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Education Towards Self-Awareness: The Role of the Small Group Within the School Setting

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EDUCATION TOWARDS SELF-AWARENESS

THE ROLE OF THE SMALL GROUP
WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING

BY

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Eduardo Pinzón-Umaña was born in Bogotá, Colombia, on January 14, 1931.

He graduated from Saint Bartholomew's High School, in Bogotá, in 1948. In 1949 he entered the Society of Jesus and from that year until 1953 he was a student in the Jesuit College in Santa Rosa, Colombia, from where he obtained the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Classical Literature. From 1953 until 1957 he attended the "Universidad Javeriana," in Bogotá, from where he obtained the Licenciate in Philosophy in 1957. At the end of that year he won a scholarship to the Institute of Languages and Linguistics of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. from where he graduated with honors. From 1957 until 1962 he attended the School of Theology at the "Universidad Javeriana" in Bogotá. He was ordained a Priest in 1960 and he obtained the Licenciate of Sacred Theology in 1962 from the same University in Bogotá.

From 1963 to 1967 he attended the regular training programs of the Colombian Psychoanalytical Association. In order to practice psychoanalysis and group psychotherapy under supervision he studied medicine from 1965 to 1967 in the "Universidad Javeriana" in Bogotá. In 1967 he was invited by the Diocese of
Kansas City, Missouri, where he conducted five group dynamics encounters for the Teaching Priests and Sisters of the Diocese. Thereafter he enrolled in the Graduate School of Loyola University in Chicago working for his Master of Arts Degree in Education, with Psychological Counseling as his special field.
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CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Problem

To become open to what one experiences in his personal life is a process which initiates the enrichment and growth of personality. To be aware of ourselves and of our experiences is the first step on the way leading to contacts with the outside world, with others and with ourselves as objects. Openness to experience is the opposite of defensiveness, withdrawal and rejection. One can communicate either way, by closing or by opening, by accepting or by denying. One can become increasingly aware of the reality existing outside oneself. Or one can perceive reality in preconceived categories. Our general vision of the world depends on whether we are open or closed to our own experiences.

Life is not static, but fluid. Consequently, only that person will find life rewarding, who has been able to interpret the complex, changing experiences of life, through a deep understanding of his identity.

Expressions such as, "If I only could just be myself" are not uncommon in our daily life. "Just to be oneself,"
however, is one of life's most difficult things to achieve. In fact, we often notice ourselves acting in ways we do not like. At other times, we do not act the way we would like to act.

The school plays a decisive role in shaping those attitudes toward one's identity and one's experiences which are vital for the human development toward maturity. Does the school recognize this role fully? And if it does, how can it become more effective in contributing to the development of the person as a person? This is the problem.

II. The Purpose of This Thesis

The second Vatican Council, emphasizing the importance of individual growth and fulfillment in the formation of the Christian, established in the Decree on Christian Education, certain general education objectives, "the most important being the full development of the human person as an individual as well as a member of Society."¹ This statement which places equal emphasis on the individual and the social development of the human person, stresses the significance of a phenomenon that, in the context of personal development, has been the object of

increasing interest in the psychological, sociological and educational fields: the group, specifically the small group.

What a young person learns today in terms of interpersonal relationships, will play an important role in his adult life, and in the society of tomorrow. The school setting, by its very nature, has to face and deal with interpersonal relationships. There are groups with which any person has to be associated and in whose company one feels more or less at ease: the family, the religious affiliation, the political party, the ethnic group, the "gang" and so forth. However, if we ask a student to identify the groups to which he or she belongs, the fraternity, the debating team, the sports' club, the peer group will be readily named.

The object of my thesis will be the small group as influencing the growth of the individual and the individual as open to the small group, helping him to attain his full development.

III. The Procedure

The study of groups has been in the scientific forefront, and has produced interesting results. I will study the small group as a source of personal development in the school setting.
One of the main tasks of the school is to prepare the youth for adult life by increasing his self-awareness and deepening his understanding of others.

Man's vocation is to be himself. I will explain how, through the group, a person can be helped to accept himself, like himself, be himself. This is the starting point of any ulterior intellectual achievement.

I will present the existentialist approach to the human person. Existentialism, although aware that the person, as such, is in many instances unexplainable, tries to understand the individual in his uniqueness. The positive approaches of Christian existentialism, such as Kierkegaard's and Marcel's, especially, stress the ultimate value of the human person. Man is his choices, says existentialism, and the educator has to promote an authentic freedom that will lead to a full development of the human possibilities. The pessimistic psychoanalytical conception of life, and the optimistic existential approach that gives hope and joy in the struggle for self-actualization, are compared.

The fact that existentialism has been chosen as a suitable approach for the deeper understanding of the individual in a group does not mean that the author accepts all the aspects of existentialism. The philosophical gaps of existentialism are not taken into consideration in this study.
In the third chapter the origins and development of group dynamics will be presented. The fourth chapter is a description of group formation. From the psychoanalytical point of view, the writer compares the development of a human individual with the formation, growth and productivity of a human group. The place of the leader and the manner in which human communication operates in a group will be described. The last chapter formulates some possible applications of the group methods to counseling in the school setting. The author will stress the nuclear aspect of this thesis: "To be oneself." Such phenomena as the dynamics of motivation, authority and the school group and defense mechanisms are presented from the psychoanalytical aspect. The teacher's professional identity, as well as the student's role in achieving self-actualization for both student and teacher, are analyzed from the standpoint of the group's function in this process of becoming. I am aware of the basic philosophical shortcomings in Freud's metapsychological writings. But I am also aware that his contributions cannot be ignored if we want to gain a deeper insight into the human mystery.

It is my desire that the learning of subjects may turn into the learner's love of himself. Teaching and studying can be motivated by the desire to "make a living." But teaching and learning can also be motivated by the love of learning and teaching, and, thereby, contribute towards a more fully developed
human personality.

If my thesis manages to make a modest contribution to this complex goal, I shall, myself, feel personally fulfilled.
CHAPTER II

EXISTENTIALISM, A PHILOSOPHY OF THE SMALL GROUP

I. Introduction

Contemporary man is confronted with a complexity of problems he seldom knows how to handle adequately. This happens in individual and social life, in politics and economics, in national and international affairs, and with increasing frequency on the university campus troubled with student unrest.

People seem to talk to one another, they gather in conventions and meetings, but very few know how to really communicate with one another. People are unaware of their own self. Many of the men and women in today's world, are afraid of one another. This is the cause of so much misunderstanding, war and destruction. The question actually is whether mankind prefers the easier way of collective self-destruction or the heroic effort required for self-preservation through self-realization.

Human existence achieves its self-realization from the beginning of each person's history. In every person's life, school has a tremendous impact in one way or another. Unfortunately, school often fails to recognize this most important
point in the integral formation of man: the deep understanding and self-awareness of the individual. Abraham Maslow writes

Science and education, being too exclusively abstract, verbal and bookish, do not have enough place for raw, concrete, esthetic experience, especially of the subjective happenings inside oneself.²

In school students are taught and informed. In many instances they know many things about the world, arts and sciences and they ignore themselves. Much of the student unrest is a demand for human attention and concern. "Something has gone sour in teaching and in learning" says George Wald, a Harvard University Biologist and Nobel Prize winner.³

Man has always been asking the question about the meaning of his existence. Over and over he searches for the answers in his own life. From the existential point-of-view, according to Gabriel Marcel, Philosophical reflexion is not concerned with "problems" but involved in "mysteries." A "problem" for Marcel is something which blocks my way by being wholly in front of me.


A "mystery," on the contrary, is something in which I find myself engaged. This engagement is precisely the value we want to stress as a very important help in the self-awareness of the individual. Group dynamics is a method which can foster and develop this being engaged and can lead to increased self-awareness. Therefore, within the school setting, the educator should become aware of its value and familiar with its functioning.

Modern existentialism concentrates its reflection on the individual human self. It confronts this contingent human existence with those collective forces that threaten to destroy his personality. Existentialism has been the answer to increasing pressures of abstract idealism that have forced the individual to a resolute and radical self-affirmation. The mass media tell us about these phenomena in the schools almost every day.

Dr. Bruno Bettelheim, an internationally known specialist in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children, professor of Psychiatry at the University of Chicago, has studied the student unrest from the existentialist-psychoanalytical approach. Dr. Bettelheim states that we have to be aware of the problems facing society which originate in the student's rebellion.

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These problems, he says, are manyfold, and have such far-reaching implications that it is wise to reflect on the whole psychological spectrum from a mature position.  

Existentialism insists that no valid philosophic question can be asked and answered unless both question and answer take into account the concrete existence of the questioner, namely man, the center of every existential philosophy.

The basic query of existentialism concerns the self-analysis and self-understanding of the human being. This, I think, is the main light that existentialism can project unto the educational fields.

Existentialism plays an important role in modern education and the sciences that search for a deeper understanding of man. Technology seems to have overwhelmed man. As Carl Rogers points out, "Psychology may be hurting its own future by its insistence that the individual is nothing more than a machine."  

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Rollo May affirms that he takes very seriously the de-humanizing dangers in modern science to make man into the image of a machine, into the image of the techniques by which we study man. He says that this tendency is not the fault of any "dangerous" men or "vicious" schools; "it is a crisis brought upon us by our particular historical predicament." 7

Hazel E. Barnes, an American existentialist affirms to this respect:

There is a need of a comprehensive existentialist philosophy of education, one which would propose educational aims consistent with the existential view of man, which would develop an educational psychology along the lines of the new insights of existential psychology and which would offer a concrete program to implement its proposals. 8

This chapter is divided in two parts: the first part will present some of the basic assumptions of existentialism that may enlighten the educators in the main task of assisting the students in conquering a deeper self-awareness of themselves. I am strongly convinced that this deep awareness of oneself is the only way to become more capable of relating to others.


Human relationships start at home and should be improved in the school setting between faculty and students, among the teachers, among peers and on all levels of vertical and horizontal relationships.

The philosophical study of the structure of group dynamics will make these processes more understandable from the existential point of view.

In the second part, concrete applications will be presented to achieve the existential goal of "being oneself" and to have a true communication with other people. The author has found Rollo May, Carl Rogers, Adrian Van Kaam and Abraham Maslow particularly inspiring in their existential approach to the understanding of man.

II. Existentialist Propositions Related to Education

1. Man's Awareness of His Dignity as a Unique, Transcending Subject.

The awareness of his own dignity in man is not theoretical or speculative. It arises from being thrown into being and discovering that he is also "Existenz," namely, potential being. In his concrete environment and world view appropriated by himself, he sees revealed the "mystery" of his own being.
Abraham Maslow says, commenting on the existentialist approach to American Psychology:

If the study of the uniqueness of the individual does not fit into what we know of science, then so much the worse for that conception of science. It, too, will have to endure re-creation.9

It is his ability to transcend the present and project himself into the future that really matters.

"Existentialism as a philosophic and educational tradition may be characterized as an awakening of man's interest in himself."10 Christian educators should be keen to arouse such existential awareness in their students to awaken a more specific Christian realization in their lives.

Man has to be himself first, before anything else. He has to first learn how to satisfy his own needs and wishes before he can concern himself with gratifying his parents' needs. Nobody can give what he does not have. To give gratification to his parents, the youngster has to have fulfilled his own self first.


This very aspect of existentialism is very inspiring. While from Freud we learned that the stages of development are seeking their answers from the past which escapes constantly, the existentialist approach looks at the risky and challenging future. Freud's psychology affirms that man is a product of the past. This creates a deterministic and fatalistic atmosphere. Man, through compulsive repetition is always seeking pleasure, looking for an equilibrium unbalancing itself constantly. This continues over and over until man reaches death, the maximum equilibrium, the returning to the prior inorganic stage. This puts us right on the next existential proposition:

2. Man, a Contingent Being, Subject to Death.

This awareness is not meant to result in fear or inertia. It is a realistic appraisal of his human condition which leads him to live in readiness to face death at some time. This knowledge increases his incentive to realize his whole potential.

Since some of the psychoanalytical aspects of a group process will be treated in this thesis, it is important to contrast the past-oriented psychoanalytical attitude with the future-oriented existentialists approach. Existentialism insists in facing the challenging and risky future. Freudian psycho-analysis maintains that the past is pulsating now in the present
life of the person. Paradoxically enough, the past and the future interchange in the Freudian metapsychology. This is the Principle of Nirvana.\footnote{Principle of Nirvana, the goal of life, according to Buddhist teaching, in which all desires are extinguished and individuality is merged with the cosmos. Psychoanalysts equate the Nirvana Principle based on the loss of individuality, with Freud's death instinct. The basic regulative principles of psychic functioning postualted by Freud are: The Nirvana Principle (constancy principle). The pleasure principle, that is somewhat a modification of the Nirvana principle. The reality principle. Horace C. English and Ava Chappney English, \emph{A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms}, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964 p. 346.}

In 1913, Freud published a psychoanalytic comment on two of Shakespeare's works: namely, \textit{The Merchant of Venice} and \textit{King Lear}. This passage, more than his works on metapsychology, explains Freud's view on the death-life instinct, the last one in his whole metapsychological conception and one of the most discussed psychoanalytical assumptions:

We might argue that there are three inevitable relations that a man has with a woman—the woman who bears him, the woman who is his mate and the woman who destroys him or that they are the three forms taken by the figure of the mother in the course of a man's life—the mother herself, the beloved one who is chosen after her pattern, and lastly the Mother Earth who receives him once more. But it is in vain that an old man yearns for the love of woman as he
had it first from his mother, the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms.  

Freud's idea of life and death is that of a hopeless battle never won in the universe through a spiral evolution from negative to negative. "From nothingness to nothingness," Sartre's idea is somewhat similar.  

Freud himself had at the time when he published The Theme of the Three Caskets (1913) many uncertainties about the death pulsion, instinct or drive that he finally called Trieb.  


