capitalist societies" (p. 248). He sets out to relate the features of the modern identity with the features of modern society, and thence to trace "the ways in which this same society may be systematically undermining its own legitimacy" (p. 249).

To go into the whole argument is too large a task, but a summary of the main points will be helpful in getting clearer on Taylor's view of the identity/society relationship and its ills. First, he looks at "the moral condemnations and defences that are made of contemporary society" (p. 249). On the "pro" side, what has modern society brought about?

For millions of people, whose forbears were the factory fodder of the industrial revolution, who may have been packed in over-crowded, insanitary, hastily-built workers' housing, sweated twelve hours and more a day, without privacy or a decent family life in the other twelve, barely able to scrape a living, with an appalling rate of desertion of women by their men, with children growing up stunted physically and emotionally; for these millions there now is the chance for a home, decently furnished, space, family life, the creative use of leisure, the building of a private space in which they can bring up a family, practise hobbies, see friends. . . . (p. 252).

On the "con" side, he lists some of the central criticisms of the modern achievement. One he calls the "Platonic" protest (exemplified by the figure of Callicles in Plato's Gorgias, and in modern form by Schumacher) that
the conditions of consumer success also breed "a society whose motive forces are greed and envy" (p. 249). A related "Romantic" protest (after Rousseau, echoed by the early Marx, Marcuse) is that a society so driven is enslaved by its desire to possess and control, and blind to higher things such as beauty and meaning in nature. "The drive to dominate generates compulsive activity, anxiety, inner tension, and eventually aggression and violence. Freedom and vision, as well as harmony, community and peace, are only possible if we somehow liberate ourselves from it" (p. 250). A third protest is that of irrationality, as in the "marxist . . . connection between irrational priorities and the ideological consciousness of capitalist society" (p. 251): We have the means by which the goods of society can be shared equally, yet growth only escalates into absurdity (bigger! better! more!) rather than effecting any balance between rich and poor; indeed, if anything the gap is widened. "Growth can . . . make the lot of poor people worse" (p. 283).

Thus, Taylor shows that the conditions of modern society are such that there is a strong motive towards consumer growth and attendant interests, coupled with a strong moral resistance to this very motive, which combine to create deep societal tensions: a loss of faith, a crisis of allegiance, a society which "saps the bases of its own
legitimacy" (p. 288). These tensions are internal to modern society and in the same way internal to the modern identity. Taylor depicts this relationship heuristically with two complementary yet competing "versions" of the modern identity: "Versions I and II have strong inner connections; and yet they animate very different judgements and feelings about modern society" (1985c, p. 273) and "give the background both to the affirmative and critical stances to our society" (p. 287).

A glance at both versions will show something of their characteristic and contrasting features. Version I is associated with the affirmative stance towards technological and material growth, and the vast improvements (for some) in the standard of living of recent centuries. It is directly connected to the disengaged and interiorized understanding of rationality touched on in the previous section, so different from the pre-modern view. As a result of this new definition of reason, the operations of nature come to be viewed in mechanistic terms, and the attitude of man towards nature becomes very controlling and instrumental.

Other consequences also follow. Success in terms of the good identity takes a turn towards disengagement and interiority in other ways. Freedom and autonomy -- implying separation, singularity, difference -- become valuable attributes, factors in which human excellence resides.
Material gain and productivity become, more than simply gains in their own right, proofs of one's ability to discern and achieve one's own needs with efficacy. They are the proof of personal worth, the conditions of successful identity. Disengaged rationality, and its manifestations in productivity and control, comes to be valued not simply as a sign of right thinking or a means of bettering one's material lot, but a sign of virtue in itself. Reason is "past reason hunted" (Shakespeare, Sonnet 129) as a proof of one's goodness in freedom from illusion, superstition, and the deceits of passion (Taylor, 1985c, 1988b). The grim Puritan, and the unbendingly logical scientist, are stereotypes of this tendency taken to extremes. But so are the self-made man and the lone entrepreneur other modern success stories of the achievements of the Version I identity.

