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Continuity and Change at C.B.C. : An Ethnography of
A Catholic Brothers School in Australian Society

by

LAWRENCE BERNARD ANGUS


A Thesis submitted in total fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Education - Educational Administration

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

November 1985
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Acknowledgements

1. THEORETICAL ISSUES AND THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
   1. Introduction
   2. Social Stability and the Possibility of Transformation
      (a) Structural functionalism, human capital and the liberal tradition
      (b) The radical critique
      (c) Agency and structure
   3. The Study of Organisations and Schools
      (a) Organisations as systems
      (b) Schools as organisations
      (c) Schools as cultures
   4. The Evolution of the Research Problem
      (a) The foreshadowed problem
      (b) False starts: preliminary research and preliminary research problems
   5. C.B.C., Reproduction & Transformation
      (a) Social and economic reproduction at C.B.C.
      (b) Religious reproduction at C.B.C.
   6. Conclusion

2. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
   1. Introduction
   2. Beyond Method: A Critique of Traditional Research Paradigms
      (a) The positivist tradition
      (b) The interpretive alternative
         (i) anthropological ethnography and functionalism
         (ii) sociological ethnography, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology
         (iii) limitations of the interpretative tradition
      (c) Research and ideology
         (i) positivism and ideology
         (ii) interpretivism and ideology
      (d) An appropriate approach for the study of C.B.C.
   3. Critical Ethnography
4. Particular Issues in the Study at C.B.C............ 60
   (a) Issues in ethnographic research at C.B.C... 61
       (i) participant observation.................. 62
       (ii) critical distance........................ 64
       (iii) sources of information.................. 66
   (b) A critical ethnography of continuity and change at C.B.C..................... 69
5. Conclusion........................................... 71

3. THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN BROTHERS SCHOOL........................................... 74
   1. Introduction........................................ 74
   2. The Brothers and the Social Mobility of Catholics............................................. 75
       (a) Service to the needy: establishing a Catholic middle class......................... 75
       (b) A reappraisal of the mission of service................................................. 79
       (c) A fading tradition: C.B.C., exclusion, and needy boys................................ 82
       (c) Social mobility and service to the needy: a summary................................. 86
   3. Brothers and Lay Teachers.............................................. 88
       (a) A declining Brothers' presence................................................... 88
       (b) Lay teachers and diversity......................................................... 92
       (c) Brothers' attitudes towards lay teachers......................................... 95
       (d) Religious and lay teachers: a summary........................................... 97
   4. The Brothers, Pupils, and Obedience........................................... 97
       (a) The pupils' perceptions of Brothers................................................. 97
       (b) The Brothers and classroom discipline.............................................. 100
       (c) The obedience of the Brothers....................................................... 104
       (d) Classroom organisation............................................................... 107
       (e) Crisis in the Brotherhood: problems and possibilities.......................... 109
       (f) Brothers, pupils and obedience: a summary...................................... 112
   5. Summary and Conclusions........................................... 113

4. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.............. 116
   1. Introduction........................................... 116
   2. A Catholic School........................................... 116
       (a) A Religious ethos................................................... 116
       (b) The place of religion................................................... 121
       (c) Religion and C.B.C. priorities: only good Catholics need apply.................. 126
       (d) C.B.C.'s religious ambience: a summary.......................................... 130
   3. The Laicisation of Religious Education........................................... 132
       (a) The Brothers' religious traditions................................................. 132
       (b) Teaching religious education....................................................... 134
       (c) The distribution of religious and lay teachers................................... 137
       (d) Diversity in religious education................................................... 139
       (e) Lay teachers, religious and religious education: a summary................... 142
4. What Counts as Religious Education
   (a) Where do you pitch your teaching?............. 143
   (b) The Vatican Council and the transformation
       of religious education................................ 145
   (c) Pedagogy and religious education.................. 148
   (d) What counts as religious education:
       a summary.................................................. 151
5. Religion and the Curriculum
   (a) The individualisation of religion.................. 153
   (b) The coordination of religious education.......... 156
   (c) Religion and C.B.C. students............. 159
   (d) The curriculum, pupils and religious
       coordination: a summary................................. 164
6. Summary and Conclusions............................. 166

5. MAINTAINING A BROTHERS' SCHOOL: ADMINISTRATION
   AT C.B.C.
   1. Introduction........................................... 170
   2. The Headmaster and C.B.C................................ 170
      (a) Headmasters of the Christian Brothers'
          School.................................................. 170
      (b) Brother Carter: headmaster of C.B.C.. 174
      (c) The headmaster's agenda........................... 176
      (d) Service to Newburyport Catholics.............. 181
      (e) Headmaster and staff................................. 184
      (f) David Welsh and Brother Carter............... 187
      (g) The influence of the headmaster:
          a summary.................................................. 190
   3. Minority Control of C.B.C............................. 191
      (a) A Brothers' school?................................. 191
      (b) The Brothers' press for change............... 194
      (c) Lay teachers: "Don't stick your neck out"
          ...................................................... 197
      (d) Changing direction................................... 200
      (e) The Brothers' control of C.B.C.:
          a summary................................................. 204
   4. Coordination at C.B.C................................. 205
      (a) Area and subject coordination................. 205
      (b) Area and subject meetings....................... 206
      (c) Gaining the headmaster's favour.............. 210
      (d) Teacher criticisms................................. 214
      (e) Coordination: a summary......................... 218
      (a) Recent innovations and teacher
          initiatives........................................... 219
      (b) Teachers, courses and individual
          initiatives............................................. 224
      (c) C.B.C.'s power coalition......................... 228
      (d) Formal and informal decision making:
          a summary.................................................. 230
   6. Summary and Conclusions............................. 231
6. CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE IN A BROTHERS' SCHOOL ........... 235

1. Introduction ........................................... 235
2. The Institution and Control ............................ 235
   (a) Discipline and the control of teachers .......... 235
   (b) Maintaining a contested tradition ............... 241
   (c) Institutionalised control: a summary .......... 246
3. Control of Pupils ...................................... 246
   (a) The Brothers, lay teachers and
       classroom control .................................. 246
   (b) Pressure from pupils ............................... 249
   (c) Pupils and control ................................ 253
   (d) Student expectations of teachers ............... 256
   (e) The control of pupils: a summary ............... 259
4. Diversity and Innovation ................................ 260
   (a) Classroom innovation ................................ 260
   (b) The year 11 transition course .................... 264
   (c) Gender and control ................................ 267
   (d) Diversity and innovation: a summary .......... 272
5. Summary and Conclusions ............................... 273

7. CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND PUPIL CAREERS ............ 277

1. Introduction ........................................... 277
2. The Curriculum and Examinations ....................... 277
   (a) The headmaster and the curriculum ............... 277
   (b) A serviceable curriculum .......................... 281
   (c) C.B.C.: "an academic school" ..................... 285
   (d) Parents and the curriculum ....................... 289
   (e) An H.S.C. focus .................................. 291
   (f) Curriculum and examinations: a summary ......... 294
3. Pupil Careers ......................................... 294
   (a) Science, careers, and an academic
       curriculum ......................................... 294
   (b) The road to H.S.C. ................................ 297
   (c) Assessment and promotion .......................... 300
   (d) Pupil careers: a summary ........................ 305
4. Curriculum Innovation .................................. 306
   (a) Autonomy, cooperation and innovation ............ 306
   (b) The transition initiative .......................... 311
   (c) Curriculum innovation: a summary ............... 314
5. Summary and Conclusions ............................... 315

8. C.B.C., CLASS AND NEWBURYPORT CATHOLICS .............. 319

1. Introduction ........................................... 319
2. C.B.C., Education, and Social Mobility ............... 319
   (a) C.B.C., Hightborough, Newburyport ............... 319
   (b) C.B.C. and Newburyport Catholics ............... 320
   (c) Resistance and reproduction ...................... 323
   (d) C.B.C. and the job market ....................... 325
Summary

This thesis is an ethnographic investigation of a Catholic Brothers school, Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.), in the provincial city of Newburyport, Australia. The study explores the traditions and historical purposes of education at the independent, religious school, and examines the manner in which these have changed or are changing. All names, including the name of the school and the city, have been altered to preserve anonymity.

The opening section discusses the emergence of the theoretical problem of the dialectic of change and continuity in the ongoing activity of C.B.C. actors. This is followed by an argument that an understanding of such activity requires an ethnographic perspective. Such a perspective, however, must not overlook the organisational and structural constraints within which participants operate. Hence, a critical ethnography, which takes account of both the agency of human actors and the structures which influence their activity, is advocated as the most suitable approach for understanding continuity and change within a complex organisation in its social context.

This argument is followed by an ethnographic account of Christian Brothers College, which focuses on the perceptions and activities of teachers and administrators. Individual chapters deal with the Christian Brothers Order and its educational mission at C.B.C.; the nature of religious education at the school; the administration of the school; approaches to control and discipline; the curriculum and
evaluation of pupils; and the relationship between C.B.C. and the wider Newburyport community.