15René A. Spitz insists on the usage of the term drive, instead of what he calls the "misleading" term instinct, used in the Standard Edition of Freud's works. Spitz' arguments for the word drive are:  
1. Freud primarily uses the German term Trieb, and rarely the term Instinkt.  
2. Instinct has in biology a different connotation from the psychoanalytical one. (continued on page 17)
In 1920, he published his metapsychological book, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which he affirms that his early theory of the two instincts or drives, *libido* and *aggression*, has to be revised. Death is for Freud so important that he concluded with a new philosophical category: The *Death Instinct*. When reading through his life, one finds how often he was perplexed in this philosophical labyrinth, from which he never seems to have escaped.

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3. Ethnology generally uses *Instinct* with a practically opposite meaning to the specific one given by psychoanalysis.

4. The understanding of psychoanalysis in English-speaking countries has been seriously threatened by the lack of a word in English that corresponds to the German *Trieb*. *Instinct*, says Spitz, carries implications which are alien to the idea of *Trieb*. There is even greater difficulty in Spanish, because *Drive* and *Instinct* are translated by the word *Instinto* in the psychoanalytical literature. However, some authors use the word *fusión*, that to my mind, has somewhat different connotations from the original *Trieb*. See Rene Spitz, *The First Year of Life. A Psychoanalytic Study of Normal and Deviant Development of Object Relations*, (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1965) p. 6.


Igor A. Caruso, the Austrian psychoanalyst, founder and acting President of Wiener Arbeitskreis Fuer Tiefenpsychologie (Viennese workshop for deep psychology), commenting on the death instinct, presents the Freudian contention in this syllogism:

A l'origine était la mort.  
La vie tend vers le rétablissement des origines.  
Donc, le but à quoi tend dernièrement la vie est la mort.¹⁸

The death pulsion is for Freud a general law that makes all psychic mechanisms longing for a previous stage. "Nothingness" has to be re-established like it was in the beginning. Freud's theory of death, as one of the main drives of man, is for the author of this thesis philosophically unacceptable and practically leading to despair.

Professor Caruso, lecturing on Freud's The Theme of the Three Caskets, and the three inevitable relations that a man has with a woman, said:

C'est un échantillon de la sagesse désillusionnée et du talent littéraire d'un homme de génie vieillissant--les idées qui y sont exprimées devaient--

pendant les 25 ans que Freud avait encore à vivre——se développer en un système grandiose et austère, dominé par l'hypothèse de la "pulsion de mort".

This quotation expresses concisely the melodramatic "mood" of the Freudian metapsychology. It is a progression, one could say, towards a cosmic regression in a closing spiral unto death.

Carl Gustav Jung, when he says that "person lives by aims as well as by causes," links to my mind the fatalistic Freudian approach with the optimistic existentialist view. Jung was the first one to speak about the actualization of the self toward which man strives into a unified living personality. Existentialism wants man to learn from the past and plan for the future.

While orthodox psychoanalysis says: "As long as there is life, there has to be death as an end," existentialism proclaims: "There is hope only as long as there is life."

19Caruso, La Compulsion de Repetition.  
Existentialism tries to teach man how to face death.

The existentialism in our century as expressed in the philosophies of Simmel, Sheler, Jaspers and Heidegger has placed the experience of death near the center of its analysis of the human condition. It has accented death as a constitutive part rather than the mere end of life and highpointed the idea that only by integrating the concept of death into the self does an authentic and genuine existence become possible. The price for denying death is undefined anxiety, self-alienation. To completely understand himself man must confront death, become aware of personal death.22

3. Man, an Integral Person

Existentialism means centering upon the existing person, as he is emerging, becoming. Existential thinking does not view man as just a body-soul composite. Descartes has been accused of introducing this dichotomy in man which eventually led to the extremes of idealistic and materialistic thinking. The existentialists speak of man as knowing, feeling, choosing, desiring. They do not, as a rule, speak of several separate faculties of man as the scholastics do. They relate knowing and willing to the human existence. They give much importance to feelings and emotions. They use speculative reasoning but are more interested in the total person who acts and reacts, who appropriates this

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this world. This is extremely valuable for any one who deals with human beings, because the existentialist refuses to look at any human being, merely rationally or just morally.

Abraham Maslow writes:

...Existentialism raises the problems and techniques of integration of this twofold nature of man, his lower and his higher, his creatureliness and his god-likeness. The existentialists teach that both the "higher" and the "lower" are simultaneously defining characteristics of human nature. Neither can be repudiated; they can only be integrated.23

The principle of Sartre's existential psychoanalysis is that man is a totality and not a collection. Consequently, he expresses himself as a whole in even his most superficial behavior.24

A counselor or educator imbued with a sense of his own human dignity, is a better qualified person to make another aware of his whole potential as an integral being. The group encounter as such could be called in a very precise sense a "peak experience," where real people meet at the very level of


human existence.

4. Man's Freedom and Authentic Existence

Human freedom is meant to promote authentic existence. The theistic interpretation would see man and his freedom grounded in God. But, whether God exists or not, says Sartre, would make no difference to the understanding of man, for "we are our choices." 25 "Life is a continual series of choices for the individual in which a main determinant choice is the person as he already is." 26

It is becoming to man to be able to choose. But choice may lead to both authentic and unauthentic existence. People often choose an unauthentic existence because of unconscious fears, that basically come from a lack of self-awareness. The actual struggle would be to exist as an authentic person. It is nothing less than the struggle "to be or not to be." And the unique human form of authenticity is self-consciousness and


26 Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 193.
Growth and self-fulfillment are not possible without pain and grief, sorrow and turmoil. This is the human condition. The educator has to learn how not to protect his students against pain as if it were something destructive. Not allowing them to grow through their pain, would be lack of trust in their possibilities of development. This lack of trust in the students' abilities would reflect a basic lack of trust of the educator in himself. Many personality problems arise as a protest against the numerous attempts from the outside to crush a person's true inner nature that wants to actualize. While this lack alone is deplorable, it seems even worse that so many people have never protested. Like the seed that was suffocated and could never rise to become a beautiful tree. Those people do not protest because they never even became aware of their inner possibilities. They miss true happiness and a rich emotional life because they never permitted themselves to become strong enough to react, to

27 Awareness is associated with vigilance. Awareness comes from the Anglo-Saxon gewaer. Waer, means knowledge of external dangers and threats. Its cognates are beware and wary. As long as a person is aware of his inner fears he is also capable of becoming self-conscious of his own potentials to counteract these fears. For inner fears are only imaginary dwarfs that can destroy the castles of one's dreams. As long as man has the possibility of in-sight, inward sight, that is to see the outside world and his problems in relation to himself, man will be able to handle whatever problems may come to his own life. Hollo Ney, "Existential Bases of Psychotherapy," in R. May, ed., Existential Psychology, (New York: Random House) p. 81.
be creative, to mold their specific kind of life, to fight for the realization of that kind of life designed for them in other words, to live authentically.

The educator has to make the students understand that discipline, deprivation, frustration and pain are not to be removed from them in order to make life easier, but that they have to engage their inner creativity to counteract these adversities and by doing so become authentic persons. Hazel E. Barnes writes:

We ought to teach people that we are responsible and free, that authenticity and the ethical life are values worth striving for. We should show them the difference between being-with-others and being one-with others. We should show and help them to understand their relation to their own emotions, to realize that they are not enslaved to their past and that they will themselves determine the quality of their own future.28

Only through conquering and superating oneself, one becomes equipped with the sense of achievement and ego strength, healthy self-esteem and confidence. One who has never tried for the best nor overcome difficulties nor achieved success will feel doubtful about himself. And the result is only one of two things:

whether we accept and love ourselves or we despise ourselves and feel contemptible, worthless and unlovable.

The existentialist approach shows the impossibility of any genuine existence without risks, anxiety and care. We have to commit ourselves to a cause be it God, country, freedom, love of man in its manyfold ways. Marcel, Kierkegaard and Sartre have all spoken strongly for commitment in life, but not on passing whims. Commitment is not a restriction, but a deepening of human freedom with the possibility of new commitments with himself and with other beings. We have to remind ourselves that growth and improvement can come only through pain, struggle and conflict.

What makes victory great is the challenge of the unknown risk. And man becomes truly human only at the moment of decision.

5. Man a Being, Sharing the Human Condition in the World, emerging towards God.

Man is called upon being and he is to respond to this call by a total dedication, as an "emerging man," not a finished product, struggling until death. Man's highest task is to know what one must be in order to be a true human being. Through each decision, man makes himself and realizes the possibilities
of his own existence.

At the same time man does not conceive his nature or essence except as related to his being in the world. Adrian Van Kaam writes:

I am not in the world as a stone is in a wall, a broom in a closet, or a vegetable in a freezer; they are contained...But I am involved, engaged in my world, I am concerned, I care as no stone, broom or vegetable can care. I am acquainted, familiar with the world; I am at home in the world.29

Man has to have an existential "overtness" toward the world, toward others and toward God. The total reality of one's self has to address itself to the totality of being, in order to be absorbed in the presence of that totality.30 To reach his potentials is to be a person. The Hebrew-Christian religious tradition seems to elevate these human potentials when it declares that man is created in the image of God.31

6. The Experience of Anxiety by Any Individual Trying to "Live".

Existentialism is not interested in the technical study

of The Meaning of Anxiety as studied by Sigmund Freud in his book. This is why the existentialists welcome Kierkegaard when he describes anxiety as the struggle of the living being against the non-being.

These are Soren Kierkegaard's three categories of anxiety:

Despair is a sickness in the Spirit, in the Self and so it may assure a triple form:

in Despair at not being conscious of having a self (Despair improperly so called);

in Despair at not willing to be oneself

in Despair at willing to be oneself.\textsuperscript{32}

The first form would set man in the category of the minerals, vegetables or animals. A beautiful star shining in the sky, unconscious of its beauty. The second form, a sad state of defeat: the person is paralyzed and does not dare to live, frightened by the challenge of becoming. The third form, a positive despair for the better in which man is ever self-actualizing, trying to reach the "unreachable star". Man in this stage feels that there is hope as long as there is life; and even though life has at some time to face death, death is not the last thing to happen, but only a transition into life in the Christian understanding.

Anxiety for Kierkegaard is also the state of mind when man confronts his freedom. He affirms that this is the reason why the most creative persons are the ones who confront more situations of possibility and hence more anxiety-creating situations. The more creative persons are those who are more "aware" or "conscious"—to follow May's terminology—of their own potentials and the more "anxious" to realize all of them. Hence comes the fear to lose their own abilities or not to self-actualize them. This is precisely the anxiety of being against non-being to which Kierkegaard refers. Emotionally impaired people experience relatively little anxiety because, one might say, by not wanting to be alive they are actually dead.

Paul Tillich's emphasis on the "the courage to be" refers precisely to this anxious process of becoming, so much selffulfilling because "in so far as the self does not become itself, it is not its own self; but not to be one's own self is despair."  

If one does not try to "just to be" he ends in despair and sadness. The challenging process of becoming is exhilarating.

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35 Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 163.
source of joy for the individual. Happiness is far too incidental and contingent a thing to be considered a goal in itself. "Happiness is the glow that attends the integration of the person while pursuing the attainment of goals." Growth motives that maintain tension in the interest of distant and often unattainable goals, distinguish human from animal and adult from infant becoming.

To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go
To right the unrightable wrong
To love, pure and chaste, from afar
To try when your arms are too weary
To reach the unreachable star
This is my quest...”

This enlightening approach to life cannot be understood in a cold rationalistic syllogism. But this is the way people can live a healthy life, laugh and enjoy emotional and peak experiences, feel the risk and the courage to be as long as they are becoming. Nature people accept tragedy as inseparable from man’s grandeur. They accept the responsibility of being human; they give up childhood omnipotence and dare to choose even if there will be no absolute certainty of the cold facts. Since

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37 Don Quijote in Man of La Mancha.
they have accepted the human condition, they take the risk just because they want to become more themselves and grow.

There are two opposite psychoanalytical attitudes towards human life: Freudian pessimism and the Junguian optimism that fits very appropriately in the existentialist approach.

7. Man Experiencing Loneliness

"Loneliness is a peculiar characteristic of modern man. This is why people so often want to visit, entertain, share companionship and friendship. But at the same time many people suffer from the fear of finding themselves alone, remarks Andre Gide, and so they don't find themselves at all."38 This is another of the basic principles of existentialism that play a very important role in group dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Aristotle said that man is a sociable animal and we have to understand him as such, so as to help him more adequately to become a better human being.

Abraham Maslow talking about existentialism and psycho-
ology affirms how the existentialist stress on the ultimate alone-
ness of the individual is a useful reminder for us, not only to work out further the concepts of decision, responsibility, choice,

self-creation, identity, but

It also makes more problematic and more fascinating the mystery of communication between aloneness via, e.g., intuition and empathy, love and altruism; identification with others, and homonomy in general. 39

Later on the danger of the group depersonalizing will be discussed. It is a fascinating combination in every person's life: In order to be himself, man has to be alone and live alone, but at the same time to really be a man, he has to live with others and share with them his existence, his loneliness, his being. "There is only one suffering: to be alone." 40

8. Man's Openness to Encounter God

Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel devote much attention to man's relation with God. Heidegger has defended himself against the charge of atheism and his philosophy seems to be somewhat "waiting for God." 41 Sartre is clearly in the atheistic line, though even the belief in God, he asserts, would make no serious difference to his approach to man.


Existentialism is not so atheistic that it wears itself out showing that God does not exist. Rather it declares that even if He did exist, that would change nothing... Not that we believe that God exists, but we think that the problem of His existence is not the issue.\(^{42}\)

Although existentialism as such does not prove the existence of God; existentialists accept Him through the act of Faith. Without God, they believe, human existence in the world becomes utterly absurd, and man is handed over to forlorness and despair. What is impossible for speculative reason becomes an actuality in the act of Faith. It rescues man from the perplexity, anxiety and despair engendered by the uncertainty and instability of the human situation. In the act of religious faith, the individual constitutes himself as a person by affirming the infinite personality of God. I am ready to accept my "being-in-the-world" with its limitations in understanding myself as a creature of God.