Version II of the modern identity also involves the notions of interiority and disengagement, but in a way that is very different from Version I, and in some ways very critical of it. It is tightly interwoven into the cultural values of modern society, but also gives the background to some of the strong moral protests against society -- its thraldom to "limitless striving, . . . endless accumulation" (p. 1985c, p. 271), its rape of the environment, its exaltation of scientific reasoning.
The location of identity within, on the Version II view, turns towards the cultivation of sentiment, of the inner self. We come to the idea that each man

... has a nature within him. ... [This] turns into the notion that our fulfilment requires an inner exploration. From this second version emerge the ideas of self-exploration and fulfilment which play such an important part in our time; the need for self-expression which is also self-realization. (1985c, p. 272)

Partly this is manifested in the growing value of private space; privacy is a particularly and uniquely modern achievement. Partly it is also exhibited in the cultivation of sentiment, in the changed nature of the institution of marriage, for example, from dynastic or procreative arrangements, to "love relations ... meant to meet the strongest passions of emotional fulfilment" (1985c, p. 272).

Partly, however, it also turns against the attributes of Version I as key roadblocks in the search for one's authentic inner nature. Version I, in its urge to dominate, to control, to acquire, is criticized for imposing on us a "false consciousness"; it is "a form of enslavement to what is secondary which blinds us to what is primary" (1985c, p. 271). This version of identity, according to the Version II critique, is divisive, atomistic, and (yes) individualistic. It not only denies our true selves but also our communal nature, and our need to communicate openly, freely and harmoniously with others.
Both Versions, I and II, share the same assumption that identity means intrinsically individual identity, and that the achievement of identity is predicated on such notions as rights and liberty, and the uniqueness and singularity of each individual person. In this way, they contrast markedly with the pre-modern identity. Yet, between them there is a strong antagonism, which is both cause and effect of widescale societal tensions, of a society at risk of destroying itself.

To turn now to MacIntyre's assessment of the modern ("emotivist") identity, there are central parallels with Taylor, although they are expressed rather differently. Identity, society, and big troubles are all intrinsically connected in a similar way; however, the same conflict which Taylor depicts between Version I and Version II is portrayed by MacIntyre on a more theoretical level, in the way that it bifurcates modern intellectual tradition.

A pertinent example will show what this means. One of MacIntyre's major claims is that modern political debate is tongue-tied by the "supposed opposition between individualism and collectivism, each appearing in a variety of doctrinal forms" (1981, p. 33). This opposition is reminiscent of the opposition between Versions I and II -- on one side individual autonomy and self-interest versus, on the other, liberation from capitalist false consciousness to
achieve an egalitarian distribution of goods. These views diverge but both are marked by a deep, unspoken agreement that they are "the only two alternative modes of social life open to us" (1981, p. 33). Hence, for MacIntyre, marxism and its many heirs, even as the richest source of modern social critique "are themselves only one more set of symptoms disguised as a diagnosis" (p. 104). Ultimately, in MacIntyre's view, both alternatives embody "the ethos of the distinctively modern and modernising world, and . . . nothing less than a rejection of a large part of that ethos will provide us with a rationally and morally defensible standpoint from which to judge and to act" (1981, p. vii).

F. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the discussion of individualism in adult education has been temporarily suspended in order to provide a framework for considering the statements about individualism within a broader perspective. To this end the views of two contemporary philosophers whose works deal centrally with the notion of the individual in the context of modernity, have been explored at some length.