The concluding section integrates an analysis of continuity and change at C.B.C. with a discussion of theoretical perspectives on reproduction and transformation. The thesis concludes that, although change has occurred in many ways, an institutionalised image of C.B.C. as "a Brothers' school" persists and impedes the formation of more democratic authority relations, curriculum, and evaluation. The potential for such change, however, is seen most strongly in the ongoing reform of religious education.
CHAPTER 1:

THEORETICAL ISSUES AND THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. INTRODUCTION

As the title suggests, the theme of this dissertation is the duality of continuity and change. Specifically, the thesis presents an investigation of continuity and change in the circumstances of a single Catholic school, Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.). The school, for primary and secondary Catholic boys, has experienced change in many ways in the past two decades. The staff of the school, for instance, has now only 20% of Christian Brothers when once it was comprised almost entirely of Brothers. Catholic religious values and the teaching of religious education have become more problematic since the Second Vatican Council. All of this has been accompanied by wider social change in Australian society. Yet, despite such changes, Christian Brothers College is still regarded as "a Brothers' school" - one which is directly controlled by members of the Congregation of Christian Brothers, and in which established Brothers' traditions persist.

Any understanding of the continuity/change duality in such specific circumstances requires an examination of the theoretical concepts of reproduction and transformation, and of the possibilities of social change that are afforded by various theoretical and methodological perspectives. This introductory chapter, in detailing the general theoretical debate concerning social stability and transformation, traces the emergence of the substantive theoretical issues which inform the research problem that the dissertation addresses.
The chapter begins with a review and critique of both the traditional structural functionalist perspectives of society and education, and of the radical challenge to that tradition. Secondly, the theoretical literature on organisational analysis and schools as organisations is critically reviewed. The following, pivotal section of this chapter traces the manner in which the researcher's immersion in the general theoretical debate on stability and transformation, as discussed in the first two sections, in combination with his intimate involvement with the research site and its actors, raised and clarified empirical issues regarding the problem of continuity and change at C.B.C. In that section, the important but often neglected process of the evolution of the specific research problem is examined. Finally, in presenting in greater detail the complexity of the reproductive and transformative purposes of C.B.C., the potential contribution of this study to the theoretical and empirical literature on social change is outlined.

2. SOCIAL STABILITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMATION

(a) Structural Functionalism, Human Capital, and the Liberal Tradition

In the traditional liberal view of education and society, education is seen as capable of altering individual capacities and, therefore, individual positions in the stable and enduring social and economic structure. Such assumptions were fundamental to the dominant approaches to the sociology of education in the 1950s and 1960s, structural functionalism and human capital theory. Both conceptualise education as a
"socially powerful, politically feasible means of attacking a broad range of remarkably diverse social and economic problems" (Papagiannis, Klees & Bickel, 1982:246) while maintaining the essential equilibrium and continuity of society.

Karabel and Halsey refer to structural functionalism as the "prevailing orthodoxy" in American sociology of education in the 1950s (1977:3). Durkheim (1956, 1961, 1964) is usually regarded as the founder of sociological functionalism (Swingewood, 1975) because of his view that the purpose of social institutions is to fulfill social needs and thus contribute to the functional unity of society. Harmony, or social order, is achieved by normative means which prevent serious, dysfunctional conflict. The predominance of such a functionalist perspective was due in no small part to the work of Parsons, who was also concerned with the social integration of members of society through their acceptance of shared values. By encouraging a common belief system and appropriate social behaviour, education was argued to contribute to social consensus and stability (Parsons, 1959, 1960). Hence, "the education system functions to develop the technical skills and the norms necessary to the particular stage of a society's development" (Papagiannis, Klees & Bickel, 1982:250. See also Clark, 1962; Dreeben, 1968).

Human capital theory has, in common with structural functionalism, an emphasis upon both the technical function of education and the efficient use of human resources (Karabel & Halsey, 1977). In the view of neo-classical economics, the rigors of education, seen as an investment against deferred economic returns, test and justly reward the varying effort and
talent of individuals. Liberal notions of equity and justice are comfortably accommodated within the dominant perspective of "fair, meritocratic competition for the unequal social rewards offered" (Papagiannis, Klees & Bickel, 1982:251). Equal chances for all means a system that is, supposedly, both fair, at least in terms of access if not outcomes, and efficient.

Schools, then, are regarded within this tradition as meritocratic institutions in which differential rewards can be justified and accommodated within the ideals of western democracy (Clark, 1972). Moreover, the socialisation process in schools, which results by and large in the acceptance of the meritocratic nature of society, is thus seen as preserving common values which should be shared by society's members. Social stability is thereby continually enhanced and preserved. Any social change that may occur is necessarily piecemeal and adaptive, and, most importantly, is internal to the normative framework of a given society (Parsons, 1960).

(b) The Radical Critique

The important point argued by the radical critics of structural functionalism is that life chances are not as much promoted by schools as restricted by them. That is, the radical tradition of society is rooted in a conflict theory which derives largely from neo-Marxian (Apple, 1979, 1982; Althusser, 1971; Carnoy, 1982; Edwards, 1979; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Giroux, 1982, 1983a) and neo-Weberian (Collins, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Watkins, 1984) perspectives. Because the neo-Marxian and neo-Weberian positions share a conflict theory of education, it is unnecessary for the
purposes of this introductory chapter to review their separate development in any detail. Briefly, however, from a neo-Weberian perspective, most clearly articulated by Collins (1971, 1977), the education system is regarded as being a site of competition between various status groups for wealth, prestige and power. The notion of "status group" largely overcomes the narrowness of the Marxian class division which is problematic in modern capitalism (Wright, 1980; Abercrombie & Urry, 1983). Society is seen as a hierarchy of status which is based not only on the private ownership of productive property, but also upon status group consciousness and cultural traits. There is much similarity, however, between some neo-Marxian and neo-Weberian perspectives, and some leftist scholars are heavily dependent upon both traditions without necessarily claiming to be Marxists or Weberians (e.g. Giddens, 1979, 1981). Moreover, as Karabel and Halsey (1977) point out, many neo-Marxists are sympathetic to the Weberian stratification approach but argue that such a view of status attainment still remains ultimately dependent upon class position (e.g. Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Such considerations have prompted recent scholars to argue that attempts to distinguish between Marxian and Weberian approaches to class are neither appropriate nor useful (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1980; Abercrombie & Urry, 1983).

In the radical tradition, schools are not to be regarded as neutral arenas in which all children start out with equal chances in the competition for the technical knowledge and credentials that may lead to future income. Instead, rather than holding out equal opportunities for individual mobility as
promised by liberal theorists, schools are thought to maintain and reproduce a system of structured inequality over time:

The Marxian view of education and society ... is class-based and historical. Individual behaviour is the product of historical forces, rooted in material conditions ... Conflict in this approach is not resolvable by universal rules because such rules are class-based; they serve particular interests – the interests of the dominant class (Carnoy, 1980:2-3).

Schooling, therefore contributes to the organised reproduction of both the forces of production and the relations of production that serve the interests of the capitalist class (Carnoy, 1980; Sarup, 1984). The forces of production are reproduced through the legitimation of the divisions of labour and divisions of knowledge (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Braverman, 1974). The correspondence principle of Bowles and Gintis (1976), for instance, stresses the structural correspondence between schooling and economic production. As they explain:

The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the workplace, but develops the type of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social class identification which are crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships in education ... replicate the hierarchical division of labor (Bowles & Gintis, 1976:131).

Students therefore emerge from schools with different attitudes and skills, already allocated, by and large, to their "proper" places in a hierarchical society and workforce. And, more importantly, because the maintenance of structural inequality over time demands that differential class relations within the workplace be accepted as normal and natural, the allocation process takes place primarily in schools, which legitimate economic and social stratification.
The relations of production, according to a conflict view of society, are reproduced through schools reinforcing predominant ideology and culture so that they are also taken for granted as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1977a; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1984a). That is, "social reproduction occurs via cultural reproduction" (Taylor, 1984:4) since, as Bourdieu and others suggest, "the inheritance of status in modern societies takes place through the transmission of 'cultural capital' [which makes misleading] the distinction between ascription and achievement" (Karabel & Halsey, 1977:19). Ultimately, then, the radical educators who support this view argue that the liberal educational system legitimates and reproduces capitalist rationality through "the control of meanings, through the manipulation of the very categories and modes of thinking we commonsensically use" (Sarup, 1984:2). As Giroux argues:

[Reproductive rationality] focuses its attention upon macro-structural relationships and how these relations in the form of structural determinations shape, as well as limit, the actions of human beings. Unlike traditional functionalist accounts, which are also concerned with the ways institutions shape society, reproductive positions reject consensus as the normative glue of a social system; instead, they focus on the way in which dominant classes are able to reproduce existing power relations in an unjust and unequal society (1981:13).