The acceptance of God is the result not of a rational knowledge but the work of faith, that is the work of a personal consecration of my life to God. The believer, says Marcel, is like a lover who offers his own self and the whole world to his beloved. And by realizing himself more he struggles happily to

make of himself a better gift for God. In my choices I am guided by a Light which, while it surpasses and transcends me, is nevertheless more intimately present to me than I am to myself. While for Sartre man is "thrown" into a hostile world and abandoned to his own devices and projects, for Marcel man, as an "incarnate" being in an "incarnate" world, is not left to realize his destiny in absolute solitude, but is illuminated by certain values, themselves "incarnate in being." Having taken our departure from our temporal human existence, we are drawn by Christ's Incarnation (where man's two great aspirations: His longing for the authentically human and for the divine are fulfilled) twoard the supratemporal Divine Existence.

Marcel affirms that I have to understand better my situation in the world, by relating it to the creative will of God. I have to realize my engagement in history, by becoming aware of my divine vocation.

The Act of Faith, as a religious experience, personal and incommunicable is basic to Marcel's philosophy of the individual's being-in-the-world. The Creator-God is both the

43"Intimior Intimo Meo", see St. Augustine, Sermon No. 144 De Tempore, Chapter 6.
"enveloping and transcending reality of myself." This act of faith rescues the individual from the perplexity, anxiety and even despair engendered by the uncertainty and instability of the human situation. I realize my engagement in history by becoming aware, by the act of faith, of my divine vocation. The act of Faith, says Marcel, marks the birth of both human personality and human freedom. In the act of faith I respond to the divine call to become truly myself. Through the act of faith I accept my human situation. The highest form of engagement is the act of faith. "I exist" is answered by "I believe." The totality of my self addresses itself to the totality of being and is absorbed in the presence of that totality. Man is called into being and responds to this call by a total dedication.45

Even though existentialism is not a rational philosophy, it has proved to be very appealing to the mentality of youth, vitally concerned with whatever considers and involves man's feelings and emotions. "The self, by relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself, is grounded transparently in the power which constituted it. This is faith."46


46Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 139.
9. Man's Openness to Encounter Men.

The existential concreteness of being is enriched by what Marcel designates as the category of "The Encounter"—two unknown persons meet. The more one person is external to the other, the more both become apart from one another. This is the subject-object impersonal relationship. At sometime, the moment of real communication springs; the "given object" is surpassed, and in its place appears the ontological plenitude of the encountered being. This is the "peak experience"; the "he" ceases and becomes a "thou." This is exactly what happens in the situation of a group encounter where unknown people start opening themselves, sharing, suffering and striving for the better, in common, and from a religious point-of-view in the presence of the "Absolute Thou."

Gabriel Marcel began with a refusal to acknowledge the traditional rationalistic distinction between subject and object. His entire work is oriented toward the recognition of a reality which is both transubjective and transobjective. This reality he calls "metaproblematical" or the "ontological mystery." To really communicate with people one has to involve oneself with the other. Being-with-others belongs to the very texture of
The group dynamic process tends precisely to create the atmosphere of respect and concern for any individual and share with the group just the human condition. The great impact of this deep relationship is so beneficial that some people think this is in some cases very sound therapy including a great improvement of human relationships, a better understanding of other people's attitudes and a breaking down of barriers of hostility and mistrust.

All existing persons have the need and capability of going out from their centeredness to participate in other beings. This involves some risk, that in the group is taken spontaneously, with the encouragement of the other members that have already taken the same risk and found it rewarding.

Marcel and his fellow existentialists condemn the increasing degeneration of human relations and the virtual impossibility of genuine communication. Society is losing the understanding for speech and language—the means of communication—and the respect for the individual—the subject of communication. Marcel deplores with Heidegger that social relations in the contemporary world have as their frame of reference the cold

egalitarian irresponsibility of man rather than the personally creative polarity of the "I" and the "Thou."

III. Existentialism and Self-Realization

1. Self-awareness as Man's True Vocation.

One becomes a person in the measure in which one loves himself; and only after one has accepted and loved himself, one is able to give himself to others and love others in openness and trust. Love of self and trust in others are two inseparable psychological realities, because mistrust of others is basically only mistrust and insecurity of one self. This is why the writer of this paper is convinced that group activities in the school setting for students and teachers have a very important role to play in the growing process of the constellation of individuals that gravitate around the school. Carl Rogers puts it this way:

...in my judgement the warm, subjective, human encounter of two persons is more effective in facilitating change, than is the most precise set of techniques growing out of learning theory or operant conditioning.48

Existentialism is not a "systematic" philosophy. This

is why it does not communicate to education a set of rules to be mastered or a set of doctrines to be memorized, but rather a spirit or attitude that would pervade the whole educational enterprise. Existentialism, emphasizes upon the strictly human. The necessarily subjective nature of existence suggests a high regard for the individual. The entire emphasis on authentic human existence and the realization of what it offers to each individual in his existential situations, has made guidance counselors and educators keenly alert to experiment with the many fruitful insights of this philosophy.

Existentialism reminds us of the need to educate individuals who will be honest and bold enough to shake off the yoke of hypocrisy, uncritical passivity and blind conformity, by daring to be themselves. There is a need of outside help to develop one's internal and subjective possibilities. This can be accomplished in the school setting, and the school setting can be improved by the organization of group encounters that help each person to become more himself. Many persons who have become aware of their unauthentic existences have acquired from the groups a deeper insight upon themselves and a better relationship with others.

That the individual is the most important factor with which education can be concerned, is a self-evident statement.
Nevertheless, we have to accept the loss of personal identity that often occurs when persons get swallowed up in social and educational systems. Books like *The Lonely Crowd* written by David Riessman and *The Organization Man* by William H. Whyte, give adequate testimony to this.₄⁹

Education can play a significant role in protecting and promoting the privacy of mind and the right of the individual to be truly himself. Morris Van Cleve writes:

The best policy for the school is to awaken individual boys and girls to the need to know themselves, to the need not be steam-rolled into social choices, and, ultimately, to the need to assert their own unique selves in a genuine way. The real reason why they go to school is not to learn how to think about contemporary problems so as better to solve them...not to reform the human race. Children go to school, ultimately, to find out who they are and what a human life is for.₅⁰

The problem of how to help the student to live authentically has to be of much concern to both faculty and students. This is why a clear concept of man is essential. For the existentialist teacher the problem is "How can I guide humans to

₄⁹David Riessman et al., *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950)

choose to become self-determining agents in their thinking and in their valuing, without asking them to give up the privacy of their own self birth into being.\textsuperscript{51}

2. Two Approaches for the Student Development.

Two major educational trends are especially viewed by the existentialists as distorting a true concept of man.

The first of these is Hegelian idealism, and Marxist materialism. Human history in these views was made by secret forces and laws that took no account of human freedom. Man's destiny was assumed to be determined by matter, by economic laws, by the will of a vengeful God or by man's social functions. Accordingly, man should exist for different reasons: the country, the Ideal society, the leader. Man exists according to these theories, for any other cause but himself. This concept invaded the educational field.

The second trend was that of naturalism, developed in the "sciences" seeking to objectify "man and things," to be able

control, predict and master them. Man is on the same level with the machine. William H. Whyte, whose book The Organization Man, we mentioned, pretends that scientists with the same techniques that have worked in the physical sciences, are going to be able eventually to create an exact science of man. 52

This is one big mistake of experimental psychology that has done enough damage in the educational field. This point-of-view does not take into account that psychology fails to comprehend the wholeness of man. Learning certainly involves tension-reduction, but these terms certainly fail to represent the complexity of man, whose complicated psychic mechanisms transcend those of a guinea pig.

The two approaches related can fit into the "objective" trend to the study of man. By the "objective" trend, Carl Rogers understands the system based simply on the operant conditioning of the person. "The problem is not different in kind from Skinner's shaping of the behavior of his pigeons toward ping-pong playing." 53 He adds that this whole trend has behind it the weight of current attitudes in American psychology that seems to

say, "Away from the philosophical and the vague. On toward the concrete, the operationally defined, the specific...our behaviors and our selves are nothing but objects molded and shaped by conditioning circumstances...The way to understand is from the outside."54

Logical and natural as this trend may be, suited as it is to the temper of our American culture, it is not the only trend that is feasible and evident. European philosophers tell us that this is not an adequate explanation to the whole range of human phenomena. Rogers wants to be in the group of Rollo May, Abraham Maslow, and Gordon W. Allport. We want to be concerned with "the whole spectrum of human behavior...that is more than the behavior of our laboratory animals."55

Existentialism looks at man as endowed with the ability to know, to will, to act. Man is capable of ever making himself—he is always becoming—by practical understanding acting and reacting.

3. Existentialism and the Small Group

Man may choose to remain indifferent, undecided, inactive.

54 Ibid., p. 87.

55 Loc. cit.
"We are our choices," says Sartre. The role of the educator would be to try to understand this complex individual student. The teacher is to help the student to chose at whatever risks and costs this may entail. Once the student has chosen, the teacher is expected to stand back and let him face all the consequences. Fallico's words are:

The object of education is to make seeming men uncomfortable with themselves, to irritate them out of the lethargy into which home, society, education, propaganda and history necessarily plunge them. Education is a kind of violence that a man does first of all to himself, for the health of his soul.

There is no substitute for self-search in the education of man. And no man can help another in these fundamental matters except by denying him palliatives and expedient ways of avoiding the genuine encounter with nothingness which is existence itself. The teacher is the rare person who knows how to withhold and to expose the obnoxious medicaments, and knows how to stand out of the way of a healthy existential crisis, gladly risking the temporary resentment of his students.56

Existentialism may be called a "philosophy of crisis," made to fit adequately in the critical situations that they have to face, if the students want to grow, mature and be themselves.

The genuine educator should not want just imitators or blind followers. He knows that every individual is extremely

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56 Fallico, "Existentialism and Education," p. 171.
worthy and different from any other person. This is why the true educator wants from his students the achievement of an authentic mind. If the common work of both, student and educator has been successful, the students will hold something to be true because they have convinced themselves that it is so. They will be free, self-moving and outgoing to people.

The existential approach to education would not be just interested in arriving at general propositions. The vital interest would be to promote learning using the subjective experiences, values, and attitudes. This way the learner, will be overcoming fear and inhibitions for the better self-expression of his own views in terms of truth, interest of the person and of mankind. In order for this system to work, it is basically necessary that the educator himself be free from his own inhibitions. When the educators are really themselves and have conquered a deep self-realization of their own inner values, it will be possible to prepare the youth for the challenges of life.

Nobody gives what one does not have. This is why it is so important for the educators to have had some experience towards making them, as a group, more known to themselves, their own values and possibilities. So many people are unaware of themselves and educators are no exception. When this inner security has been conquered, the educator will let the student
be himself, because the teacher has also come to be himself, after a painful process he understands that the student will also reach what he has reached before him.

The educator is expected to have gone himself through a long process of ego enhancement. He is supposed long ago to have given up being good out of fear or in order to keep his parents' love. He must be good because he made the choice to be so. Fear has been replaced by courage. This is a life worth living.

The educator will avoid the weakness of leading the student in the teacher's way. All this is hard to relate to anyone who has not gone through this life-experience. And life itself is, in many instances, unexplainable.

It is evident that existentialism does not pretend to set up an absolutely new system of values in education. We cannot ignore the past if we want to succeed in the future. Existentialism is aware of the technical advances in programmed instruction, specialized personnel, theories of transfer and purposeful learning. We have to realize that we are dwarfs mounted on the shoulders of scientific giants who preceded us. If we see more than they did, it is mainly because we stand on their shoulders.
Abraham Maslow explaining growth in self-actualization psychology says that the balance between spontaneity and control varies as the health of the psyche and the health of the world vary. Pure spontaneity, he says, is no longer possible because we live in a world which runs by its own non-psychic laws. Pure control is not permanently possible, for then the psyche dies. Education, he affirms, must be directed both toward cultivation of controls and cultivation of spontaneity and expression. In our culture and at this point in history it is necessary to redress the balance in favor of spontaneity, the ability to be expressive, to control, to be creative.57

It is absolutely necessary for the school to have a calendar, examinations, discipline, tests, regulations. But the school has to do more than just that. "I cannot suppose that a teacher had nothing else to do beside setting a paragraph for the student to learn everyday and recite it the next day by rote."58 Behind the school structure there has to be a definite pursuit of values; and the chief goal has to be the knowledge and self-actualization of man. The existentialist approach to education would prefer to see the school become

57See Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 198.
more student centered than subject-matter or teacher centered. The goal is to foster new relationships of mutual acceptance of students and staff. It is true that man is a mystery and this mystery confuses us in adolescence with its patognomic manifestations.59 This is why the educator is always ill-at-ease trying to "engage himself in this encounter."60

There seems to be a striking increase in public concern about the schools as instruments of intellectual excellence. Most of this concern is centered around a conception of "achievement" which involves the mastery of "subject-matter," that seems to be anything external to the day-to-day life of the student.