Essential to the discussion is the view that not only is the individual a peculiarly modern invention, but that it is interwoven with peculiarly modern problems -- one of the gravest, yet one of the hardest to see being how these problems are characterized. For Taylor, this is portrayed
as a tension between attributes of the modern identity which both support and oppose the prevailing growth-orientation of modern civilization. The modern identity equals Version I and Version II together, yet Version II is centrally critical of the individualism (among other things) of Version I. In order to come to grips with the problems of modernity, for Taylor, Version I and Version II, individualism and its critique must be viewed together. MacIntyre comes to a similar conclusion -- to understand the modern situation, individualism and collectivism must be seen in terms of their underlying partnership, as well as their overt antagonism.

With these broader considerations in mind, the following chapter returns to adult education, to see what light can now be shed upon the critique of individualism therein.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE CRITIQUE IN CONTEXT

A. INTRODUCTION

In light of the framework developed in the previous chapter, what can now be said about the critique of individualism in adult education? How do the statements discussed in Chapter Three measure up against this broader context? To address such questions, to provide an analysis of the critique informed by Taylor's and MacIntyre's views, is the purpose of the present chapter.

B. SIMILARITIES

The first point to observe is that there are evident similarities between the adult education literature and the literature of the analytic framework.

First, both bodies of literature express the view that the concept of the individual is a particularly modern and particularly Western manifestation of personal identity. The mutual concern is expressed that there is a tendency in Western thought to universalize the Western view of the (ideally) autonomous, independent individual, and in so doing to disregard its historical and cultural distinctiveness.
Second, the opinion is also shared that the distinctly modern Western conception of the individual is largely reflected in and perpetuated by the institutions of society. In the works of Taylor and MacIntyre, the "institutions of society" are considered collectively, including politics, economics, morals, and even marriage; although education is not specifically emphasized it is implicitly included. In the adult education literature, of course, the situation is the reverse -- education is a particular example of "institutions of society" in general. However, although they are looking from opposite ends of the telescope, the view is the same from both ends that the individual, the social system, and social institutions such as education are closely intertwined.

A third similarity between the adult education literature and the works of Taylor and MacIntyre is that there is a mutual expression of criticism that there are things which are wrong within modern society, and that at the heart of what is wrong are things particularly to do with the modern notion of the individual. Within the adult education critique, naturally enough, much attention is given to problems in how adult education is practiced, provided, conceptualized: too much emphasis on the individual, a narrow view of the individual, too little acknowledgement of social forces, and so on. Although in contrast, these details are far too fine for the scale in
which Taylor and MacIntyre map the modern landscape, the view that they are local problems which derive from more global societal concerns, fits the general contours of the Taylor/MacIntyre map. Held in common is the view that the concept of the individual, separated from and privileged over more collective societal concerns and interests, is at home in a society with no vision, in disarray.

In this regard, however, the adult education literature and the analytic framework both converge and diverge. That the individual is separated from the social and given priority is a point of convergence; so too is the opinion that this tendency is related to deep problems, a lack of societal vision, in the modern world. But according to Taylor and MacIntyre to make this critique isn’t enough. They diverge from the adult education authors by taking their analysis one step further.

In their view, the notion of the modern individual is associated with a central ambiguity: It is not only a constituent feature of the status quo, it is also a constituent feature of the views which are most critical of the status quo. In other words, not only does the notion of the individual give rise to "individualism", it also gives rise to what could be called "anti-individualism". In order to speak to any purpose about either stance they need
to be viewed together, in terms not just of their differences but also their close relationship.

From this perspective, the critical statements about individualism in adult education tell only half the story. They critique the individualistic tendencies within adult education and within modern society, but do not acknowledge how the same assumptions about the individual which underlie individualism also underlie and influence their own critical stance. What difference would it make if they did? On a broad conceptual level, greater integrity would be achieved. More specifically, some light might be shed on matters of concern to the critics such as why educational reform so often fails to meet its transformative potential (Griffin, 1983; Shor & Freire, 1987): Their views (the critics') draw on the same assumptions about the individual that underlie the views and practices of which they are critical.