Both economic reproduction and cultural reproduction perpetuate inequality under the semblance of fairness and equal opportunity as schools are regarded as merely neutral transmitters of "the benefits of a valued culture" (Giroux, 1983a:267). Therefore:

According to Bourdieu, it is precisely the relative autonomy of the educational system that "enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence
and neutrality, i.e., to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively" (Giroux, 1983a:267).

The "objectivity" and "neutrality" of the education system is regarded by radicals as being completely mythical (Papagiannis, Klees, Bickel, 1982). Thus, although there are important differences in specific approaches, critical sociologists see schools as one of society's most important cultural apparatuses which work to maintain ideological hegemony and to restrict the development of working class consciousness (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971; Poulantzas, 1975; Papagiannis, Klees, Bickel, 1982).

The important notion of hegemony is the "essential ingredient" in Gramsci's social analysis (Welton, 1982:141). It refers to a process of ideological rather than coercive control whereby the ruling class culture and view of the world is passed "through a whole tissue of complex vulgarisations to emerge as 'common sense': that is, the philosophy of the masses, who accept the morality, the customs, the institutionalised rules of behaviour of the society they live in" (Fiori, 1973, in Welton, 1982:141). In this way, ruling classes gain consent to their domination from the very groups who are dominated. Schools, according to Althusser in particular, operate largely to secure such consent.

Although both Althusser and Gramsci are concerned with means by which domination is accepted by subordinate groups, they exhibit quite different approaches. The difference is related to one of the major issues of contemporary Marxism, the distinction between structuralist and culturalist approaches.
(c) **Agency and Structure**

Despite the power of the radical critique of structural functionalism, there remain striking similarities between, for instance, Parsons' functionalism (1957, 1959, 1960) and the version of structural Marxism popularised by Althusser (1970, 1971). Neither, for instance, regards social transformation as an empirical possibility unless specific and necessary historical conditions are met. For Parsons, social stability and system sameness are ensured by commitment to common patterns and value consensus. For Althusser, social determination is largely of an economic nature but is no less pervasive for being insidious and in the interests of a dominant class which governs social and economic structures. As Giddens points out, "Parson's actors are cultural dopes, but Althusser's are structural dopes of even more stunning mediocrity" (1979:52).

Such Marxist structuralism shares with traditional structural functionalism a blindness to the independently creative capacities of humans who, despite the force of ideologies and dominant symbol systems, always retain "some degree of penetration of the social forms which oppress them" (Giddens, 1979:72). In the logic of both structural functionalism and structuralist Marxism, "the teleology of the system either governs (in the first) or supplants (in the second) that of actors themselves" (Giddens, 1979:112) because social actors are regarded as talking, thinking, working and acting in conditions of which they have no understanding. The reproduction of society occurs "behind the backs", it is argued, "of the agents whose conduct constitutes that society"
(Giddens, 1979:112). Such cultural determinism is challenged by Giddens (1976, 1979, 1981) who argues that the possibility of social transformation is inherent in the ongoing dialectic between agency and structure, and between continuity and change:

All social reproduction is grounded in the knowledgeable application and reapplication of rules and resources by actors in situated social contexts: all interaction thus has, in every circumstance, to be contingently "brought off" by those who are party to it. Change is in principle involved with social reproduction — again in both its basic sense and in its "generational" sense — in its very contingency: social systems are chronically produced and reproduced by their constituent participants. Change, or its potentiality, is thus inherent in all moments of social reproduction (Giddens, 1979:114).

Such a dialectical view, Giddens claims, is exactly the standpoint that Marx himself takes in the Grundrisse when he argues that:

... every social item "that has a fixed form" appears as merely "a vanishing moment" in the movement of society. "The conditions and objectifications of the process", he continues, "are themselves equally moments of it, and its only subjects are individuals, but individuals in mutual relationships, which they equally reproduce and produce anew" (in Giddens, 1979:53).

The point being made here by Marx illuminates somewhat his famous but pithy statement from the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1951):

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past (in Watkins, 1985:8).

That is, any understanding of the continuity/change duality can never be gained by seeking explanations from either the nature of social structure or the subjectivity of human agents alone. Instead, human beings must be seen in a dialectical relationship with social structures. And in the interaction
between agents and structures people have, at each and every moment, both a relative autonomy from, and a relative dependence upon, social structures.

Such dialectical thinking can enable understanding of continuity and change in organisations like C.B.C. For it is in such spatially and temporally specific contexts that "the continual flux of interaction between agent and structure" (Watkins, 1985:14) may be most readily perceived. Such a dialectical, processual perspective of organisations directly challenges the system-structural approach which has in modern times guided organisation theory.

In the next section, traditional approaches to the study of organisations, including schools, will be examined and critiqued. The discussion which follows will elaborate upon the theoretical and empirical possibilities of a dialectical approach to organisational analysis which views schools as cultural sites.

3. THE STUDY OF ORGANISATIONS AND SCHOOLS

(a) Organisations as Systems

Just as structural functionalist and human capital views of education have been challenged in recent years by more radical perspectives, traditional views of organisations have also been increasingly challenged during the past decade. As Greenfield (1973, 1983, 1984), Bates (1980, 1981), Foster (1981, 1983) and others have pointed out, traditional studies of schools as organisations, in particular, have attempted to understand them according to technical or bureaucratic norms. The fundamental assumption which undergirds traditional approaches is that the
structure and operation of organisations can be explained by
universal laws which exist and which can be empirically
discovered. According to Greenfield:

In the contemporary study of organizations ... theorists have taken as their justification the claim
that their knowledge rests on the method of science
and that it leads to the understanding, prediction,
and control of the dynamics of organizations (1984:3).

Such control is thought by traditional organisational theorists
to be possible because organisations are conceived of as
systems which interact with larger systems called environments
and the even larger system of society (Barnard, 1938; Simon,
1945; Katz & Kahn, 1966).

The organic metaphor (Morgan, 1981) of social system is
consistent with the structural functionalist view of society
and place of education within it (Parsons, 1960) that was
reviewed earlier. According to Barnard (1938), organisations,
like organisms, are possessed of a cooperative morality to
which their human occupants seek a sense of commitment.
Getzels, Lipham and Campbell (1968) explain that harmony and
efficiency result from such commitment:

... when the needs of the individual and the goals of
the system are congruent, there is a feeling of
identification with the system. When the needs of the
individual and the expectations of the role-set are
congruent, there is a feeling of satisfaction and
belongingness in the system. When the expectations of
the roles and goals of the system are congruent, there
is a feeling of rationality regarding the system (in

That people need to identify with and belong to the system, be
it organisation or society, is taken for granted as a basic
tenet of human nature. This belief makes it possible, or even
"natural", to define the behaviour of those people or groups
who do not conform and belong as being merely pathological or
deviant rather than oppositional. The purposes of person and organisation should be congruent.

From this point of view, the aim of the organisation theorist is to:

... improve organizations by making them more efficient and effective and to make them serve better the needs and interests of the individuals who inhabit them ... The administration of the organization becomes a largely rational and technical matter (Greenfield, 1984:3).

Emphasis upon supposed universal laws, laws of behavioural science and universal (closed or open) systems, imbues organisations with a reified sense of independent reality which denies the fact that organisation is produced by people and can be reproduced by them:

It is true that organizations appear to be solid, real entities that act independently of human control and are difficult to change. Yet the paradox is that the vital spark, the dynamic of organization is made from nothing more substantial than people doing and thinking. Organizations are limited by and defined by human action (Greenfield, 1980:27).

Organisation has thus become narrowly regarded as a thing, a completed product that is produced without the help of human hands, rather than as a continuous process of organising (Angus, 1983; Brown, 1978; Greenfield, 1983) in which power is exerted to ensure the cooperativeness of people (Angus, 1983; Selznick, 1962; Weber, 1968). This view of organisations resulted in the search for the "One Best System" (Tyack, 1974) in which schools would play an important part (Parsons, 1959; Dreeben, 1968):

This was a heady vision and one in which education was a fundamental agency. For although many things were necessary for this desirable state of affairs to come about, three things were essential: a selection and allocation of individuals to appropriate positions, a system of socialization into the norms and values of
society; and a system of rewards and inducements that would maintain motivation and commitment (Dates, 1982a:15).

An important point in this vision of the "one best system" is that the relationship between individual, organisation and society is regarded as unproblematic. Organisations are viewed as existing within the normative framework of society which is accepted as given. They are seen neither in relation to social struggle nor their own histories. The resultant oversimplified theories of organisation can be seen in relation to reproduction theories of society for, in the simplistic notions of system congruence and system maintenance, organisations are seen merely and uncritically as reproductive mechanisms (Golding, 1980; Forester, 1983; Salaman, 1981). That is, modern organisation theory allows analysis only of institutions, and, by limiting themselves to the examination of "measureable facts" of organisations and the "manifest behaviour" of organisational actors, researchers

... implicitly endorse the social conditions which have created those facts and those behaviours. The supposedly objective analyst becomes a political actor, working on behalf of the status quo (Denhardt, 1981:633).