Adults are spending in today's world large amounts of money and time trying to understand "human relations" in their work. But the students are forbidden such learning because it is not "subject matter," because such a thing is not "supposed" to be in the traditional curriculum. But the teacher's job is to bring together, via the processes going on in the classroom group, the externally given subject matter and the unique needs

60See Gabriel Marcel, Du Refus a L'Invocation, (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), p. 49.
of each learner. Many times "the student's 'here-and-now' task as classroom approach goes forward, is, to please, or at least, not to displease the teacher. And the teacher is pleased mainly when the student manages to invest himself with some intensity in the 'there-and-then' of subject matter. Neither teacher nor student spends much time, officially discussing the interpersonal here-and-now. This is why the T-Group is described by participants as being "like nothing I ever saw before." 61

Some existentialists have been defensive against group processes for education and mass procedures. Jaspers says that "mass diffusion of knowledge...in the cultural chaos that now exists, signifies nothing." 62

Existentialism is so much concerned about the individual and his authenticity, that the system is wary of any social groups, forces, allegiances which endanger human liberty. Among the informal social agencies of education, the existentialists have been most critical of mass media. "Technical progress in recent years has favored the manipulation of opinion; in particular we emphasize the prodigious part played by the radio." 63

Some of them go to the extreme, like Morris, when he writes:

If education means the selection and acquisition of certain modes of response over others, it seems almost preposterous to believe that existentialists could have schools at all.\(^6^4\)

Man tries to avoid loneliness for man's condition is basically social. It seems that existentialists have failed somewhat to suggest concrete ways of building social organizations and society of patterns designed to safeguard the individual freedom when dealing in groups. This is why the author of this paper thinks that the encounters attempting to develop the whole person and his true freedom are so necessary to improve human relationships. One cannot effectively accept oneself, being alone. The group seems to be a "conditio sine qua non," the individual becomes self-conscious of his inner worth and possibilities. Such a group is basically structured, as we will explain, on a great respect and concern for the individual. Each person is allowed, maybe for the first time, to really be himself in front of the group. The group answers with a warm response and understanding. Each person is fighting his own struggle for an authentic life. This is why a group like

this will be promoting to the most the self-actualization of the individual for the betterment of the community. The strong person has to be able to transcend the group when necessary. Yet he realizes that his strength has been actualized by the group.

It seems that consciously or not, the present school system forces the individual student to conform to the group, suffocating the development of personal traits and aptitudes. This gives protection and security to individuals, especially to those of weak personality. Being an un-individualized member of a group does not expose him to criticism or attack. It gives him the social approval which is so vital in the pre-adolescence and adolescence periods. The student who always conforms in one way or another tries to be out of trouble. He actually might be out of trouble with his teachers and even with his peers. His life-space, in Lewin's words,⁶⁵ is so wide that his own personality is nowhere. His life in the future will most likely have little influence because his personality ignores self-affirmation. But are we sometimes protecting the established

⁶⁵Lewin's theory has been briefly explained in the third chapter of this thesis.
structures so much that we dare to kill the individual? Do we not rather have to protect the individual, even if this means some changes in the fixed structure? "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The literal fixation to the letter of the law is only a sign of insecurity. And only the spirit of the law sets us free. "Truth shall make you free." Youth rejects any imposition that is not based on truth. So many precious talents of young people are lost for good causes because they do not accept falsehood. In many schools he is considered to be the best student who is the most quiet of all. Is this the real way to prepare leaders or are we killing initiatives just because they do not conform to the established traditional structures? It is only in the practice of taking risks and personal responsibility that one can grow. The individual has to leave the safety of his passive obedience, test himself and expose himself to possible criticism. This means danger. It is threatening. There will be no protection from the authority figure. The only strength will be just his trust in himself. Security is not sought any more in the superior's command but within himself. It will only be in the midst of this situation that the person will be free in psychoanalytical terms, from being fixated or even regressed to previous

66Mark 2:27.
67John 8:32.
stages. Life is motion. Any living creature has to move forward in his developmental stages. This is a struggle that implies survival.

To grow is self-rewarding but one finds also in growing many intrinsic pains. Each step forward is a step into the unfamiliar, good and satisfying. It frequently means a separation, even a kind of death prior to rebirth, with the consequent nostalgia, fear, loneliness and insecurity. It also means often giving up a simpler and easier life in exchange for a more demanding, more responsible and difficult one. This is why growth that requires courage, facing the risk, in the individual, demands from the school setting protection, permission, encouragement and challenge. And only when the educator is attuned to his student in a deep understanding of the strenuous, painful, wearing-out process of maturing. Only then, the school will truly be preparing the men and women of tomorrow.

There are many challenges that will help the student to discover his true self and numerous hidden and unknown capabilities. But only facing the risk he will pull open the curtain that keeps him unable to contemplate his own mystery. Are we protecting so much our students that we do not allow them the possibility to grow? Would it not be rather that we are afraid of them because we are afraid of ourselves and we think they may
become more powerful and influential?

Such an attitude pretty evidently shows a defense mechanism whose victims are the students. That kind of an adult has not matured himself and thus does not want others to grow and self-actualize.

Allport writes to this purpose:

...personality may be arrested in its development. Plenty of people, adult in years, have not successfully effected these transformations. They suffer from infantile guilt, from unresolved conflicts with early authority figures.68

We have to understand that man no matter what his age is, exists not as a complete being, but as one who is becoming, as a "project." The task of the educator is to create a climate that allows man to discover himself. This new insight which can only grow in an atmosphere of love and trust, will liberate the person and set free the hidden forces of his inner self. The writer wants this point very clear: coordinate with this acceptance of the self is the assumption that the main path to health and self-fulfillment is via basic need gratification, rather than via frustration. But we have to be well aware of the

68Allport, Becoming, p. 74.
reality that the complete absence of frustration, pain or danger is even more noxious to the psychic health. "To be strong, a person must acquire frustration-tolerance."\(^{69}\) The writer wants to stress again that motivated struggle is the healthiest if not the only way to grow toward self-actualization.

In order to educate into self-integration, the educator must bring his students closer to reality. Possession of self springs from integration of reality, faced courageously. Reality is more or less frightening, because any change disturbs us. Our students have to learn how to face reality and re-interpret it themselves in the ever changing life-processes. Reality is not a thing that can be grasped once forever. This is why I affirm that reality and the human event at all his stages, have to be closely connected and integrated for a healthier human development. To be human without a system of values is psychopathogenic. What man needs and does not have, he seeks for unceasingly. Within this framework, our student's nature will persist forever, pressing for actualization.

Carl C. Rogers explains this new methodology and affirms that it has the capacity to move people, to make them more free, more open-minded, more flexible.

\(^{69}\) Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 200.
The importance of this system (non-directive) goes beyond the classroom and extends to every area where human beings communicate and try to live with one another.\footnote{70}{Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, (Boston: Houghton, 1961) p. 309. Chap. 15 explains the method as experienced by a participant, pp. 297-304.}

This big enterprise has to be realized through an intimate personal relationship. Pestalozzi, the warmhearted Swiss educator wrote in 1814:\footnote{71}{Quoted by Reinhardt: The Existentialist Revolt, p. 227.}

Human kind forms itself essentially not in massa but individualiter, from face to face, from heart to heart, with...a concern for the individual.

John Dewey affirms that education is a constant reorganization or reconstruction of experience, which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experiences. In his book Democracy and Education, he wrote:

Education may be conceived either retrospectively or prospectively. That is to say, it may be treated as process of accommodating the future to the past, or as a utilization of the past for a resource in a developing future... (The value of education lies in the importance of increasing) the meaning of the things with which we have actively to do at the present time. The idea of education advanced in these chapters is formally summed up in the idea which is marked off from education as preparation for a remote future, as unfolding, as external
Samuel Tenenbaum contends that to fulfill Dewey's ideals one has to become involved with his whole self, his very person, his root drives, emotions, attitudes and values. Tenenbaum makes these comments about the group experience:

No series of facts or arguments, no matter how logically or brilliantly arranged, can ever faintly compare with that sort of thing.\(^7\)

There are things that cannot be learned in books. Life is one of them. And the group experience is essentially life shared, with emotional processes at work, making shy persons less shy and over-aggressive more considerate of others. When we see our own life reflected in others we finally start wondering how foolishly we have lived. I can say from my own experience, that practically everybody in these groups has learned as a matter of fact, how lucky each one was. They have started to like themselves, accept themselves, love themselves. Because this has not been done before, they did not know how to love others. The human psyche works in such a way that the consciousness of ourselves gives us the ability to perceive ourselves not


\(^7\)Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, p. 306.
only in our own way but also in the way others see us. This enables us to have empathy with others. This is the "magic secret" that makes the group so effective. The group itself goes along. Because the greatest demand of any of its members, whoever they may be, is to have personal identity. This is more important to any individual than attention, prestige or even love, because self-identity comes prior to any other personal reality. And to fulfill these potentialities is to be a person. There is no end to this fulfillment. Man has been created to the image of God, whom man is to develop in himself.

Real communication is the mean through which this self-fulfillment is accomplished. Rogers says that

the warm, subjective human encounter...is more effective in facilitating change that is the most precise set of techniques growing out of learning theory or operant conditioning.74

Speaking about this interpersonal relationship Rogers affirms that when someone understands how it feels and seems to be oneself without being analyzed or judged, the person can blossom and grow in that climate.75

74 Rogers, "Two Divergent Trends", p. 93.

More than many tests of objective value, the real human encounter is most inspiring and fulfillment in itself. Tests are helpful and sometimes necessary, but the mystery of man can only be approached in a sound human encounter at the existential level. Rogers has initiated a "psycho-therapeutic procedure that in some aspects can help the educational purposes." Rollo May affirms that the technical dogma protects the psychologist not only from his own anxiety, but also from understanding the patient. "They block him off from the full presence in the encounter which is essential to understanding what is going on." Rogers states that the strictly objective approach—non-humanistic, impersonal, rationally based on knowledge of animal learning and operant conditioning, ends up ultimately in a mechanical situation instead of a human encounter.

Abraham Maslow affirms that this encounter requires a personal integrity, self-awareness and self-control on the counselor's part. The "peak" experiences are integrative of

77May, "The Emergence of Existential Psychology," p. 28.
the splits within the person, between persons, within the world and between the person and the world. "Peak experiences" are moves toward integration. In peak experiences, time disappears, hopes are fulfilled, and they themselves make life worth living. 80

Marcel, Heidegger and Jaspers agree on the depersonalization of man and the lack of communication, both of which reflect a lack of integrity of man in himself and with others. Man's integration will be possible by sharing, which denotes the actuality of human rapports as revealed in the reality of "myself," of the "thou," of the "other" and of the "Absolute Thou" of God. 81

Man's approach to God as an absolute Presence, takes the form of worship. In this relation between God and Man, Marcel finds profound interpersonal bounds which transform the being into his actualization. Participation is not an accomplished fact, but a definite will to participate. This is why man is a wayfarer. 82 Unlike Sartre, Marcel will not place the emphasis

80 See Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 210 and following.
81 See Reinhardt, The Existentialist Revolt, p. 219.
on choices as creating values so much as in values creating choices. Values give rise to my dedication as to my human vocation that is just to be myself willing to relate with others and with God. Man, it is true, experiences loneliness, but man as such is built up on these relations rather than on loneliness, pessimism and death in Sartre's mind.

Christian existentialism is enlightened by faith and life, instead of shadowed by despair and death. This is why Christianity understood death not as the last thing of all, but as a little event within eternal life. Christianity understood that in death is more hope than in a merely prosperous human life.

Anxiety is experienced by any healthy human being that tries to live. Such a tension of living, when shared in a Christian group encounter, makes life worth living, and life itself becomes joy shared with my fellow men.

We will conclude this chapter with these words of Kierkegaard, reflecting the hope of a fulfillment in God, that ultimately has to be the goal of a true Christian education.

The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude which relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, a task which can be performed only by means of a relationship to God.  

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33 Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 162.
CHAPTER III

A HISTORICAL REVIEW: FROM THE STUDY OF SOCIETY TO THE STUDY OF THE SMALL GROUP

1. Studies on Man as a Social Animal.

Man is a social animal. In order to understand what happens to the human being, we have to examine carefully, not only the isolated individual but also the ways in which each person functions in the different groups. Man has necessarily to relate to his fellow men in one way or another. Much of the human welfare or unsettledness in the world stems from the relationships among men.

The history of mankind has been deeply affected by individuals. But it is also evident that those individuals were deeply affected by their respective groups. The influence of the group is basic in the individual's everyday life. The more we know about these groups the better we shall be able to understand men and their life, both as individuals and as members of a group. This group can be the family, the society, the country of the human race.
The old saying "know thyself" has always been a basic source of any improved human relationship. One of the main tasks of people in the world is to relate better with others. People have to be able to share with people joy and sorrow, conflict and tension, work and prayer. Men and women have to learn how to be with people contentedly or to be happily alone, to lead or to follow. People have to learn how to really belong to the human race. This precisely would be one of the most important tasks in a school setting as I will explain later on. Better relationships between teachers and students and among students themselves will improve the relationships in the future society. If the boys of today learn how to relate better with those around them, the men of tomorrow will improve our institutions. The whole welfare or mankind will benefit from better relationships among people.

Many people in our modern world cluster into relatively small groups to satisfy their basic human needs. The modern man spends much time getting together in groups, planning, working, educating, relaxing. It is sad to think that much of this work is focused toward destruction rather than improvement of the

84The admonition of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. This saying has also been attributed to Thales, Solon, Pithagoras and Socrates, as a basic truth for a sound living. See Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. (New York: Harper and Brothers: 1974, p. 538)
human race. It is necessary to know as much as possible about the nature in which groups form, function and dissolve, in order to improve human behavior.

Intellectual activities of thoughtful people have been interested in acquiring knowledge about the nature of groups and the psychological forces associated with them.

A sound education is not possible without dependable answers to a host of questions concerning the operation of groups, how individuals relate to groups and how small groups relate to larger communities. There are certain conditions under which groups form and operate better. There are also certain factors that foster the decline and disintegration of groups. Some groups exert powerful influence over the members, while others exert little or none. The relations between groups and the characteristics of the individuals as influencing and being influenced by groups are some of the important issues to be studied in this work as a small contribution for the deeper understanding of our students.

The earliest writings on groups contain some general principles about the nature of groups and the relations between individuals and groups and how to manage the group. During the period from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries there
was created in Europe an impressive literature dealing with the
nature of man and his place in society.

It is interesting to note that the somber, ungrateful,
self-centered personality of Auguste Compte, was deeply interest-
ed in human relations. He is the father of modern sociology and
his writings made people think what to do about studying society
for the better understanding of peoples and the improvement of
interpersonal relationships. Even though he maintains such
"philosophical truths" as "we know the whole better than the
parts," his extensive treatment of positivism in 1830 pro-
vided a major advance in the examination of basic assumptions
about the possibility of subjecting the phenomena of the human
group to scientific investigation.