The above point is an important one and requires greater elaboration. It can perhaps be brought out more clearly by highlighting the contrasts between how both literatures, above and beyond their treatment of the individual, cast their different diagnoses of the problems of individualism.
C. THE INDIVIDUAL AND INDIVIDUALISM RECONSIDERED

In the adult education literature, individualism is observed to have two main features: First, the criticism is made that most mainstream or institutionally located adult education, in its conceptualization and in its practice, operates on narrow, culturally received assumptions about the nature of individual identity. Second, it is held that in so doing, the societal dimension of education, including the social construction of the individual, is absent or obscured. According to the authors, these two features have a variety of manifestations. Regarding the former, ideals of individual identity such as autonomy, independence, and self-direction are seen to have a very strong influence on shaping the nature of theory construction within the field. A particularly acute expression of this is Knowles' well-known notion of andragogy (Tennant, 1986; Griffin, 1983; Lawson, 1985). The view that each individual is a unique, singular being with an in-built drive to self-actualize, and that each individual is (or ought to be) free to act upon his or her own choices and take responsibility for them are also strong underlying assumptions which influence the shape of adult education's goals, concepts and practices (Lawson, 1985). These traits, and the high value generally put on them, are acknowledged by the critics to be cultural expressions rather than facts of life; the tendency to construe them as the latter, within the mainstream education literature, is regarded as a chief symptom of what is most
individualistic about the education system and the society it reflects.

Regarding the second feature, the critics argue that this tendency is accompanied by a lack of regard for the societal dimension of adult education -- and of the education system generally -- and that there is a corresponding reductive fusion between education and learning (Griffin, 1983; Lawson, 1985; Rubenson, 1982). This not only disregards important societal influences on education such as knowledge, culture, and power (Griffin, 1983), it also restricts the role of education to one of reproducing existing social conditions rather than acting to transform them.

In turning to Taylor and MacIntyre, there is in many respects, as noted, a good deal of overlap. The traits which are seen to characterize the individual are the same: autonomy, independence, the drive to self-actualize, and so on. The same high cultural value is seen to be accorded (ideally) to personal rights and freedoms, and the same criticism is expressed that in modern society's privileging of the individual, a condition of widespread social myopia has ensued. Yet in their analyses of these concerns, Taylor and MacIntyre introduce a dimension into the picture which is not present in the adult education literature. From their perspective, there are central tensions associated
with the notion of the individual which are manifested not only in the individualistic tendencies of modern society, but also in views which protest against individualism. Taylor portrays this in terms of intra-mural tensions between Version I and Version II of the modern identity. Maclntyre characterizes it in terms of emotivism which gives rise both to the autonomous moral agent, and to the modern moral protestor (who can never win an argument) (p. 68-69). For both authors there are ambiguities within the modern identity which underlie both affirmative and critical stances towards contemporary society. From their standpoint, the strand of social commentary which is critical of individualism is more a symptom of such ambiguity than a tenable diagnosis.

An illustration can be drawn by assigning Taylor’s Versions I and II names rather than roman numerals, and providing them with some stock characters (see Maclntyre, 1981, pp. 26-29 for the role of the "character" in social analysis. It should be noted that such a technique easily runs to caricature and is used here, gingerly, to demonstrate a point rather than to enact a lengthy drama). Version I, signifying such interests as autonomy, self-control, and individual achievement can be called the "individualistic" version. Stock character types on this side would be the Puritan, the utilitarian, the lone entrepreneur, the self-made man, the laissez-faire liberal.
Version II, signifying such interests as self-discovery, self-expression, personal and social harmony, and the protest against the false values of Version I, can be called (for want of a word) the "anti-individualistic" version. On this side are the Rousseauian Romantic, the social protestor, the environmentalist, the marxist critic (and MacIntyre would add the therapist). Underlying Version I are the fundamental -- and fundamentally modern -- values of equality, rights, and liberty. Underlying Version II are similar values. The modern notion of the individual gives rise to both individualism and the anti-individualism critique. Both views are interwoven into the fabric of modernity and must be seen together in order to understand "what is really going on" upon the stage of what MacIntyre calls "the theatre of the present" (1981, p. 29).