Far from being value-free, then, much organisational research reinforces and gives additional legitimacy to the underlying assumptions of orthodox organisation theory and to the prevailing conditions of society.

One of the most striking aspects of such conventional organisation research is that it fails to treat class or status groups in any serious fashion and so produces analyses of organisations that are devoid of political considerations but replete with consideration of supposedly neutral management techniques. As Salaman writes of such research:
Inequalities within organizations are given little attention, in the face of vigorous speculation about organizational structure and its determinants; the distribution of power, and the design of jobs (elsewhere seen as elements of class situations, or as reflections of class conflicts) are conventionally regarded as outcomes of technical problems and priorities. If the possibility of conflict within organizations is granted (as it is in only some traditions of organizational analysis) it is regarded simply as a fact of organizational life, not as directly related to class relationships (1981:228).

Salaman's work illustrates the many parallels between organisational structures and class structures, and the way in which organisation techniques of control contribute to class reproduction under the guise of impartial rationality:

... without the clear recognition that the design of work, the distribution of work rewards, the process of organizational control and legitimation, and relations between grades of employee within the plant reflect the class relations of the wider society our understanding of organizational process and structures can at best be partial, at worst, hopelessly unreal (Salaman, 1981:229-230).

Salaman adds that "a major reason for the popularity of functionalist approaches to employing organizations is precisely because they permit a classless and de-politicized conception of the enterprise" (1981:230). As he points out, "Such an unrealistic and inadequate conceptualization has done much to hinder the development of a more successful - and realistic - form of organizational analysis" (1981:230).

Yet the underlying classless consensus and irrefutable, technical, neutral rationality, that are assumed by conventional organisation theorists to be part of organisation in a capitalist industrial society, are clearly not as pervasive as such theorists claim them to be. Clear evidence is provided by the work of Edwards and his colleagues (Edwards, 1979; Gordon, Edwards & Reich, 1982) that, far from being
settled and stable, industrial or business organisations are continually in the process of adjustment and readjustment through the interactions and conflicts of their members. As Apple writes of this important research:

We cannot understand the real history of changing management structures from, say, Taylorism to the human relations school of management to the current experiments in worker participation without seeing the way labor has always acted back and attempted to alter the terrain on which labor-management conflicts have been grounded. Labor has not always been successful in this, but the point that must be recognised is that the outcome is only a moment in a larger dynamic of constant conflict, incorporation of dissent, temporary accords and changes (Apple, forthcoming).

Such an argument adds weight to Greenfield's critique of modern organisation theory, the basis of which is his claim that "the organisation can have no ontological reality beyond the concrete specifications of individuals whose attitudes, values and motivations define organisation" (Greenfield, 1983:50). From this point of view, negotiation occurs in organisational settings (Garfinkel, 1967; Gronn, 1982) in which reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Garfinkel, 1967) and which may therefore, be "reconstituted by conscious choice and effective action" (Denhardt, 1980:630. See also Habermas 1971, 1979; Marcuse, 1968). This latter point, however, is under-developed by both Garfinkel and Berger and Luckman who describe such negotiation and reality construction as being essentially unimpeded by social constraints and considerations of imposed power. Their position is therefore a socially conservative one (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). As Giddens (1979, 1981) reminds us, however, such action occurs in circumstances of only relative autonomy. At any temporal and spatial point there are structures which
limit human agency even though, as Bhaskar points out, organisations themselves are "a collection of structures, practices and conventions which individuals reproduce and transform but which would not exist unless they did so" (1979:45).

An adequate theory of organisations, therefore, would need to investigate the ongoing process of organising, the interactions and conflicts that produce, reproduce and transform organisations, and the historical and structural constraints upon transformation. Such a theory would offer an alternative to the established positivist paradigm which has guided the study of organisations and which, according to Benson (1977a), has entered a period of crisis. Such a conclusion seems reasonable given the above critique of organisational analysis. Similar claims in the literature in educational administration have been made by Erickson (1977) and Griffiths (1979) as well as by Bates (1980, 1982b) and Greenfield (1983, 1984).

Benson (1977a), for instance, argues that the established paradigm consists of "interrelated, theoretical, methodological, and practical commitments" which embrace a conceptual scheme of "rational structuring", a methodology that amounts to "a fairly simple form of positivism", and a practical concern solely with administrative-technical effectiveness (Benson, 1977a:3-9). As Benson summarises orthodox studies of organisations:

Theoretically, the studies have relied upon a rational model. They have assumed generally that the empirical relationships between structural features are to be explained in terms of rational, goal-seeking tendencies of the organization. Methodologically, the
comparative-quantitative studies have relied upon an uncritical stance toward the organizational world that is taken for granted by participants (1977a:5).

By outlining four analytical problems that are inherent in the current orthodoxy, Benson (1977a) in a seminal paper, provides an important direction for a more adequate approach to organisational analysis. This approach allows for a dialectical view of organisations and takes into account the critique of orthodox organisational analysis that was outlined earlier.

Firstly, in dealing with human action, recent studies deriving from diverse sources such as ethnomethodology (Bittner, 1965), phenomenology (Silverman, 1971) and Marxism (Benson, 1977b) have addressed ways in which organisational reality is produced and reproduced by people (Benson, 1977a).

Benson concludes that:

Theoretically, the action critique forces us to attend to the processes through which particular organizational patterns have been generated and are sustained ... This forces attention to history, to the sequence of events and contexts through which the present arrangements have been manufactured. It also directs analysis to the ongoing, day-to-day interactions through which a produced reality is sustained (1977a:6).

Research in organisations, therefore, should direct attention to the negotiation, reproduction or alteration of organisational paradigms (Brown, 1978; Imershein, 1977) or organisational cultures (Schein, 1984). This matter relates to the second problem of conventional organisational analysis, that of power:

Through the exercise of power a paradigm is enforced, action premises are established, the relationships between components are arranged, and environmental interchanges are negotiated ... Conventional approaches study the regularities, the orderly
The third problem of organisational analysis with which Benson deals is its relationship with other levels of analysis, including analysis of society. Recent work, for instance, in contrast to the predominant paradigm, in which such relationships are not regarded as problematic, has examined the connection between organisations and the structural arrangements of society (Giddens, 1976, 1979; Goldman & Van Houtan, 1977) rather than treating them as distinct, boundary-maintaining entities.

Finally, Benson points out that comparative-quantitative studies assume that major organisational factors remain stable. Process oriented analysis, however:

... would deal with changes in the underpinnings, in the infrastructure upon which the organisation is built. This would involve attending to the ongoing interactions that continuously reproduce the organisation and/or alter it (Benson, 1977a:11. See also Hall & Hall, 1981; Heydebrand, 1977).

Benson's criticisms of the established approaches to organisational analysis are extremely pertinent to this study of Christian Brothers College. An adequate analysis would need to take such criticisms into account and seek to understand the mechanisms by which reproductive and transformative processes, usually conceived of as society-wide, are pursued at the organisational level of an individual school.

(b) Schools as Organisations

Within the supposed social stability of the structural functionalist world, schools, as was pointed out in section two
of this chapter, played an important part in ensuring that the harmony of the system was not disturbed by generational change. Indeed it was the function of the school and the family, the "pattern maintenance" function, to ensure the commitment of diverse young people of various social and economic origins to the overriding values of the social system that would thus remain stable over time (Parsons, 1957. See also Bates, 1982a). Through a shared vision of the "one best system" (Tyaok, 1974; Parsons, 1959; Dreeben, 1968), education could maintain across generations, it was argued, the motivation and commitment to an idealised system which promised continual social progress (Bates, 1982a). The work of education in controlling and guiding society towards the one best system was not to be underestimated because, according to Bressler's (1963) argument:

Social change can be controlled by the application of disciplined intelligence ... the educational process is the only alternative to stagnation or revolutionary violence. It is the duty of education to preside over gradualistic change toward a more perfect expression of the democratic tradition (Bressler, in Bates, 1982c:15).

As was also discussed in section one, scholars in the radical tradition of conflict sociology have strongly argued that, in the structural functionalist approach to society and schooling, schools become apparatuses of social control which maintain capitalist domination (Althusser, 1971). Far from fulfilling their promise of greater democracy, equality and freedom, schools ensure the ongoing oppression of the majority while preserving and legitimating the privileged position of a few (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). So pervasive is this control, according to Althusser, that those
who might strive to implement change within schools face overwhelming odds.