The philosophical point-of-view on man's nature presents
a spectrum of opinions in man's enlightening ideas. A slogan
attributed to Durkheim, reflects the extreme approach: "every
time a social phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation
is false." The other extreme position is held by White in

85 See Nicholas S. Timasheff, Sociological Theory--Its
86 Quoted by Cartwright and Zander, Group Dynamics,
his "organization man." White promises that with the same techniques used effectively in the physical sciences, we can eventually create an exact science of man. The writer maintains with increased conviction along the time, that the individual is unexplainable, like Aristotle said. Consequently different traits are to be found in each individual. It does not seem feasible there will ever be such a device that would fit as an outside measure for the ever-changing, unique, becoming individual.


Until the end of last century, psychology had not been concerned specifically with the behavior of groups. Gustave Le Bon analyzes the transient group formation. McDougall focuses into the stable organizations. Trotter studies the psychological basis of Aristotle's zoon politikon, and


Sigmund Freud studies the *Group Psychology* and the *Analysis of the Ego*. The psychoanalytical theory focused upon motivational and defensive processes within the individual, was extended by Freud himself to group psychotherapy.

The establishment of the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig in 1879, motivated experimentation, hypothesis and generalizations that related almost exclusively with the individual. In 1879, however, Norman Triplett initiated the first experimental investigation of social influences on the individual performance.

Triplett studied carefully bycicle races and came to the conclusion that a rider's speed was significantly increased when he was paced than when he was unpaced. His data showed that the presence of another contestant served to liberate latent

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energy not ordinarily available. Triplett's investigations confirmed the hypotheses that an awareness of the presence or absence of other human beings is an important factor in performance. A solitary individual and the same person in a group can be said to be two different psychological structures.

In the first decade of the century, the Germans, August Mayer, Ernse Meumann and W. Moede showed that the performance of healthy pupils in groups was superior to their work as isolates. Those who preferred solitary work were children who were somewhat maladjusted. F. H. Allport studied the effects of the group on cognitive behavior and concluded that the individuals produced more quantities in group than alone; but the best quality and more original thought was produced in solitude.  

3. Kurt Lewin and the Field Theory

The most influential work in the emerging study of group dynamics was that one performed by Kurt Lewin, R. Lippitt and W. F. White. From 1937 until 1940 they investigated the group processes and styles of leadership. Leadership became

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one of the most important factors to be considered in the whole dynamics. The influences upon the group as a whole and upon individuals in the group were carefully studied. Groups of ten and eleven-year-old children were formed to meet regularly for several weeks under the leadership of an adult who induced the different group atmospheres. Groups were as similar as possible.

Three types of leadership were investigated in the experimental manipulation of children groups under adult planned leadership: democratic, autocratic and laissezfaire. The effects produced in the group members were interesting. Autocratic groups seemed to produce a certain atmosphere of scapecoating. Aggressiveness appeared as a constant in different levels in most groups. This aggressiveness changed when new group levels were approached. Violent emotional explosions took place when groups under autocratic leadership were given a more permissive leader.

Kurt Lewin was the first one to use the term "group dynamics" when he wrote about his research about group processes and leadership and its various impacts on the different groups. He said that his purpose

was not to duplicate any given autocracy or democracy or to study an "ideal" autocracy or democracy,
but to create set-ups which would give insight into the underlying group dynamics.96

Kurt Lewin believed that it was possible to construct a coherent theory about the nature of group life that would improve family life, work groups, school, committees, military units and communities in general. He says that leadership, status, communications, social norms, group atmosphere and intergroup relationships are some of the basic problems to understand the nature of group dynamics. He and his associates conducted several laboratory experiments designed to compare the effects of fear and frustration as organized versus unorganized groups.97 He investigated whether the actual behavior of leaders of youth groups could be modified through training. Bavelas suggested to Lewin the ideas known today as "group decision." This was later related to industrial production. Bavelas also artificially controlled who in the group could send information to whom and tested the effects of such communication networks on group group efficiency and satisfaction.98


Margaret Mead interested Lewin in studying problems related to wartime shortages and this made Radke and others to conduct experiments on group decision as a means of changing food habits.99

Lewin's work on group dynamics started to be published in the late twenties and when he settled in the United States, he found more facilities to apply his theoretical concepts to group behavior and put them in laboratory testing. Kurt Lewin attracted a generation of scientists. Festinger, Schachter and Bach tested the effects of groups cohesion upon pressure to conform to group norms.100 A predominant of research has been from Lewin's studies. The question of the group's effect upon the single member and later the effects of each member on the process of the group. Bales presents a theory of group interaction.101 Problems such as how to adapt the group to the


realities of the immediate situation, how to accomplish the group's goal, how to hold the group together, how to satisfy the members' needs were in the forefront. Burrow studied the self-analytic group, in order to better understand group dynamics by exploring the processes within the group. He presents a rationale for group therapy and affirms that emotional disorders are due to unresolved problems occurred in a network of interpersonal relations. It has been confirmed that certain patients are helped better when interacting with a variety of persons. For some of them the traditional one-to-one doctor-patient relationship is less helpful, whereas for others the group is too hard to face.

In the psychoanalytic experience, this writer has found that generally speaking pre-psychotic patients, strangely enough, are helped immensely in the group atmosphere. For some of them, the analytic couch, arouses a deep sense of loneliness before the "judge-analyst" and in quite a few instances the couch precipitates psychotic desintegration. Freud himself is concerned with the "ceremonial of getting the patient to lie on a sofa, while he sits behind him out of his sight." The general


practice of "orthodox psychoanalysis" keeps today this "ceremony" as a matter of "integrity" in the psychoanalytic treatment. Many people, even psychoanalysts, affirm that there is no psychoanalysis without the sofa. They seem to give a magic strength to the couch and some of them seem afraid to face their patients. Nevertheless it is true that there are certain advantages in the position Freud suggests. But more than the rules, the individual is important and each case should be treated accordingly.

Semrad, at Harvard University, conducted seminars wherein medical students and social scientists met together, observed their own interaction and interpreted to each other what the group was doing.\textsuperscript{104}

The Field Theory as applied to small groups is attributed to Kurt Lewin.\textsuperscript{105} Lewin studied the individual and the group from a phenomenological position, that is to say, he was more interested in what the individual, not what the observer perceived. Leadership was another aspect of his research. But his most important contribution as the field theory.

\textsuperscript{104}Elvin V. Semrad and John Arsenian, "The Use of Group Dynamics," \textit{American Journal of Psychiatry}, 50 (1951) 358-363.

affirms that every individual has not only a physical space but also a field of life psychological space by which he is surrounded, within which he moves and achieves his goals. If the life space of the individual is too limited, his "barriers" could even suffocate the person. On the contrary, if his "barriers" are too far apart the individual would somewhat lose his personal identity. Anyone could walk into his life space without any interference. In other words, his life space would be a "nobody's land," what eventually would make the individual nobody for himself, unaware of himself, if these barriers are too tight, the individual would be isolated because his life space would be so narrow that nobody but himself would be able to exist in that field. This narrow set of barriers would eventually put the individual in isolation and loneliness. This particular existential situation is referred to in the chapter on existentialism.

The field theory is applied to groups. The group also has its own life space, \textsuperscript{106} "locomotes" in pursuit of its own goals, encounters barriers in this process. The field theories

\textsuperscript{106}Havinghurst presents his approach to the concept of life space and the importance of the social environment in the development of the child's social life span. See Robert Havinghurst and Bernice L. Neugarten, \textit{Society and Education}, third edition, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968) p. 139 and following.
introduced concepts to understand better the group life: norms; rules governing the behavior of the members; roles: such as leader, follower, parasite, clown, public-relations individual; power and influence over each other of the members of the group; cohesion or togetherness that grows as long as the group grows; interaction or communication; consensus, regarding agreement on goals, norms, roles and other aspects of the group process.

Field Theorists are especially concerned with cohesion as an important variable for increasing or decreasing the group's productivity, the agreement on goals and understanding, satisfaction, influence, pride of being members of a group, ability to face crisis. A key indicator of group cohesion is the way in which the group makes a decision. Decisions made by unanimity when members are willing to express agreement, indicate high cohesion in the group. Decisions made by acquiescence to the leader or to the majority vote would indicate a low cohesion. 107

Robert F. Bales 108 had a considerable impact on the


study of groups. Bales proposes an observational scheme that gives to his interaction process analysis (IPA) a great usefulness. Bales considers four main problems in the groups: adaption of factors outside the group; instrumental control in performing the task reaching decisions; expression of feelings and integration or sense of belonging, so important in the performance of the group. The most important task accomplished by Lewin was to synthetize theory and practice, making it possible to understand the individual as well as the group. Lewin's distinction between the Aristotelian notion of substance and the Galilean concept of function connected group psychology with mathematical procedures, necessary to draw general conclusions in his experimental theory. After Lewin, it became clear that the group is a dynamic entity, operating as a whole with interdependent parts and cooperation of individuals toward a common goal, agreed upon collectively. Through concerted effort man can attain goals which he cannot reach in isolation.

George G. Homans differs from the previous authors in his major assumption and purpose: he tries to be as close as possible to


man's everyday life. Whereas, Lewin's theory is more useful as a perspective with which to approach the analysis of a group, Bales' interaction process analysis (IPA) provides a scheme for the analysis of the behavior of members of a group. Homann's system presents a device to synthesise the findings of studies in small groups.

4. Jacob L. Moreno and Sociometry

An important contribution in the field of group dynamics is the work of Jacob L. Moreno, the father of modern sociometry. Sociometric tests, in which Moreno was the pioneer, played an important role in group dynamics and were used as well as playground observations, teachers' interviews and school records. Moreno analyzes and describes group behavior and introduces "sociometry" as the technique for measuring the attraction-repulsion dimension in human relationships. Following the "who chooses whom" members of the group report how they feel about other members, whom they like, whom they dislike, with whom they would like or not like to be associated to perform a task. This device refers the dimension of the emotional

111 See J. L. Moreno, "Sociometry and the Cultural Order," Sociometry, 6 (1943) 299-344.
relations among members and provides a schematic picture to compare the different patterns of relationships among members of a group. The concepts of leadership and isolation have also been studied by Jennings, who has been associated with Moreno. Moreno has also used "role-playing" in his "psychodrama" technique, very closely associated with group psychotherapy. The individuals express spontaneously their emotional conflicts. Their real-life situations are represented in the group. The performers are being aided by "auxiliary-egos," who represent important persons in each individual's life and help them to externalize their inner feelings, hostilities and fears. This way they are supposed to see more objectively their problems and resolve them adequately. Moreno with the help of his wife, conducts his own private institute in Beacon, New York and his system has been spread rather extensively. Like any other kind of group therapy, this one would be very successful in very expert hands, but very dangerous in unexperienced ones. I have attended some of Moreno's presentations and I doubt his


effectiveness in the long run. It seems to me that the dramatic aspect is too much stressed in a collective emotional atmosphere, where some people may be thrown into deep conflicts from which they would feel inadequate to get out.

One of the contributions of Moreno's theory to the group process is that every individual should be capable and willing to play his own role in such a way as to enable every other individual to play also his own role in the group. Mutual attraction, or positive sociometric choice, makes group interaction positive and productive. Mutual repulsion or negative sociometric choice harms the interindivudual rapports. The attraction-repulsion valence is in this system, the basic principle for social interaction and interpersonal relationships. Moreno started also the publication of the journal, *psychodrama*, in 1949 and conducts regular training in psychodrama to those who desire to become experts in his techniques.

5. The National Training Laboratories of the National Education Association.

A specific organization for improving interpersonal

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relationships started in 1946. The first training was held at a workshop in New Britain, Connecticut. The workshop was sponsored by the Connecticut Interracial Commission, the Connecticut Department of Education and the Research Center for Group Dynamics, located then at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Kenneth Benne, Ronald Lippott, and Leland Bradford formed the training team. The research team was composed of Kurt Lewin and Ronald Lippitt. This work was the starting point of today's National Training Laboratories Institute held at Bethel, Maine, and in many other centers across the United States.

The dynamic effect of bringing out the group process and the members' hidden personal and interpersonal feelings has been proven very effective as long as it is conducted by experts. The group has showed to follow the same epigenetic phases of the individual human being, which has brought analytic psychotherapy and group dynamics psychology into a close relationship. I will speak in a later chapter in detail about this process of the formation of the group and the psychoanalytic implications therein.

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The Workshops of the National Training Laboratories have ordinarily planned a specific human-relations training, removed from everyday activities and have proved to be a major instrument of organizational change. Each workshop is supposed to have a specific goal; group emphasis; personal and inter-personal emphasis; inter-group emphasis; factors in planned change; inner city problems and human relations; basic human relations skill and problem solving; conflict management; communication skills. These are some of the topics discussed in a typical group atmosphere. Many educators, leaders, doctors, social workers, have gained much in their own personal knowledge and in the relationships with others from these encounters. I think they are a very important instrument in the improving of modern education.117

Many people have preventsions against these encounters. The newspapers have sometimes published about these experiences conducted by unexperienced people. It is only consequential that

a helpful device in unskilled hands can be harmful. Other people reject these encounters because they identify them with group psychotherapy conducted by untrained individuals. It is pretty evident that this type of procedure is dangerous and should be avoided. We have to remember that psychotherapy deals mainly with early experiences in life and their impact on the psychological tempo of the individual.\textsuperscript{118} The encounter group emphasizes the "who you are here-and-now" and how you react to others. The group process will be explained in detail.

Group dynamics is a field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their

development and their interrelations with individuals, other
groups and larger institutions. It emphasizes the dynamics
aspect of group life and its main goal is the improvement of
human relationships. Education has much to learn from this
particular field.

The history of group dynamics has been summarized in
this chapter. The dynamics of the group history will be explain-
ed in the next chapter.