Stacked up against this view, the critique of individualism in adult education falls in with the anti-individualism line of protest which Taylor and MacIntyre claim is itself as rooted in the modern identity as is individualism. Educational individualism, so the protest goes, perpetuates existing inequalities of educational provision, promulgates a middle-class vision of the nature of individual identity, and serves the interests of consumerism, capitalism, liberalism, the status quo. Adult education is too often utilized to reproduce these conditions; thus, its potential to bring about societal
transformation through the liberation of oppressed persons and classes from the false consciousness of the individualistic values of modern society is not realized. This, of course, is to exaggerate the views within the critique of individualism to a hyperbolic degree, perhaps unfairly. However, the point of doing so is to stress the extent to which they harmonize with Taylor's Version II, as well as with MacIntyre's inclusion into the modern moral scheme (and hence into its ineffectuality) the concepts of rights, of protest, of unmasking (p. 66). What is notably lacking from the adult education critique is the rest of the equation, which locates this critical stance within the context of modernity.

D. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are other important points of contrast. For instance, central to Taylor and MacIntyre's argument, and largely absent (with the exception of Lawson) from the adult education critique, is the location of their views within an historical perspective. The modern individual can best be understood as an historical development; the distinctiveness of the notion of individual identity and its societal influence can best be demonstrated in contrast to its historical antecedents. Both authors take some pains to draw this out, and to underscore the importance of such a measure. MacIntyre postulates that much modern theory -- since the Enlightenment -- is ill-equipped to interpret
reality aright because its very equipment was born of or after the changes which wrought the modern self, and the modern condition:

History by now in our culture means academic history, and academic history is less than two centuries old. Suppose it were the case that the catastrophe of which my hypothesis speaks had occurred before, or largely before, the founding of academic history, so that the moral and other evaluative presuppositions of academic history derived from the forms of the disorder which it brought about. (1981, pp. 3-4).

Taylor asserts, in a similar vein, that the changed notion of identity, the "liberation through objectification wrought by the cosmological revolution of the seventeenth century, has become for many the model of the agent's relation to the world and hence sets the very definition of what it is to be an agent" (1985a, p. 5). We as moderns are too deeply imbued with the notion of individual identity to be able to see what it is, without some earlier or other model of what it isn't with which to compare. Within the adult education literature, although the historical distinctiveness of the modern individual is remarked upon as an attribute of individualism (Lawson, 1985; Shor & Freire, 1987), no contrast is seriously established; hence, this point is not explored in a way that shows up the depth, the complexity, and the significance of the relationship between the individual and modernity. Perhaps it is asking too much to expect the adult education critics to do so, since their concern is with education not history, after all. Yet the point remains that to interpret the influence of
individualism on education in its fullest sense requires a less perfunctory consideration of the historical development of the individual in the modern age.

E. THE DISENGAGED IDENTITY

A further point of contrast concerns the matter touched upon in the above quote from Taylor concerning the idea of "liberation through objectification" so central to the modern understanding of the individual. This idea makes itself felt in two ways. First, it underlies the ideal of reason associated with the Enlightenment wherein, among other developments, "'fact' becomes value-free, 'is' becomes a stranger to 'ought'" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 81). Again, Version I can be called in to represent the attendant ideals and assumptions of this notion, as manifested within the modern identity.