It is against such overly determined perspectives of both structural functionalist and structural Marxist accounts of schools and society that Greenfield's critique of organisation theory, as outlined above, can be seen to hold out hope for the possibility of substantial change within the school system. While affording a significant advance upon such deterministic approaches to schooling, however, the voluntarism of Greenfield's position perhaps does not take seriously enough the ideological and structural parameters within which any educational change must occur. Any notions of possibilitarianism or romantic individualism must be balanced against the duality of agency and structure (Giddens, 1979, 1981; Bhaskar, 1979):

The duality of agency and structure transcends the dualism of voluntarism, in which agents are free from any constraint, and structural determinism, where the conditions not the agents act, through the recognition that institutions are made up of actors who indulge in practices which are both constrained and enabled by those institutions. In this way human agency can often transcend and overcome organisational structures which exercise domination over them. Such practices, while sometimes not being acknowledged by the actors as such, consequently lead to the generation, maintenance or transformation of these institutions (Watkins, 1985:29).

(c) Schools as Cultures

One particularly enlightening insight which Greenfield provides, nevertheless, is in his description of schools as sites of cultural negotiation between those people who have a stake in them:
what many people seem to want from schools is that schools reflect the values that are central and meaningful in their lives. If this view is correct, schools are cultural artefacts that people struggle to shape in their own image. Only in such form do they have faith in them; only in such form can they participate comfortably in them (Greenfield, 1973:570).

This insight is extremely important because the functionalist rationality which still dominates approaches to school organisation and administration treats schools 'as merely instructional sites designed to pass onto students a 'common' culture and set of skills that will enable them to operate effectively in the wider society' (Giroux, 1984b:36, emphasis added). Such a view, based on a conception of education which separates fact from value, ends from means, assumes that schools are politically neutral whereas, when studied as both instructional and cultural sites:

Schools must be seen as institutions marked by the same complex of contradictory cultures that characterise the dominant society. Schools are social sites constituted by a complex of dominant and subordinate cultures, each characterised by the power they have to define and legitimate a specific view of reality (Giroux, 1984b:37).

Thus, contradictions over such "message systems" of schools as pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation (Bernstein, 1977), and over class, gender, and political and social futures (Apple, 1982, 1983; Watkins, 1983, 1985) create tensions which are mediated only by the influence of human agents upon the current practices and organisation of schooling. And these themselves have been produced by historical practice which has shaped educational structures in an ongoing dialectic of continuity and change of what is to constitute the culture of the school.
As Bates (1982d) makes quite clear, an understanding that schools are cultures is essential for any understanding of schools as organisations:

Foster (1980), Giroux (1981), Greenfield (1979, 1980), and Bates (1980, 1981) have all argued the necessity of constructing a cultural analysis of educational administration as an alternative to the inherently sterile pursuit of a deterministic behavioural science. This is not solely because the dynamics of organisation can better be understood through such a perspective but also because educational organisations, above all, are committed to the maintenance, transmission and recreation of culture (Bates, 1982d:19).

Culture is, in this view, "the prime resource", and, one might add, the prime mediator and outcome, of educational practice. Schools are, therefore, inescapably cultural sites.

Such a conception of schools as cultural organisations will be important in the discussion of the evolution of the research problem which follows.

4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

(a) The Foreshadowed Problem

The focus of the thesis is upon an independent Catholic primary and secondary school for boys. The school is owned and conducted by the Congregation of Christian Brothers in a provincial city in Australia. Baldly stated, the essential research problem is to investigate the manner in which forces for both continuity and change are negotiated and dealt with at Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.), Newburyport. This problem statement will be elaborated upon in the pages ahead to raise several more specific research questions which the study attempts to answer.
Stated as above, the research problem has a ring of confident precision as the starting point for a case study. Such is not the case, however. Instead, the statement should be seen as a foreshadowed problem in the tradition of ethnovographic research (Malinowski, 1922; Smith, 1979; Wilcox, 1980). Firstly, the problem statement enunciates an issue upon which the researcher can focus, and one which provides an organising concept for the research as a whole. The question is capable of modification and refinement, however, as the research progresses. Secondly, and more importantly, the issue addressed in the problem statement is not one that was decided upon before the commencement of research at C.B.C., but one which evolved during the researcher’s association with the school and growing familiarity with the beliefs and customs of its members. In this sense the problem conceptualises what was seen by the researcher to be of crucial importance in developing an understanding of the dynamics of C.B.C.

Prunty (1981) has noted that most research reports, even of qualitative research, fail "to acknowledge the importance of one's personal history in formulating the research" (p.18). He argues, in the light of his own personal history in coming to address his dissertation topic, that the final part of Malinowski’s statement that "foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies" (1922:9) should be re-formulated to read, "and these are first revealed to the observer through personal experience, and then ordered by the observer's theoretical study" (Prunty, 1981:28). As far as this dissertation is concerned, the personal antecedents
which can be identified include the researcher's own ambivalent experience as a secondary student at a Christian Brothers school, his four years' residence in Newburyport, his five years as a teacher at C.B.C. and, before that, four years as a teacher in other schools. Also significant were earlier research attempts to make sense of the everyday realities of C.B.C.

While all of the above factors helped to shape the researcher's interest in C.B.C. as a research site, the last was most immediately apparent in the researcher's growing awareness of what Prunty calls "answers looking for a question" (1981:29). These early, tentative studies were also important in the search for an appropriate methodology.

(b) False Starts: Preliminary Research & Preliminary Research Problems

The author's initial research at Christian Brothers College involved the application of a questionnaire, the Finlayson Instrument (Finlayson, 1973), in an attempt to measure certain characteristics of the school which are thought to contribute to its "climate" (Steinhoff & Owens, 1976). The questionnaire that was used, unlike most within the genre, surveyed pupils as well as teachers and administrators. Analysis of the results, however, led to little understanding of the social situation of the school. What was intended as a measure of the perceptions of its actors relied so heavily upon statistical averages and coefficients of correlation that any sense of the school being composed of human actors was denied. This camouflaged the genuine differences and conflicts over definitions of the
situation, the multiplicity of interactions, and the variety of responses to everyday situations and problems which are the life blood of a school.

It was to capture the everyday experience of life at C.B.C., then, that participant observation was next employed in an attempt to understand pupil perceptions of their schooling (Angus, 1981a). That study raised issues of pupil deviancy (Angus, 1981b), pupil self-image (Angus, 1982), pupil-teacher interaction and classroom organisation (Angus, 1983), and pupil perceptions of teachers and teaching (Angus, 1984a). The research focus at that stage, therefore, was rather narrowly upon perspectives of the process of schooling.

In investigating that foreshadowed problem, however, it became clear that a number of broader social, cultural and structural aspects of C.B.C., as well as the pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation that were its "message systems" (Bernstein, 1977), were important to its members of staff and contributed to its uniqueness. These included its history and status as an independent Catholic school serving a provincial community, its linkages with the Newburyport business community and workplace, its ownership and administration by members of a religious Order whose representation on the teaching staff is declining, and the history and mission of the Congregation of Christian Brothers. In all of these aspects of ongoing life at C.B.C., elements of both continuity and change are apparent.

In retrospect, the problem statement as written above seems to provide an obvious interconnection between these issues, but as the research project was unfolding they appeared to be unordered although, at a level of personal experience, of
immense significance. As Louis Smith might have said, "It smelt like a good problem" (1979:330). The scent, however, had still to be followed before the problem could be "seen" in a way that would allow directed inquiry.

As Prunty (1981) has suggested, the problems that had been revealed by personal experience in C.B.C. were ordered largely through theoretical study. As the researcher became increasingly aware of the importance of broad social and structural issues for any understanding of C.B.C., a study of the literature on classroom interaction and pupil cultures gave way to that on economic and cultural reproduction, which was briefly mentioned in section two.

The following section relates the literature on reproduction and transformation to specific circumstances of Christian Brothers College to elaborate upon the precise nature of the research problem and the specific issues which the research will address.

5. C.B.C., REPRODUCTION, AND TRANSFORMATION

A central tenet of the radical position that was outlined in section two is that schools are institutions that reproduce society. That is, reproduction theories apply to macro or society-wide processes. This dissertation, however, is an attempt to contribute to the further refinement of reproduction theory by studying the mode of expression of these processes through the everyday lived experiences and perceptions of human agents in an actual institution.

In relation to the notions of continuity and change in the foreshadowed problem as stated earlier, two research questions now become particularly apposite:
(i) How does an individual school like Christian Brothers College reproduce itself over time?

(ii) What supports and inhibits such reproduction?

In addition, and again related to the foreshadowed problem, two particular aspects of C.B.C. make it especially interesting as a site for investigation.