If I have used references in the previous chapters, I
will describe in my own personal words the way I perceive the
process of a group, from birth to adulthood. To my mind, the
group history and each individual's own personal history, are
two very similar realities.
CHAPTER IV

GROWTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL, GROWTH OF THE SMALL GROUP:

A PSYCHOLOGICAL PARALLEL

Human interaction is a very complex reality within the dynamics of our existence. It is so complicated because it is expressed with or without our own verbal exchanges and it is conditioned in stimuli-responses, by a dual process of interaction.

One aspect of this process is the individual's intra and extra-self perception of himself and his environment. A second aspect is the other people's intra and extra-self perception of their own selves and of the external environment. The contact of two beings or more, always promotes interaction.

The effectiveness of interaction must pass through many "filters." It has to overcome some "barriers" to avoid distortion, which is the product of very isolated perception, one-sided in experience and empty in the receiver's input as far as his perceptual response is concerned.

Human interaction in a conditioned setting like that of
a group, is not less complex and it has to reach some objectives. It can provide adequate and enriching interaction. It can alienate the group, because of a lack of cohesiveness. It can also be autocratically forced from the outside that the individuals become deprived of possible enrichments.

The way people talk, tells us often how they feel about themselves. The manner in which they permit themselves to experience one another, constitutes the principal struggle within group interaction.

1. Group Identity and Group Task

The effective development of any group, work or social group, requires that members share an imagery of the group. One of the initial crisis in group development involves the process of achieving and identity which serves as a definition of the situation and provides a source of continuing expectation of the behavior of self and others. A group without identity, without some common definition in the minds of their members, and a set of expections, cannot survive for too long.119

In general terms, the condition of social certitude, or congruity between expectations and events, and the avoidance of ambiguity and anxiety are central aspects of creating a group identity.

A group is always engaged in work. It is always to some extent implicitly or explicitly involved in meeting task demands that originate from within or outside the group. Such work represents the consciously determined deliberative reality oriented, goal seeking aspects of the group activities. Generally speaking a group exists for a particular purpose or to accomplish a specific task.

Most of the group formation in our society are task-oriented, problem-solving or problem-preventing gatherings. The content of the group itself is crowded with intellectualized discussion on situation, plans and observation, which will be carried through in the group or implemented into society later. Sport groups work on plans of training and further events. Church groups perform activities on problem-solving and teaching implementation of their own beliefs. Educational groups make an emphasis on grades, curriculum, academic requirements. Business meetings are oriented toward the budget and the better way of increasing productivity and income.
2. Different Kinds of Groups

Classification of groups depends upon many variables: size, nature of interaction, goals, systems of structure. The social environment will also differentiate the groups in their different functions: educational, religious, political, recreational. Groups may also be very temporary or highly stable.

Shertzer and Stone\textsuperscript{120} present three types of groups:

1. **Primary versus secondary groups.** In primary groups people meet for companionship or mutual help. Secondary groups are formed accidentally, e.g., a lecture. Intimacy is the variable of differentiation.

2. **Ingroup versus outgroup.** Groups with which the individual identifies with a sense of belonging, are ingroups. Family, sex, club, occupation, religion. Outgroups are characterized by expressions of difference and sometimes varied degrees of antagonism, prejudice, hatred or apathy.

3. **Socio versus psyche group.** Socio groups which are often voluntary have in mind to serve society in one way or another. (Like the Parent-Teacher Association or the School

Drop-out Committee.) Psyche groups satisfy the emotional needs of its members, like it happens in a boy's gang.

The external or internal use of power provides another variable for group classification: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Group-Centered.\textsuperscript{121}

Groups of people can get together within an informal structure in which spontaneity of environment and external arrangements can provide a loose atmosphere of social relations.

Another kind of group differentiation is based upon structure, in which plans and organized activities are mostly performed. Glanz presents a short practical classification of organized groups:

1. **Formal Groups**, made by the existence of written reports, constitutions of by-laws, rules and procedures in action, formal organized meetings.

2. **Action Groups**, made to bring desired or needed changes. Action groups must convey the primary task of doing something.

3. **Study Groups.** Educational environments are

particularly suitable for the development of such groups. A class is a formal study group. Intellectual development is the major task of such a group.

4. **Discussion Groups** respond to the need of exploring a given area of concern. If conclusions resulting from discussion are satisfactory, the group may organize an action to implement the results, or may organize a study group to enlarge the results of their discussions.¹²²

It is pertinent to note that discussion groups can be the richest in production. They promote creativity and thinking. As a result of the discussion, the group can set plans for action. Plans for action will be the product of study. The whole work will end in the structure of rules and procedures for action. The discussion group can move forward in the three steps mentioned by Glanz, unifying in one all of them.

After these introductory classifications for the better understanding of the different variables of the group reality, I will describe the group's birth, growth and development as I see them from an existential and psychoanalytical point-of-view.

3. Existential Reality and Existential Fallacy of a Small Group

a. Group

The meaning of the word varies with the user and with the situation. In the group system and dynamics there is a crucial point that I want to locate in the right perspective: the value of the group, formed by individuals, is itself, more important, as such, than its productivity or any other aspect of a group.

Most of the time a group is thought as important and adequate, mainly in proportion with its productivity. This is only a reflection of the distortion of hierarchical values and the interchanging of secondary values with primary ones. The product of a group is necessary. I will present “product” as a characteristic of a mature group. But “product” cannot be considered the first element in spite of the growth and fulfillment of individual involvement. To my mind, here lays the difference between what I name “The Existential Fallacy” and the “Existential Reality” of a group.

b. The Existential Fallacy

Existential fallacy is the arbitrary use of a group to accomplish a task. Existential fallacy is the misuse of people’s
potential in groups for an external benefit deprived of human meaning or human concern. Existential fallacy in a group is the collection of people under some institutional name, some symbolic idea or religious dedication. This is supposed to keep them together, because of the conditioning setting or because of the external rules. The emphasis on such external aspects only is a fallacy in group togetherness. As a matter of fact this creates barriers of individual isolation, hidden competition, anxiety, mistrust, false identity with symbols. The external smile of unity is a big facade of the hidden agenda both of the individual and of the group. The fallacy of group creates an artificial togetherness around impersonal symbols and impersonalized individuals.

Cohesion for productivity in a group creates negative competition and isolation. The anxiety of a task to be performed, deprives the individual of a responsible work, of a personal fulfillment and of an adequate use of his potentials. Pressure of work can be used only as a way of survival, not as a means of productive, meaningful, and human contribution to society.

c. The Existential Reality

The process of formation, growth and life in a group
situation will be studied, focusing on a specific situation: the existential reality of a group. What matters is not a group made by external circumstances. The real heart of the matter is an experience that comes from within each member. An experience that produces the existential perception of the group.

The description made in this thesis of a group's history agrees to a certain extent with Freud's ideas explained in his "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego." This book of Freud has exerted the most important influence in all the systems of group psychotherapy.

Freud's thought has been taken out of the strictly psychotherapeutic, psychopathic atmosphere and introduced into group dynamics among others by William C. Schutz, Ph.D.. Dr. Schutz has been a research psychologist at the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Berkeley. As a consultant for several business corporations, he has advised on group behavioral problems and conducted training for small groups. His latest book, Joy, will be mentioned in this work.


The group, in developing its structure, gradually takes over the functions of the individual Egos. This enhances the birth and growth of the group's Ego dynamics.

The group that is being described has some characteristics in size, intensity of work and objectives.

**Size.** Small group, average seven members.

**Intensity of Work.** The ideal situation would be a two-week experience completely dedicated to accomplish the task.

**Objectives.** The improving of interpersonal relationships.

This kind of group covers the basic definition of group dynamics as a structure that emerges from individual to individual in constant dynamic interaction with one another.

**The Group Has A Task.** As any regular group, this group has a task, but it is a task from within, not from the outside. This explanation helps to differentiate between:

1. What is commonly called a group, as a result of having a collection of individuals spatially together.

2. What is the process of becoming a group, going from individual people to the steps of formation, growth, trust
and unity. This is a product of individual work, interaction frictions, perception, Ego spatial differences and dichotomies, until the reaching level of continuous becoming in the common ground of reality, feelings, orders and plans.


In the beginning of this chapter it was explained how the group always engages in work. The existential group has a unique and difficult task. The characteristics of this task are important to be studied in order to understand the uniqueness of the group. The characteristics are as follows:

a. The main task is to dedicate adequate, controlled time and effort in building-in a real group, made out of each one of the individuals engaged.

b. The task as a goal is not clearly defined by external rules or by the leader's conscious effort. It is the product of the struggle, and the searching for group identity, performed by the group itself.

c. The struggle for group identity promotes behavioral changes and responses in the individuals deemed cooperatively to it. This point touches the individual's privacy in each one's self-confrontation, intra and extra perception of reality. The
task becomes a very difficult one. Self-exposure implies a risk for search, for growth, for offering.

d. The task is deprived of specific guidelines conditioning people's behavior and responses. The initial touch of a task through the channel of one's own creativity and freedom is another risky experience of the existential group.

5. Task of the Leader.

There are some specific tasks that the leader should perform, as conditioning factors for the dynamics of the group:

a. The central task of the leader is to maintain an adequate climate called in group jargon the "here-today-now-approach." This tends to facilitate the existential perception of this group and its process of development.

b. The leader's personal involvement must be as realistically and existentially oriented as possible. He must help the group to deal and interact in the existential reality. The leader must be skilled enough as to offer open ways of discovery for the group itself.

c. The leader does not command, he supports, he does not create coherence in the group, he offers opportunities of touching reality.
d. The leader must belong to the group, passing as any other member through the struggle of interaction within himself and others.

e. To be responsible for himself in the group, is the best catalyzer and most realistic help and task the leader can provide to each member and to the group as a whole. 126

6. The Small Group Becoming an Organism.

The writer will study in detail the process of formation, growth and productivity of the small group starting from the initial period of the birth, formation, approaches, development until reaching a climate of productivity which is considered one of the most meaningful reasons for a group to be. The level of productivity expresses the level of engagement in the existential reality as a response to maturity.

The atmosphere in which becoming a group is developed,

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provides enrichment and a testing of the three basic psychological needs of personality development for which any human being struggles in life. The historical nuances and the collecting data of a group "searching-to-be," present a parallel with the human being in his process of growth.

The group goes through the same epigenetic phases as does the individual. This is the point where analytic group psychotherapy and group dynamics come into close relationship.

There are particular important areas of similarities between the boundary incidents of an ongoing group, and the boundary incidents of an ongoing life. The whole process of becoming provides what I call the group to individual history. This history is unique, provides group identification, and enlarges individual relations through the lenses of each member's reality. The group's history is the most objective agenda in the process of becoming. It is the best reflecting mirror transcribing all the interactions, all the operational techniques for behavioral changes, all the struggles for life. It is the history of search for gratification of the most basic psychological needs. As any life has a history, a group becoming alive, surviving, and producing, has a very personal history.

Groups within their own history do have their own "flavor," climate and culture. The "mood" of the group is
changeable according to the different interactional moods. There are periods of tension and relaxation, of almost diagnostic analysis. There are cathartic experiences releasing feelings. There are moments of learning to listen and to respond to one another in a greater depth and insight. All this material which for a clinician can be described as group content, becomes in existential reality, the group organism and structure. This is what really belongs to the group, its process as well as its product. That process and organism have made of a number of people spatially together, a group of people realistically belonging in interchanging and sharing. Deeper insight in oneself is projected in stronger ties of depth for the group's growth. In other words, perception of others, is a product of the group's history as an additional dimension of the outgrowth perception.

Using Durkin's idea, the goal becomes that of discovering oneself and others, a constancy of relationships among crucial variables, rather than merely the similarity between elements in a situation. 127

Under conditions of continued interaction, group members tend to develop more values in common. Norms of behavior when developing across the time, increase group consensus and

therefore exert stronger influence on each member's behavior.

The history of the group is unique, unpredictable, changeable, like it is the life of the individual. Life as such has to face many variables of style of behavior facing new experiences. Each history is unique and differs from one group to another. It is the result of sharing the other individuals' perception and styles of behavior facing the existence of interaction. The style of behavior represents the consistent way in which an individual engages his environment and handles his relationships with other persons. It would correspond to the Adlerian "life-style." The group's style is another result of accumulation of histories. It is unpredictable. This does not imply that the group cannot achieve a pattern of its own style. This conquered pattern is one of the achievements of becoming a group.

The First Stage: Search for Security.

There is a common factor in the beginning of all groups. The first sessions are filled with attempts to ward-off anxiety. The security-seeking behavior is group shared, but it is not perceived as a common reality. Most of the time, looking for security, there are many attitudes and behavioral approaches from the members to the leader, to release that anxiety. The
real (latent) anxiety is filled with feelings towards the leader, who is seen as omnipotent. On the surface the dependence is apparent. The group asks for guidance, norms, structure. The group strives to please the leader. There are some members who may try another approach to cover up the anxiety created by the figure of the leader. Those members become very defensive, hostile, talkative in generalized matters. Some of them challenge the leader about his power and effectiveness, but they deal with generalized cultural, sociological, religious or political aspects of life, to attack trying to manipulate the leader's power. Such kind of comments are not pertinent for the immediate reality of "here-today-now." 128

Whenever there is passive, dependent behavior, or hostile authoritarian approach, during the first phase of group development, there is secretly some resentment against the leader. His power is feared. There is a phantasy in the members that leader wishes to manipulate the group for his own purposes.

The security-seeking behavior of each member is mainly threatened by such realities as: a) facing the unexpected in a close circle, b) the initial self-exposure to the group, c) the

128 Existential group therapists, like May, Maslow, Bur- genthal, understand the "here-today-now," in basis of experiencing
confrontation of inter-and-extra impact of just the physical presence of strangers.

The leader receives all that loaded tension, as a projection of group anxiety. The group expects of the leader to perform his role solving the situation and restoring the stability because "he is the expert."