Also, however, it underlies the "liberation from false consciousness" notion which is often associated with the Version II stance of social protest or critique. This phrase generally refers to a change-of-consciousness process involving conscious disengagement from received beliefs or opinions in order to formulate a more critically aware perception of the world (Shor & Freire, 1987). Within the adult and pre-adult education critique, regarding what to do about individualism once it has been diagnosed as a problem within education and society, the nostrum "to become more
critically aware" is prescribed repeatedly (Keddie, 1980; Lawson, 1985; Hargreaves, 1980; Tennant, 1986; Shor & Freire, 1987). That this prescription has a particular cultural distinctiveness for the modern identity is nowhere acknowledged by these authors. Criticalness in itself has been around at least since Plato; however, its modern meaning -- again since the Enlightenment -- has a characteristically self-reflexive dimension which is fundamental to the modern concept of the individual, to the modern understanding of thought itself. For Taylor and MacIntyre, the interplay between objectified reason and critical inquiry is an essential factor in shaping how the individual is conceptualized and how the modern world is understood which again, in contrast, the critique of individualism in adult education does not extend itself sufficiently far to include.

F. SUMMARY

In summary, what can be said in analysis of the critique of individualism in adult education, as measured against the Taylor/MacIntyre yardstick, is that it provides an important but only a partial assessment of some very complex issues. What these authors miss, most essentially, is the point that there are deep similarities which underlie some of the surface differences between what is critiqued and what the critique itself assumes. To miss this point, for both MacIntyre and Taylor, is to miss something
fundamental in the struggle for answers to the question, "the permanent and ever-changing question, 'What are we today?'" (Foucault, 1988, p. 145). To take it into account is to take a necessary step past the polarization between individualist ideals which "grow apace while feeding in the opposite camp unreal dreams of transformation to an equal society" (Taylor, 1985c, p. 316) towards a more unified view of the forces influencing education and society.

Another point not addressed within the critique of individualism in adult education -- nor largely addressed for that matter by Taylor or MacIntyre -- is the perplexing question of "what, then, should be done?" Problems have been raised, critiques have been reviewed and examined, but few words have been uttered towards solutions. To this matter, and to the concluding matter of "implications for the field", we shall now turn.
A. INTRODUCTION

"Solutions" is not an easy or popular topic at the best of times. It is not one which any of the authors discussed in these pages have tackled foursquare or satisfactorily. Certainly, there is no *deus ex machina* to be trundled in from the wings to arbitrate and provide answers for the many complex questions which have been raised. However, there are some important points to consider in the direction of solutions, if not the arrival there. These have some bearing on the implications of this study for future directions in adult education.

B. NON-SOLUTIONS

They can be approached, first, in terms of things which are not solutions. One thing to emphasize, regarding the contrasts between the modern and the pre-modern identities drawn by both MacIntyre and Taylor, is that there is no suggestion that we ought to -- or even could -- cast aside the modern identity and re-assume some feudal or classical Athenian way of life. MacIntyre is somewhat at fault in this respect, showing a tendency to idealize traditional societies, without acknowledging the often less-than-ideal features (slavery, serfdom, ritual murder) which have at times pertained within such societies.
Taylor's approach is somewhat more circumspect. For him, the purpose of the pre-modern/modern contrast is to show that in the transition from pre-modern to modern views of life and identity there have been great gains but also terrible losses, of which there needs to be a more acute reckoning. Much contemporary discussion of issues concerning identity, society, and the problems of our day does not come to grips with the deep dilemmas involved with the very issues it debates (1985c, 1988a). He further stresses (which MacIntyre further tends not to) that we "can't just jump out of the [modern] condition" (1988a, p. 14). The notion of identity is too tightly bound up with our own identities, thought processes, fundamental values, and social forms to be authentically repudiated. No criticism of individualism or its influence is complete without acknowledging this condition of our existence.

So, it is no solution to suggest that the modern identity simply be cast aside. Additionally, it is no solution simply to prescribe, as the adult education critique tends to, greater critical awareness. This may indeed be the way to greater understanding, but it is not without a role to play in the shaping of the modern individual. Therein may lie liberation, but it is not so much a liberation from modern concerns as a liberation into them. This is another dilemma which also underlies much
modern debate and although it gives no answers (maybe the opposite) in itself, it at least needs to be surfaced in order to move towards them.