(a) **Social and Economic Reproduction at C.B.C.**

Firstly, schools like C.B.C. have an explicitly transformative purpose which relates to the notion of resistance to economic and social arrangements (Angus, 1984b; Bates, 1982b; Watkins, 1984). Along with most Christian Brothers schools, C.B.C. had, historically, a distinctively working class location. But rather than reproduce the working class culture of its pupils, the aim has historically been to transform their cultural identity in order to establish and maintain a Catholic middle class. In relation to the wider social structure, therefore, "elements of contestation and transformation are present and overshadow the elements of cultural reproduction" (Bates, 1982b:55). These issues are discussed in chapter 3 and in chapter 9. Suffice to say at this point that C.B.C. seems to provide a case that does not sit comfortably within the tradition of reproduction theories. Recent literature has suggested that such theories appear to be overly determined and too mechanistic in their somewhat crude assertions that schools are simply agents in the reproduction of inevitable social and economic outcomes (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983a). As Giroux argues:
By ignoring the contradictions and struggles that exist in schools, these theories not only dissolve human agency, they unknowingly provide a rationale for not examining teachers and students in school settings. Thus they miss the opportunity to determine whether there is a substantial difference between the existence of various structural and ideological modes of domination and their actual unfolding and effects (1983:259, emphasis added).

These ideas are very pertinent to the foreshadowed problem which is directly concerned with both continuity and change in a single setting. Rather than taking the theoretical construct of reproduction for granted, therefore, the research focuses upon C.B.C. actors who collectively create both continuity and change as existing patterns, structures, beliefs and assumptions are produced, reproduced and also contested. Such a focus, as was discussed in section two, allows a more complete understanding of the agency of human actors than is afforded by traditional reproduction literature. Moreover, in the attempt to come to terms with overly deterministic neo-Marxist reproduction theories, C.B.C., with the notions of resistance and transformation explicit in its history, seems to provide a case in which the interpretations that such reproduction accounts allow can be empirically assessed (Bates, 1982a).

C.B.C., then, is an inherently interesting research site in which prolonged but unsystematic investigation had turned up many issues that warranted further study. These preliminary investigations were drawing the researcher deeper into an analysis and critique of the reproduction literature which, while initially it seemed especially relevant to the C.B.C. case, did not adequately explain it. The research intentionally, therefore, "... reflects Geoff Whitty's
comments that recent work in American and Australian sociology display a willingness to interrogate theory with empirical research and vice versa" (Bartlett, 1983:1).

(b) Religious Reproduction at C.B.C.

The second aspect of C.B.C. that makes it particularly intriguing also relates to its history and to the much larger history of the Catholic religion itself. The rhetorical justification for separate Catholic schools is the argument that such schools perpetuate that larger history by inculcating the Catholic faith in young Catholics. A theme that has been consistently used in this argument is presented as strongly now as it was a century ago:

The environment of the wider society and culture of our time ... is frequently inimical to Christian values ... [I]t would seem that Catholic schools today are more necessary than ever in the past to provide for Catholic children that environment of Christian community which is crucial to the transmission of the Christian Message. The provision of this environment in the face of the non-Christian values in society generally is a further strong argument for the continuance and improvement of Australian Catholic schools (Flynn, 1975:285).

From this point of view, the essential role of schools like C.B.C. is one of religious socialisation and the reproduction of Catholicism. Flynn (1981) explains that such religious socialisation is a three-fold process:

first there is experience of Christian faith, then initiation and affiliation into a community of faith, the Church, leading, finally, to personal commitment in faith to God during adulthood (Flynn, 1981:97).
The liberal sociologist Westerhoff sums up many aspects of what Flynn means by religious socialisation:

Socialisation is the lifelong formal and informal ways one generation seeks to maintain and transmit its understanding and way of life; seeks to induct its young into, and reinforce for its adults, a particular set of values and responsible adult roles, and seeks to help persons develop self-identity through participation in the life of a people with more or less distinctive ways of thinking, feeling and acting (Westerhoff, in Flynn, 1981:99).

But just as theories of economic and cultural reproduction have been criticised as being overly determined and mechanistic, the long-standing point of view that Catholic traditions can be directly and unproblematically reproduced through religious education in Catholic schools is also challenged by recent theorists. This point is made, somewhat ironically, by Leavey in her discussion of the difficulty that she had in deciding what was actually being measured by the "Religious Outcomes" scales in her doctoral research in Catholic secondary schools:

Is it orthodoxy or religiosity? And the two are not the same thing. Currently, anyway, in the Catholic Church, orthodoxy is associated with conformity, with the dull and passive Christian - the one who does his religion mechanically ... With regard to my own study, I have to say that I do not know for certain whether I have tapped the merely orthodox or the genuinely religious impulse of the students. I do not know for certain either that the religious scales do not measure indoctrination by the staff (1972:110).

The point is that Catholicism, like capitalism but with a much longer history, has no simple continuity. It, also, is continually produced, reproduced, contested, transformed (Cave, 1972; Houtard & Rousseau, 1971; Lauchli, 1972). Indeed, the problematic nature of Catholic education has, especially since the Second Vatican Council, become an issue that is central to
much of the recent literature (Britt, 1975; Gill, 1972; Leavey, 1980; Praetz, 1982). The Church as a cultural institution is a mediator between the wider social structure and individual situations. And C.B.C. provides a specific context in which to investigate such mediation.

6. CONCLUSION

The original problem statement now becomes increasingly complex as two society-wide cultural institutions, the education system and the Catholic religious system, are both mediated at C.B.C. The study therefore attempts to understand the process and mechanisms by which macro forces are mediated at the level of a single institution.

In order to gain such understanding, the research must examine the everyday actions and perceptions of C.D.C. participants and the way in which "their daily life experiences influence, interact and renegotiate their life-time patterns and expectations" (Watkins, 1984:76) through their complex interactions with organisational relationships in the creation and recreation of the culture of the school. Alert to the structural relations within which continuity and change are dialectically related, the research must avoid relegating C.B.C. to merely the deterministic straight-jacket of structural functionalist and structuralist Marxist accounts in which the school would be viewed simply as a "container in which people are acted upon" (Watkins, 1985:15). At the same time, any account of C.B.C. must also resist the voluntarism and naive possibilitarianism that seems to be implicit in the Greenfield critique of orthodox organisation theory.
In the following chapter, a methodological approach which avoids both narrow determinism and excesses of individualistic relativism will be advocated. The methodology will also be consistent with the substantive theoretical considerations which have been developed in this chapter and which inform the research.
CHAPTER 2:

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the ontological and epistemological presuppositions of various research methods will be examined. The analysis, following Fay (1975) and Bernstein (1978), each seminal works in the area, will deal with the main research paradigms (Kuhn, 1962) of social science: positivist, interpretative and critical. The following section examines the more traditional research paradigms, positivist and interpretative. The former invariably utilises quantitative data and methods. Interpretative research, on the other hand, while not necessarily entirely eschewing quantitative data, seeks interpretation and understanding from qualitative data and employs methods appropriate for the recording and analysis of such data. The third section considers the development of a critical ethnographic research perspective. Only such a perspective, it is argued, is capable of detecting, and more importantly addressing, the dialectic of agency and structure which is essential for any understanding of organisations or of society.

In the fourth section of this chapter particular issues in the study of C.B.C. are examined. These include, firstly, a set of issues which concern any ethnography - the nature of participant observation, sources of information, and the maintenance of critical distance during the long period of immersion in the research site. Secondly, an issue which is most important for this particular thesis is addressed. This
involves an elaboration of the application of the perspective of critical ethnography in the specific case of C.B.C. Finally, the methodological issues addressed in this chapter are briefly reviewed.

2. BEYOND METHOD: A CRITIQUE OF TRADITIONAL RESEARCH PARADIGMS

In the analysis which follows, neither the positivist nor the interpretative paradigms will be examined in detail - both for reasons of space and because these paradigms are generally well known. Instead, emphasis will be upon a critique of the adequacy of these research traditions and upon an explication of their ideological components. This critique is necessary to establish the case that a critical ethnography is an appropriate methodology for this study. Because the methodology for this research is broadly ethnographic, more attention will be given to ethnography than to other methods.

(a) The Positivist Tradition

The positivist research tradition in social science grew out of the view that social scientists, if they were to be considered at all scientific, should use in their research methods that were similar to those which had seemed to lead to the discovery of objective laws and regularities in the natural sciences. There is in this tradition, therefore, a concern with measurement, reliability and replicability. The appropriate way of going about knowledge production is thought to be by means of the hypothetico-deductive method in which the researcher begins with a clearly articulated theory, deduces hypotheses which are logically consistent with that
theory, and then tests the hypotheses under experimental conditions. But since social science hypotheses do not often lend themselves to laboratory experimentation, statistical analysis of large samples usually counts as objective testing. Implicit in such methodology is:

... an assumption that the social world, like the natural world, is entirely external to the social scientist, independent of his will and accessible to him through the observation of physical movements. (Woods and Hammersley, 1977:10).

It is in approaches to theorising, as much as in the methodology itself, according to Sharp and Green (1975), that the "inherent weakness" of such inductive research is revealed. The positivist, logical empiricist tradition of inductive research, they argue, through "fact finding" and "head counting", produces:

... a great deal of statistical information about, for example, differential class chances for educational attainment but offers little by way of explicit theoretical or conceptual breakthroughs for interpreting the data (Sharp and Green, 1975:2).