The first sessions are always painful and difficult. The lack of consistent structure as far as ignoring "what is supposed to be doing" is a very upsetting factor for each member. The fact that the leader's behavior is mostly passive and quiet, more listening than talking confuses, creates more anxiety and accumulates more hostile feelings. The anxiety reaches a high level and the hostility comes to the open. In some slow way the group starts to touch the reality of dialogue and the demand of more active participation. Out of frustration and forced by reality-oriented experience, each member starts to confront his ego boundaries and begins to listen to himself in the projection of others. This process works as intermember affectual relationships.

The first stage presents a marked level of anxiety because of the insecurity created confronting such a complex situation in the dynamics of interaction. This stage is an anxiety-increasing-process because the group passes from
initial dependency, (from the leader and circumstances) to counter-dependency in which members take some lead, express resentment against the program, reluctance and criticisms against the leader. Comments as "I have many things to do and to work." "My time is not to be wasted sitting here doing nothing," are very common.

It is clear to understand that the way the group is dealing with anxiety, is not adequate, in its first stages, because it is not realistically oriented. Any experience has to be internalized to become part of one's own identity. Nevertheless, this is the way the group initially performs.

Dependency from the leader and counter-dependency from the members against the leader, are results of dealing with anxiety by manipulating reality. One of the central purposes in a group experience, is to learn about the dynamics of interaction among the members. This implies the acceptance of each one's self and the acceptance of the whole group. Initially all of the work is demanded from an external source (the leader). This is an unconscious reaction of the group to avoid the reality of the member's interaction.

This initial phase of life in a group, has a very close relationship with the process of development of the life of a
child. The need for security is the first psychological need the child demands to be gratified, in order to start growing. Even though the security provided to the child comes from outside of his own self, (maternal care, food, comfort) he has to take the risk of asking for his own security. As a baby, he tries to do so. In growing up more he learns about many manipulations to achieve the gratifications he needs.

Life in a group begins the same way. The group, by the behavior of its members, must take the risk of searching for security. This explains, in another dimension, the process of dependency, counter-dependency, in a parallel way with the child's life. The child in his dependency, cries and calls for the mother. The group, in its beginnings, is dependent and calls for the leader. The child manipulates various resources, using counter-dependency to eliminate his own anxiety (temper tantrums). The group uses counter-dependency to avoid the painful anxiety by blaming the leader and criticising him for whatever happens. Security-insecurity, is the mature balance of human interaction. This product cannot be achieved entirely in the first stages of the group. Anxiety is a very important element in the formation of a group. 129

The awareness of anxiety as a common ground in the feelings of a group, produces a cathartic process and one of the initial steps to detect similarities in individuals. Because of the common ground of feelings, the repetitive pattern of mankind, searching for security, becomes more realistic and closer to the existential moment of the group. By reaching this common experience, the group becomes aware of the unnecessary evaluation of good or bad, positive or negative, as the first approach in interaction. Qualifying connotations are so often a common defense mechanism to denial of the reality of the perception.

2. The Second Stage: Need for Acceptance (Learning how to communicate in depth.)

When the individual ego of the members reach certain levels of dealing with security-insecurity interactions, the group starts to feel ready for what I call "communication in depth."

It has been said that whenever you communicate with another individual, there are at least six messages, each one somewhat different from the other, involved in the exchange. The writer presents these phenomena following a pattern of Subject (a) Object (b), in other words, giver and receiver relationship:
a) What I **actually** say
   What I **mean** to say
   What I **convey** to others.

b) What the other **actually** hears
   What the other **thinks** he hears
   What the other **thinks** you said.

If we have seven subjects and seven objects in a two-way human interaction, \((7 \times 7 = 49)\), that would mean 49 different approaches. But the real product will be 49 interrelationships multiplied by an \(a + b = 6\) different possibilities of Subject-Object in a stimulus-response setting. In a group of seven people there would be mathematically speaking \(49 \times 6 = 294\) different possibilities of meaning, saying, hearing, thinking, relating, which makes a complex enough language to understand.

Many times what the person MEANS to say is not what he is ACTUALLY saying. And what one ACTUALLY says may be different in reality content, from what the other person **thinks** he HEARS, which may also be different from what the other person THINKS YOU REALLY SAID. The problem is not only semantics or mathematics. The real difficulty is the LACK OF KNOWING HOW TO COMMUNICATE IN DEPTH. This would be one of the main tasks of the specific group I am describing.
I communicate by my behavior as well as by my words. My behavior results from the perception of my own needs to relate to other people, and to what I perceive about the actions of others. Frequently, I am not aware of the extent to which my life-style is known to others.

To learn ways to speak as a whole person is a difficult task but is part of the growing and enriching process of life. Our society has become very alienated for it has been manipulated into many isolating games: competency, excessive work, automation, mass media, etc. A big group of nice girls and intelligent men working together in a wall-to-wall carpeted office, may be feeling themselves more lonesome than a lonely Arab in his dessert who does not have anyone around to relate with. People of today complain so often about lack of communication or communication being noneffective. The group we are describing as belonging to our society, suffers from that isolation. So many people in our world today are really "the lonely crowd."¹³₀

The group, in this second stage of experiences, touches another new for them, but very old and neglected world of

of interaction. Many experiences in non-verbal communication give the members opportunities for growth in self-perception, in time-space relations with ego boundaries. These are experiences increasing the awareness on how one comes across to others, on ways to listen and be open to other's non-verbal communications. They learn through the group, how other's physical and psychological presence affect one's self, and so and so forth.

Going through these experiences it is easy to learn and to detect, as Sheflcn 131 suggests the importance of many other aspects in communication, besides words.

Many configurations of posture or body positions indicate at a glance a great deal about what is going on in group interaction. Sheflcn suggests three points:

1) Components of individual behavior are contributions to group activity.

2) Different postures indicate how the individual contributions are related to each other.

3) Postures define the steps and order in the interaction.

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This explains very clearly what we said before about each group having its own "mood" and its own "flavor." Discharges of tension are almost automatically expressed by changes to more comfortable postures, deep-breathing reactions and so on. Moments of fear or sorrow are characterized with "shelly" behavior as showing a need for protection. Progressive behavioral changes in one member, are perceived by the group and affect the group in its own development.\(^{132}\)

Non-verbal communication is a very important part in group development, which provides: a) gain in personal insights; b) the use of this insight confronting the impact with others; c) the acceptance or rejection of others to be in one's psychological space; d) the breaking of barriers of understanding promoting catartic experiences; e) the detection of the nearness-distance-reality between two ego boundaries; f) the confrontation of anxiety dealing with new experiences. By this time the group has gone deeper into the real feeling level between "I and I," "I and you," "I and the other members of the

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group," "I and the general external environment."

If the "real" group has become into existence, whatever any of the members does, affects the other members and the entire group as well. And whatever the group experiences, affects each one of the individuals, differently, accordingly to each one's personality.

"Individual differences significantly affect the characteristics of small groups. In general it was found that effective group functioning was facilitated by cooperativeness, efficiency and insight, while behavior which we have called "striving for individual prominence" reduced group cohesiveness and friendliness....mature accepting persons facilitate, while suspicious nonaccepting persons depress group characteristics indicative of smooth functioning. 133

In the group process as it has been described here, the author finds a great similarity with Jun's structural components of the emotional aspects of personality, specifically with the "archetypes" and the "collective unconscious." 134

Communication in depth covers more than the big step of learning the non-verbal approaches. This experience is

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considered quite loaded as a catartic element. It allows people to start dealing with verbal and non-verbal language, using the insight of each other. That is the real feeling-level unfortunately so misused in some group experiences. This kind of group looks only for the fun of sensual feelings or groupy feelings, without any professional or ethical goal in mind.

Behavioral interchanges and perceptual experiences of the self and others have a special meaning in our group. Learning about how I affect the group and how the group affects me, provides opportunity for interaction in a behavioral change. This behavioral change covers a basic possibility of improvement. Our group starts learning how to express internal and external feelings, within each person and towards others, reaching the operational feedback approach.

9. Feedback, an Experiential Reality of Yourself in a Second Dimension

According to the modern behavioral sciences, "feedback" is a way to help another person to consider a possible change of his behavior. It is the communication to a person or to a group, which gives that person some information about how he affects others. As in a guided missile system, the feedback helps an individual to keep his behavior "on target" and thus he better achieves his goals.
There are some criteria for useful feedback which I consider pertinent to clarify the dynamic flow of feelings in the group:

a. The feedback is descriptive rather than evaluative. By describing one's own reaction, the feedback lets the individual free to use it or not, as he feels fit.

b. The feedback is specific rather than general. It focuses directly at the present moment and time of the happening, because it is the way to touch the existential reality of the behavior affecting or being projected in others. To say "you are too dominating," has a different color than saying "Listen, you are not allowing room for me to express myself. There is no way for you to hear what I want to tell you now."

c. Constructive feedback takes into account the needs of both, the receiver and the giver.

d. The feedback is directed toward those patterns of the receiver's behavior which are in this existential moment susceptible of change.

e. The feedback is most useful when it is solicited, rather than when it is imposed. The solicitor formulates the kind of question which those observing him can answer.
Summarizing, feedback means to the writer of this thesis an objective mechanism facilitating behavioral changes in order to follow and to fulfill better the individual's interaction. It is a reinforcing technique for clarifying points in the awareness of personal identity.

The different events lived collectively by the group, provide enough elements for learning the interpersonal affect-reflect relationship. This creates a favorable atmosphere for the gratification of the second basic psychological need: ACCEPTANCE.

This moment is the positive beginning of a group's perceptual identity. Each individual member has been searching for himself as accepted by others, and has allowed himself to accept others within himself. To reach this level, the group has to have passed through a difficult process with variables such as: distance, inhibition, hostility, rejection, anxiety, fear, manipulation of reality, generalization, long periods of silence, intellectualization. Communication in depth reaches the third level in which anxiety becomes channeled and gets a meaningful profile.

On the first stage, when dealing with search for security, the anxiety has passed from dependency to counter-dependency. This makes the second step. The anxiety level is very high in both phases.

The third step reaches communication in depth in what is called INTERDEPENDENCY. This permits the members to perceive the reality of their individual anxieties and the reality of the common grounds of everybody's anxiety. This creates the initial positive value of social acceptance. The person is accepted and considered as a part of the whole, not because of his good qualities, but in spite of them. Psychological proximity in sharing the feeling level, creates positive extension-explosion in the gratifying feeling of community. The individual perceives what he is feeling, what he wants to say, he takes the risk of saying it, he interacts, and still he feels loved and accepted by the group.

Psychoanalytical theory which focuses upon certain certain motivational and defensive processes within the individual, was first extended to group life by Freud, who comments

So long as group formation persists or so far as it extends, individuals behave as though they were uniform, tolerate other people's peculiarities, put themselves on an equal level with them and have no feeling of aversion towards them....Love of oneself knows only one barrier: love for
The psychological history of the group is growing into life with more realistic awareness of its own specific potentials, limitations and at the same time the group is conscious of the environment. Life in a child also searches for this second step. Making again a reference to child development, the group has similar processes of gratification in the search for ACCEPTANCE. The child must learn the socializing process, getting along with himself and his peers, as well as with the limited conditions of the environmental world. We have here a particular important area of similarity in the boundary incidents between ongoing group and ongoing life. It has been explained in this thesis how life is always a becoming. Existentially speaking, the needs of security and acceptance must struggle within the ambivalence of becoming. Being today is not yet being tomorrow. The acceptance and security of today is not tomorrow's reality.  


10. The Third Stage: Experiential Realization and Responsibility in Group Structure: The Small Group Productivity

The perceptual emergence of gratification of the two basic psychological needs, security and acceptance, brings almost necessarily the emergence of the third step: feeling the urge for achievement. The group is becoming closer to maturity.

At this time it is more evident the organized structure of the group as a product of the experienced reality. The members feel now the identity of belonging to the group. The group's structure results from forces acting on the group in a manner that a pattern of stable relationships exist, promoting and chanelling group productivity. The group's structure becomes the group's identity as the given contribution of each member's shared identity.

The productive task of the group by this time, will be to learn how to interact as a whole in order to maintain the appropriate balance in the awareness and acceptance of feelings. This is the process of the feelings touching reality and producing mature responses to life. This learning is unique, non-reciprocal among the members. It is difficult to be followed by another group because that would be another personalized touch of another group experiential history.
One of the most valuable results of a human relation training, is an increase of tolerance for ambivalence, different approaches to life in others, limitations, productive acceptance of one's own potentials and the reduction of stereotyped behavior. ¹³⁸

Some of the consequential elements in the process of teaching the third stage are: increased centered attention on individual development; struggle for structure; search for clarification of goals; personal insight towards achievement. The structure conquered by the group has a powerful influence. The group can use the confrontation of different strategies to influence each of the members and the group as a whole towards achievement. The group has reached a level of stability which provides group maintenance facilitating effectiveness in work.

Because of the intra and enter processes of learning in the dynamics of the group, the urge to produce springs automatically. The unity of the group is deeply experienced, consequently there is a drive to produce.

TWO LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT. It is important to notice that this third step of development, presents two aspects of

achievement: 1) the task of the group has been accomplished.
From isolated individuals a group has been born; 2) the potential of achievement in the future, based upon the experiences and perception of personal growth, is a common need. A structured group has come to productivity.

Dynamically speaking the two feelings of achievement do not offer the same realistic perspective. The first one belongs truly to the immediate reality and it is existing here and now. The second one is a third dimension of personal insight. The first achievement has made evident each one of the members' possibilities. Nevertheless the future has not been conquered yet. Achievement follows the pattern of becoming.

At this third stage the group reaches such a high level of cohesiveness that it tries to become alienated from the external world. The group experiences the fear of going back home. "If we could stay here forever." "Going back home is so difficult...." "If we could create a way of living this way together...."

The realization of shared feelings on this level, reduces the anxiety and enhances the more realistic planning process in the group and for the members to face life.

A more elaborate interpretation of the dynamics of the
feelings of achievement, "here, now," and in the "process of becoming" is necessary.