C. PROTO-SOLUTIONS

So the way towards solutions involves a slow, labourious process towards better articulation of the questions. For MacIntyre and Taylor this is a mutually urgent point. Both would assert unequivocally about the state of modern theory generally that "we have not yet developed the concepts we need to come to terms with [things] fruitfully" (Taylor, 1985c, p. 248). They move in rather divergent directions from this agreed upon stance. Again the perspective of Taylor casts a more favourable light. MacIntyre, dour Scotsman that he is, provides a bleak prognosis. In assessing the mood of the times as emotivist, he takes the view that having become emotivist in our perspective we have become emotivist in our reality. He "tends to take modern society at the face value of its own dominant theories, as heading for runaway atomism and breakup" (Taylor, 1988a, p. 6). Taylor, on the other hand, thinks "that we are far more 'Aristotelian' than we allow, that hence our practice is in some significant way less based on pure disengaged freedom and atomism than we realize" (1988a, p. 6-7), and that theory to a large extent gets it wrong in accounting for what in actuality is truly
going on. Thus the first step in the direction of solutions involves this basic realization.

In this regard, the works of other thinkers such as Gadamer (1986) and Foucault (1988a) who explore modern issues in terms of non-modern and non-Western contexts, signpost the way in which adult education thinkers might gainfully follow.

D. IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

If the considerations raised by Taylor and MacIntyre have any veracity, then the broad implications for adult education include, first and foremost, that it has a lot of conceptual work to do. The present state of theory -- affirmative and critical -- gives a far from complete or accurate picture of the personal and social realities about which it theorizes. That adult education is deficient in the area of conceptual foundations is nothing new (Rubenson, 1982), however it is a point which cannot be stressed too often in order that, slowly and painfully, something may be done about it.

From the critical statements about individualism in adult education, it is apparent that "adult characteristics" approaches to theory development, and to attendant modes of educational practice and provision, provide only a one-dimensional understanding of individual identity, and show
insufficient insight into the social dimension of education, including most especially the manner in which identity is socially and historically constructed. In this respect, the critique of individualism points out some serious limitations in the way in which adult education is thought about and carried out.

However, the critique itself also has a long way to go. It takes up some important issues about the nature of individual identity and the influence of this on education as an institution within society, but doesn't go far enough to do justice to the underlying issues with which it is concerned. Crucially, it does not acknowledge the deep association between its own perceptions and the issues it critiques. Without this acknowledgement, it lacks an important understanding of the strong influence of characteristically modern assumptions on shaping both affirmative and critical points of view. With it, the debates in education about individual versus society interests (Lawson, 1985; Hargreaves, 1980) and about the role of education to transform or perpetuate existing social conditions might move beyond debate towards more communicative dialogue.

Taking it into account leads one to conclude, with Taylor and MacIntyre, that the dominant theories within the field, as within the contemporary social sciences generally,
need to be seriously questioned. With this in mind, some of
the theoretical pre-occupations within adult education might
profit from being put aside, or approached from other-than-
dominant angles. For instance, the notion of andragogy has
doubtless made important contributions to the field, but its
conceptual limitations and cultural assumptions are clear,
and a rethinking of "adult characteristics" from a much
wider view is clearly needed.

In the end, of course, it is not simply the topic of
individualism per se, -- or "adult characteristics" or even
adult education -- which is the central focus of concern.
The problems which Taylor and MacIntyre raise, and which the
adult and pre-adult education authors attempt to tussle with
in a narrower context, have to do with how we think, and how
we think about ourselves as individuals and members of
communities. What is needed within adult education
especially -- as a field struggling with its own
disciplinary identity -- is to open lines of inquiry to
include other disciplines, other perspectives, other
cultures than our own, other times than modernity. To
determine what is going on within the field, it is necessary
to cast an analytic eye on what is going on without.
REFERENCES