Because quantitative, positivist studies are guided by a logic of structural functionalism, an underlying value consensus is assumed which limits both the formulation of problems to be studied and the conceptualization of possible solutions:

Methodologically, this tradition tends to engage in positivistic "fact finding" procedures with arbitrarily imposed categories for differentiating the data. It fails to do justice to the complexity of social reality, which cannot be "grasped" by merely reducing sociologically significant characteristics of men to their external and objective indicators (Sharp and Green, 1975:2-3).

(b) The Interpretative Alternative

Criticism from within social science of the separation of the individual from seemingly determined social structures,
which is characteristic of the positivist paradigm, coupled with a philosophical attack upon the tenets of positivism (Bhaskar, 1979; Polanyi, 1966) and the revelation that scientists do not in any case follow the "correct" scientific manner (Kuhn, 1962), has led to the emergence or in some cases the reemergence of other research traditions (Woods and Hammersley, 1977). These share a common concern with investigating the ways in which human actors themselves construct the social world through their interpretation of and interaction with other human actors. These traditions have been especially apparent in the development of versions of ethnography.

(1) Anthropological Ethnography and Functionalism

Although, as Smith (1983) reports, the evolving field of school ethnography is in a state of "zesty disarray", the essential feature of most ethnographic research is that it attempts above all to describe, and then to interpret, "the nature of social discourse amongst a group of people" (Wilcox, 1980:2). With open mind and open notebook the researcher attempts to get close enough to the group to understand its social interaction. A belief that is generally held amongst ethnographers is that:

The final emphasis must always be upon the group before us ... no one who studies a group will go far wrong if he gets close to it and, by whatever methods are available, observes all that he can (Homans, 1950:2).

Such a viewpoint is strongly apparent in the American tradition of school ethnography with its particularly strong roots in anthropology (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980; Smith, 1979;
Wilcox, 1980; Spindler and Spindler, 1977). Ethnography is regarded by such researchers as the "science of cultural description" (Wolcott, 1975:112), a means by which to understand what it is like to "walk in someone else's shoes" (Wolcott, 1975:113). In this tradition Geertz' development of Ryle's notion of "thick description" is widely shared.

Geertz (1973) regards ethnography as "thick description" which locates the multi-layered significance of events within their social contexts. Since the most significant data amount to "our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to", analysis involves "sorting out the structures of signification" (Geertz, 1973:9). The researcher must therefore be in a position to observe behaviour within the context of its setting, and to elicit from those observed the "structures of meaning which inform and texture behaviour" (Wilcox, 1980:2). In short, in this tradition, according to Conklin (1968):

An ethnographer is an anthropologist who attempts ... to record and describe the culturally significant behaviours of a particular society. Ideally, this description, ethnography, requires a long period of intimate study and residence in a small, well defined community, knowledge of observational techniques, including prolonged face-to-face contact with members of the local group, direct participation in some of that group's activities, and a greater emphasis on intensive work with informants than on the use of documentary or survey data (in Peshkin, 1982:54).

This latter point raises the important question of the extent to which this sort of ethnography has actually allowed a shift away from the view of human nature which is an integral part of the positivist, structural-functionalist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Indeed, especially in the American tradition of largely anthropological ethnography which is
outlined above, an essentially limited, structural-functionalist approach to human nature and society is still apparent despite the use of methodologies that are thought to afford understanding through description and interpretation. That this is the case for much modern school ethnography is illustrated by Spindler and Spindler:

Education is a cultural process. Each new member of a society or group must learn to act appropriately as a member and to contribute to its maintenance and, occasionally, to its improvement. Education, in every cultural setting, is an instrument for survival. It is also an instrument for adaptation and change. To understand education we must study it as it is - embedded in the culture of which it is an integral part and which it serves (Spindler and Spindler, 1971:ix).

As Sanday (1979) points out, the key concepts in this statement - "process, maintenance, survival, adaptation, change, embedded in, and integral part of" - echo the early functional anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown (1949, 1952), for whom:

The only acceptable definition of function ... was the "contribution" an institution makes to the maintenance of social structure ... Radcliffe-Brown partitioned the total social system into three "adaptational" units: (1) social structure, or "the arrangements by which an orderly social life is maintained"; (2) the "ecological" or the way the system is adapted to the physical environment; and (3) the culture, or the mechanisms by which an individual acquires "habits and mental characteristics that fit him for participation in social life" (Sanday, 1979:332).

The structural-functionalist notions of systems maintenance and equilibrium, and the image of human action as being regulated by pre-existing patterns of behaviour, so apparent in the work of Radcliffe-Brown (1949, 1952), are still to be found, then, in recent ethnography. Therefore, Sanday argues, "regardless of the method employed most social science research of today is devoted to uncovering causal relationships and explaining covarying patterns" (1979:532). Although offering
some insight into the day to day reality of human life such ethnography is flawed, therefore, by its structural functionalist perspective which, as explained in chapter one, fails to grasp the complexity and uncertainty of social life, and fails to address notions of agency in reproduction and transformation.

(ii) Sociological Ethnography, Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnomethodology

While the American tradition of ethnography derives largely from anthropology with emphasis upon the understanding of events, the use of ethnography in Britain has been associated more with sociology (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980; Karabel and Halsey, 1977) and especially, in recent years, with the new sociology of education (Young, 1971). In this tradition, emphasis has been upon an understanding of relationships rather than of activities, and research has been more explicitly based upon sociological theory.

Many researchers who have embraced ethnographic approaches to educational investigation have done so, allege Delamont and Atkinson, "in reaction to 'positivism', 'mindless empiricism' (or whatever epithets are invoked in the same vein)" (1980:139). And while ethnography offers many advantages over other methodologies in understanding social contexts, it is important to note than "there is a potential - and very serious - pitfall involved in identifying such research activity solely or primarily in terms of the method" (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980:139). This is because, as is clear from the previous section:
"Ethnographic" research approaches do have affinities with particular theoretical schools or traditions. The rationale for participant observation, for example, or for the analysis of naturally occurring talk, can be found within a number of so-called "interpretative" sociologies. Ethnographic research reflects the epistemological commitments or presuppositions of such theoretical perspectives (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980:139).

Sociological ethnography derives particularly from symbolic interactionism, which attempts to explain how the definition of the situation is negotiated amongst a group; and from ethnomethodology, which seeks to understand the social construction of reality. In both cases, concern is with social interaction as a means of negotiating meanings in context (Korabel and Halsey, 1977).

In contrast to positivism, the emphasis in the interpretivist tradition is upon the elucidation of "the way in which the social world is constituted by the actors' meanings" (Freeman and Jones, 1981:1). According to Sharp and Green, within this tradition:

... there are a number of different strands and subcategories, variously called symbolic interactionism, phenomenological sociology or ethnomethodology ... [W]hat seems to be held in common by all of them are, first, their common heritage in German Idealism, developed in social science in the work of G.H. Mead, M. Weber and A. Shutz, and second, their substantive concern with the problem of subjective meaning as a basis for an understanding of the social world (1975:3).

It is important to point out that both symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, despite their inadequacies (which will be discussed in the pages ahead), place human actors and their interpretive and negotiating capacities at the centre of analysis. Their importance should not be undervalued, therefore, as they highlight the essential limitation of positivism which is its emphasis upon causal
mechanisms which determine action and which "lie outside the situations in which interaction takes place" (Layder, 1981:47).

Because symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology have so much in common, especially their phenomenological perspective, and because the same criticisms hold for both, they will be taken together as representative of the interpretative tradition. Although symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology are concerned with a somewhat different set of problems, their similar phenomenological approach opposes the false separation of individual and society.

Symbolic interactionism, according to Blumer:

... refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's action instead of merely reacting to each other's action (in Layder, 1981:32).

The tradition is based in the work in the 1920s and 1930s of Mead, whose central idea is that humans act according to the way they see or construe the world around them. Actors undergo a continuous process of meaning construction as they interpret and reinterpret symbols or clues derived from their perceptions of the social situation in which they are involved, and the roles which they imagine themselves and others to be playing.

In symbolic interactionist research, Blumer states:

... one would have to take the role of the actor and see the world from his standpoint. This methodological approach stands in direct contrast to the so-called objective approach – the actor acts towards his world on the basis of how he sees it and not on the basis of how the world appears to the outside observer (in Delamont, 1976:25).

In ethnomethodology attention also is upon human actors and the way in which members of various social groups make sense of
the social situations in which they find themselves. The focus is upon the way in which people, through their actions and speech, are able to "impute and sustain a sense of orderliness in the situations in which they are involved and how they manage to define and redefine situations according to circumstances and in concert with other people involved in the interactions" (Layder, 1981:42). As Garfinkel explains:

[Ethnomethodology] is directed to the task of learning how members' ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions, practical circumstances, common sense knowledge of social structures and practical sociological reasoning analyzable; and of discovering the formal properties of commonplace, practical actions, "from within actual settings" as ongoing accomplishments of those settings (Garfinkel, 1967:vii-viii).