The author insists on the historical parallel in a process of evolution between group development and individual growth. The adolescent period is the richest of a human being in insights and internal dialogue. Adolescence connotes the search and affirmation of potentials, as well as the fears of confronting those potentials with the outside world. Responsibility is the opportunity to prove to oneself and to life, that one can take the risk of living. Maturity is always the overcoming process of fully accepting life in its existential reality. Maturity implies a daily process of adjustment to changes, limitations, ambivalence, uncertainty. The daily choice not the stereotyped response, is the touch of existential maturity.

The process of the group development has its own adolescence. The group becomes mature having to accept the fears and dreams of adolescence and the ambivalence and limitations of an ever becoming maturity.

There is a very gratifying atmosphere among the members of the group when they share feelings of being really needed, accepted, understood. The members also feel that they can offer, give and share. If the group has been genuinely involved its
are already rewarded. The problems of implementing this experience into the subjective picture of each individual's world, is yet to be accomplished. This is the final task and confrontation in group achievement. Planning together implies the analysis of basic behavioral approaches for change, common to the whole group. The implementation of plans is the personal investment in each individual's reality. This is the product of a group in depth with its inter and intra personal perception, with its reality-oriented experience, with the use of experience as a task to make life and human interaction more meaningful and responsible.

The author has presented in this chapter a general description of the existential reality of a group. Groups, like individuals, are similar organisms. Both have their own life and the capacity for re-structuring themselves. Both have the capacity for growth, power, and behavioral changes. Ahead of both of them lies a third dimensional approach by means of self-insight.

An existential group "alive," in reality, can be a very healthy element to improve our educational processes and to promote a more mature development in our society.

An individual is nothing before he has chosen himself.
This is the gift that the members receive and give in the group. For the main thing in life is not be this or that but just to be oneself.

The true "common" between man and man and carrying this beyond into the group relationship, is the step forward into the essential "we," which is the final goal of human civilization.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: EDUCATING FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION

1. Facing Themselves, the Teachers Face the Students Better.

The leit-motiv of this work has been that education should help children and adults to know themselves and to develop healthy attitudes of self-acceptance. To help a pupil to have meaningful experiences, a teacher must know the pupil as a person. This means that the teacher must strive to know himself deeper.

In the school there are countless opportunities for helping the child in his search to find himself. The student has to discover his aptitudes, to face his difficulties and be aware of his limitations. What the teacher does strongly affects the student's attitudes regarding his inner worth as a person. Life at school is heavily invested with praise and blame, pride and shame, acceptance and rejection, success and failure. In one way or another the educator has a significant effect on what the student feels about himself. Many of the problems affecting the student, should have been faced and solved
previously by the educator in his own personal life. These problems, largely of an emotional nature, give a deeper insight into oneself.

A cooperative effort of the whole school will provide better atmosphere for the development of the student. In order to establish a sound atmosphere of mutual understanding among students and staff, previous steps are supposed to have been taken.

Most normal children experience hostility in their lives. To be able to understand and sympathize with them, the educator is supposed to have faced his own hostile tendencies. The educator should lead the way in this particular field. He will know how to accept the implications of his anger with his pupils, his impatience with himself, the unavoidable tense relations with his colleagues. The educator must seek to understand the devices he uses to avoid responsibility for himself by blaming others. To appreciate his students' fears and anxieties, he has to have faced his own fears and anxiety. Otherwise he will be uncomprehending when his students express their anxiety in such signs as inability to learn, impertinence, irritability. The educator's understanding of others can be only as deep as the wisdom he possesses when he looks inward upon himself. This is why a small group carefully organized
for the staff will develop their inner possibilities and will be a big help for a smooth relationship in the whole school.

Learning is a progressive experience in which many people invest their potentials. Teachers and students can learn together in the daily encounter with life. Maslow speaks about the humility that can be shared by people when they are aware of how little they know in comparison with what could be known and what is known by others. Because of this, it is possible for them to be honestly respectful and humble before people who can teach them something they do not know.140

However, if the school milieu is not a healthy one, because of authoritarian structures, lack of motivation, artificial systems of learning for life, etc., the frictions among the members of the school will hinder effective learning. As a result of unhealthy atmosphere there is a more serious consequence in the children's personalities as well as in the teachers'.

The mental health of children is affected by the quality of their interpersonal experiences in school, and the quality of their interpersonal experiences is

largely dependent upon the human relations, values and skills of the school personnel. Among the values and skills which promote POSITIVE interpersonal experiences are those which... underlie a climate of open, two-way communication, mutual acceptance and trust, an exploratory approach to the understanding and resolution of human problems, and commitment to the expansion of human resources.\textsuperscript{141}

Human interaction as it takes place in the school has been strongly oriented in the line student-teacher relationship. Sometimes it has a paternalistic flavor, emphasizing the guideline techniques to be given from the wise to the ignorant. Sometimes the moral responsibility has been mainly stressed: the teacher has to be the model of the student. Some other times there has been a strong effort to understand the student in depth. The author stressed the last aspect and he considers that the teacher's perceived own identity is his best qualification for the difficult task of education.\textsuperscript{142}

The interpersonal positive relationships among the staff


personnel, will provide an adequate and healthy atmosphere for a better learning situation. This person-to-person, not job-to-job, relationship will foster mutual understanding and will help the teachers personality in their inner growth and creativity. A positive approach in the staff will more easily resolve the necessary tensions and crises that arise in any institutional and administrative situation.

The educator has to be aware of the opportunities that the school itself offers for a healthy learning together, sharing together, growing together. Any individual can improve and become more achieved. The educator has to be aware that he is not an exception.143

The teaching staff share the common ground of training others for life. All the educators strive for the good and improvement of their students. They share a basic common philosophy, a similar set of values and interest for the welfare of society and of the individual. They all share their efforts as a group to offer the best learning opportunities to the students. They belong to a particular school. The social and

physical environment give the staff a certain cultural and spatial feeling of togetherness. The teachers use or share the same educational equipment. They gather in the lounge during the recess periods, the lunch hour, the meetings. Often times they pray together and in the Catholic schools their human potentials join efforts towards a genuine Catholic education, whose primary objective is "the full development of the human person as an individual as well as a member of Society." 144

The educational setting provides many possibilities for the growth of the individual and of the group. However, often times the school responds to the dehumanizing demands of the society that evaluates the children solely for their grades and for their performance, while the person in it's entity of inner values is forgotten. On the other hand, society requires from the teaching staff to produce effective teaching with very little consideration for the teacher as a person. "When I am at school I am a Teacher; outside, I am another person." This sentence expresses a deep reality. What atmosphere will result from a group of educators with such a mentality? Colleges and universities are closed to change and rational discussion, because of the attitudes of the staff.

144George G. Donovan, Ph.D., Vatican Council II., p. 153.
Many teachers have felt the need to examine the relationship between their life and their work. They agree that learning is good, in focusing just on the methods of teaching and encouraging scholarly pursuits. "There is much that is meaningless along the academic road from the kindergarten to the doctor's degree."\(^{145}\)

The search for meaning is not a search for an abstract or concrete body of knowledge. It is a search for the meaning of life, truth, and a distinctly personal search for a deeper understanding of oneself. And the essential function of education is to help the growing child understand himself and develop healthy attitudes of self-acceptance. Some teachers work hard and do almost everything except the one thing that is needed. They ask for long lists of the children's interests. They talk to the parents and the students. They ask the students to vote and express what they think is most important in the school. They are experts in the last educational devices. But they often seem to leave out the one important thing: their own personal involvement. And it is precisely this involvement in the process of letting children become into adults, that

education has to face. To assure a continuity of tradition, education must early prepare the children today to be the adults of tomorrow. It is the teacher's task to take care of the unavoidable remnants of infantility in their students who are in the main process of becoming adults.146

2. Existential Reality, Existential Fallacy

When in the fourth chapter the growth of the individual with the growth of the small group were compared, the main differences between the existential reality and the existential fallacy of a small group were pointed out.

The common factors of an educational setting are supposed to provide identity, cohesiveness and efficiency. However, they can be used merely as identification tags like "The Staff," "The School so and so," "We educators and our goals." If this is the case, behind those tags there is no meaning, they represent just the fallacy of an artificial group. This fallacy can destroy instead of construct, discourage instead of educate. As a consequence the rejection of authority and social values and the manifestations of hate in riots and unrest will readily appear. Youth has always reacted against

unauthenticity and falsehood.

In some schools, meaningful relationships among the teachers, unity of common goals and free expression of ideas are taken for granted. This is a false assumption and the facts speak against the reality which crushes personalities and dwarfs individuals "for the common good." Staff meetings are like one-way streets with one-track-minded policeman directing the traffic. The amount of work makes the individual teacher a slave of the task to be done. There is little, if any, personal communication and the teachers talk among themselves very rarely about their real problems. Some of the teachers wait regularly for a most painful experience that comes once a month, or worse, one a week: the staff meetings. "It seems often times boring, the principal talks all the time or brings an outside speaker who does not know any of the individuals nor any of the particular problems of this particular school. To say the least, those meetings are meaningless to the school activities." (Complaints of a teacher about his place) Jacobson and Kerokhoff say that some of the characteristics of the schools, create by themselves barriers to effective teamwork and to the development of a consultative approach to interpersonal interactions. They affirm that the public schools, like any other institution are resistant to changes which might threaten the stability of the
organization or the security of individual members. Self-confrontation can be threatening to one's self concept and his feelings of job security. This would help to understand why any project that implies change would be automatically rejected. 147

Behind a silk curtain of healthy, united cooperative programs, hides the real scene: teacher's personalities operating like machines under inadequate motivational dynamics. Signs of over-dedication can often cover anxiety or fear of competition from other teachers or from any other person who could challenge his security facade. 148 A reserved, withdrawn teacher who is keeping for himself all the powerful control of his students, is not really helping them to face themselves. Nobody can give what he does not have. An always smiling teacher who never refuses any job nor asks for anything may be stressing himself, motivated by feelings of rejection. A principal who happens to be everywhere may be projecting mistrust of his teachers, what evidently deep down reflects his own inner insecurity which in all the places looks from fallacious acceptance

147 Jacobson, Kerckhoff and others, Consultation Process in the Schools, pp. 6, 11, 27, 31, 33, 34, 36, 61, 70, 95. See footnote no. 141.

from the outside. It is evident that this existential fallacy of a group that has no deep identity as a group, creates an unhealthy atmosphere in the school. The children perceive that something is wrong and unmotivated teachers make criticism spread like fire over the school. Those frictions easily destroy a positive human interaction. To improve this situation the organization of a small group would be very beneficial.

Acceptance of self and of others comes before this feeling of togetherness of the staff as a group. But this "does not consist simply in an optimistic claim that all is all right with me and the rest of the world." A well-organized small group will provide an atmosphere of togetherness and mutual understanding.

The educator has to remember that "the process of gaining knowledge of self and the struggle for self-fulfillment and self-acceptance is not something an instructor 'teaches' others. It is not something he does to or for them. It is something in which he himself must be involved." The small group will help the teachers really to be "involved."

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The staff of a school is a powerful leading group and can offer a realistic positive experience in the life of the students. But teaching does not have that meaning if it is not the projection of a life whose reality has been faced and accepted with its consequences. One can ask how a teacher will be able to present a healthy picture to the students if he and his colleagues as a group do not live that togetherness. If the students perceive just a fallacy they will not follow or strive for an existential positive reality. The small group for the staff will improve the situation among the teachers and before the students.

There is indeed a negligence in the concern for the improvement of the teachers in the totality of their own self. There are thousands of courses offered in every possible academic subject to improve knowledge and technicalities of teaching. Unfortunately, not much is being done to help the teacher to improve the human interaction with his peers. Teachers know and qualify themselves just as "good, bad, strict, fair" teachers. Cold adjectives that do not dare to approach the real person with feelings and emotions. The teacher needs to be a human being and be treated like one. The small group is

specifically designed to provide this sound atmosphere in the school. 152

3. The School Staff and the Small Group

Being able to wait enables the educator to listen. A teacher has to be a good listener to others, to his colleagues, to his own self. And if he does not listen to himself he will not be able to listen to others. The same defense mechanisms will be operating: fear of himself projecting in fear or hostility towards others. The small group is very helpful to improve this not uncommon situation.

A basic understanding of each one's personality and motivational behavior, is a sound step to promote healthy human interaction in the school staff. The small group process and results have many applications to the educational setting among the staff. The effectiveness of the school is a result of human interaction and good understanding among the persons. Administration, policies, schedules, methods of teaching, systems of evaluation, level of aspirations in a school system, become alive because of human interaction. And the small group goal is precisely to improve human interaction.

The teacher must be considered as a person. The school system has to have a place for the teacher to express himself wholly as a human being, in the totality of his uniqueness that has chosen as a profession to teach. These seem to be the most important processes in a small group specifically designed for educators:

1) Awareness and fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs in each teacher and as an individual and in the educators as a group in the school.

2) The acceptance of human failure and limitations in the ordinary problems of the school.

3) The positive approach to normal human conflicts such as competition, interference, lack of communication, complaints, awkward behavior, hostility. Hostility is unpleasant and it is also inevitable and the teacher has to be able to deal with it adequately.¹⁵³

4) A healthy trustworthy and positive relationship with authority. This is one of the most important problems teachers must face when they face themselves. An educator with an "authority complex" does not belong in the teaching position.

¹⁵³Jersild, *When Teachers Face Themselves*, p. 106.
5) The use of adequate feedback that would help the teachers among themselves and would increase their human capacity for self-actualization.

The teacher's personal and professional identity is an existential reality, not just a fallacy, if life is faced, with a positive joyful image of oneself as a person and as an educator.

The current social and inner dilemmas of the teacher as crises may turn into growth crises, towards a professional identity which contains not only teaching techniques but also insight into one's self, the child, the parent. The teacher's activities will be led by his wisdom and guided by his love. Learning for love may then turn into the love of learning; and teaching in order to make a living will turn into love of teaching for a better life.
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B. PERIODICALS


A.M.D.G.
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Eduardo Pinzon Umana, S.J. has been read and approved by the director of the thesis.

Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 13, 1969

Signature of Advisor