Such analysis is concerned with uncovering the basic principles or rules by which a sense of stability and coherence is created and maintained as individuals in contextually specific situations "accomplish the very events to be explained" (Philipson, 1972, in Layder, 1981:44).

The emphasis in both traditions upon the negotiations of human agents in the actual construction of meaning systems opposes any mechanistic interpretation of human behaviour. The notion of "objective reality" gives way to the "social construction of reality" (Berger and Luckman, 1977) which rules out all forms of determinism "whether biological, psychological, social or cultural" (Sharp and Green, 1975:15). According to this tradition, therefore, economic and cultural reproduction should not be seen as inevitable. Instead, following Cicourel:

... social structure is seen as a human, indeed an intellectual construction, the result of a network of consciousness of people which aquire in their
socialisation a "sense of social structure", and through their interpretive action in the social world reproduce it (Sharp and Green, 1975:15).

The interpretative tradition's emphasis upon the active, knowing subject "brings the individual right to the forefront of history and society ... [and] makes the search for causal regularities ... inappropriate" (Sharp and Green, 1975:20). Such a notion of social structure is a vast improvement upon the narrow determinism of positivism and structural functionalism, and indeed of functionalist ethnography. And while it is also one which allows refinement of naive versions of reproduction theory, the interpretivist tradition is not without its own problems.

(iii) Limitations of the Interpretative Tradition

One of the difficulties of interpretative work is that, because the researcher must deal with interpretations of interpretations:

... what Cicourel (1967) calls "background expectancies" ... must always be inferred by the fieldworker since such assumptions are regarded as fully unproblematic by members of the studied organisation (Van Maanen, 1983:41).

These background assumptions become hardened into apparently stable, institutionalised meanings. Nevertheless, because "institutional structures result from and are stabilised by the creative interpretations of social actors, they are open to continual transformation and change" (Sharp and Green, 1975:20). And, within the interpretivist tradition:

The very practice of ethnography tends to reduce social reality to the totality of real social relationships which can be observed in their givenness through "naturalistic" methodologies: i.e. "observing individuals or groups in their natural setting with
minimum interference by the observer" (Reynolds, 1980, in Sharp, 1982:49).

This means that emphasis is upon reality construction of individually creative members of groups, and that the constraints which human actors must confront because of the nature of social structures are largely ignored or taken for granted. Thus, in what Freeman and Jones (1981) refer to as Berger and Luckman's "naive constructivist account":

... there appears to be no way of grounding choice between competing sets of criteria which exist or might exist for choosing between alternative constructions of reality, since these criteria must themselves be social constructs ... [Therefore] the constructivist seems relentlessly pushed towards a total relativism (Freeman and Jones, 1981:8).

Such epistemological relativism becomes apparent in interpretative research in the emphasis upon analysis of negotiation over meanings as reality is collaboratively constructed. This emphasis ignores the point that, whatever definition of the situation is finally to prevail within a group of human actors, it is essentially one of power (Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Bernstein, 1978). As Karabel and Halsey point out in relation to interpretative research in schools, for instance:

Teachers and children do not come together in a historical vacuum: the weight of precedent conditions the outcome of "negotiation" over meanings at every turn (1977:58).

Therefore, unless analysis is related to social structure:

(It) does not enable us to pose the question of why it is that certain stable institutionalized meanings emerge from practice rather than others, or the extent to which the channelling of interpreted meanings is socially structured and related to other significant aspects of social structure (Sharp and Green, 1975:20).
This limitation of both symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology is referred to by Sharp and Green (1975) as the problem of "emergence" (see also Layder, 1981). Because action and meaning are explained in terms of their immediate context, both the prior knowledge of actors and, even more importantly, any link with a conception of an independent, external social reality, are denied. And this denial prevents any understanding of the dialectic between continuity and change, and between human agency and social structure.

By stressing the precedence of description over interpretation and explanation, ethnographers do not necessarily provide any basis for critical judgements. And nor, by merely describing and interpreting the social situation that is created by a particular group in particular time and space, does the researcher "look also at questions about how and why reality comes to be constructed in these particular ways" (Freeman and Jones, 1981:12). Freeman and Jones add the important point that:

This is part of enquiry for those with an interest in comprehending power relationships in order to promote a more egalitarian society, who investigate also how it is that world-views hold their sway even when they do not serve the interests of those who hold them (1981:12).

This last point of Freeman and Jones raises a most important but frequently overlooked aspect of research traditions — the relationship between research methods and ideology.
(c) Research and Ideology

Research paradigms are founded as much upon a view of human nature and society as they are upon epistemology (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Ideas and assumptions about knowledge and values contribute to the belief systems that make people comfortable in one or other research paradigm — positivistic, interpretative (or qualitative, hermeneutic, naturalistic or phenomenological); or critical social science (or critical theory) (see Fay, 1975; Bernstein, 1978; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This literature on research and ideology raises the problem of fundamental belief systems and the nature of the issues that research addresses. The problem has also a political dimension that is not immediately apparent but which is to be found in the relationship between myth, ideology and the construction of scientific knowledge. As Bates explains:

I use myth to refer to those interpretive and prescriptive rules which form the basis of perception and integration of experience and the promotion of particular intellectual, socio-political orders. Myths, in this sense, can be seen as both constitutive and carriers of ideology in the socio-political systems of science and education. However, just as in science competing paradigms and competing historical reconstructions contend for dominance, competing myths also contend within the socio-political structures of education ... My argument is that ideologies (and the myths which constitute them) involve description, interpretation and prescription and are allied to interests which, within both scientific and educational socio-political systems are frequently in competition. It is within such a framework that the various relationships between ideology and educational research can best be understood, for research is both commissioned and interpreted in terms of the interests with which it is allied (Bates, 1982c:2).

(1) Positivism and Ideology

In education, as in other areas of social research, the rules that have generally governed understanding have been
those of "the scientific method", firmly located in the postivist paradigm. But, as Becker argues:

... education's swoon into the arms of quantitative scientific psychology coincided with the broad democratization of public education ... What schools can do is use methods that they can claim are scientific so that the troubles that arise will be visited on someone else. In other words, objective, quantitative, scientific research provides educators with defensible explanations for their failure to deliver on the various and contradictory promises of educators. That prejudices the entire education establishment in favour of such research and against anything else, especially against qualitative research that relies on the sensitivities and seemingly unrestrained judgements of individual researchers. (Becker, 1983:101, 104).

The predominance of positivist research has a more deeply ideological influence, however, than merely providing a sense of dubious legitimacy for the educational establishment. The point is that the obsession with the illusory objectivity of science (Kuhn, 1962; Lakatos, 1970; Feyerabend, 1975) is a strong factor in reinforcing the status quo. Positivism maintains not only scientism but a social order in which science is separated from ends and ethics, facts from values, leading to "a form of ideological hegemony that infused positivist rationality with a political conservatism that makes it an ideological prop of the status quo ... [but one which] is not self-consciously recognised by those who help to reproduce it" (Giroux, 1983c:15. See also Fay, 1975; Bernstein, 1978; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; and Bates, 1980, 1981). A number of critics argue therefore that the positivist approach is biased towards supporting the basic features of industrial society.

In the positivist tradition, or paradigm (Kuhn, 1962), of social science research, emphasis is upon the search for generalisations or laws which will enable not only explanation
but also the prediction of social behaviour and, therefore, social intervention and control (Fay, 1975; Bernstein, 1978). By treating conventional activities and social circumstances as if they are naturally occurring entities, the positivist approach reifies the social institutions and customs of the society it is studying (Fay, 1975). Such reification insists that social arrangements be treated as if they were immutable things which must necessarily be the way they are (Lukacs, 1971). Social structures and structural relationships are regarded as inevitably functioning the way they currently do regardless of the wishes of social actors.

Research which reifies social arrangements in this way by treating them as neutral, cannot be ideologically neutral itself - for such research must, necessarily, implicitly endorse such arrangements and so lend support to the status quo. Positivism, therefore, is profoundly conservative and has the effect of legitimizing the structural dominance of powerful groups. And moreover, with structural relations of dominance and submission being seen as functional and not political relationships, coercion is seen not as political but natural (Fay, 1975). Indeed, from a functionalist perspective, any questioning of fundamental arrangements is regarded as irrational. This, as Fay (1975) and Lukacs (1971) point out, is recognised by Marx in his discussion of alienation and reification, and in the Marxian theoretical tradition in which "... those who are in a dominated position cannot come to see that they need not be in this position, that there are viable alternatives to their situation" (Fay, 1975:64). Unmasking the ideological content of research is, therefore, as Fay argues,
"not just an exercise in philosophical analysis, but a move to open up the possibility for a social order along quite different lines from our own" (1975:64).

(ii) Interpretivism and Ideology

As was argued earlier, the interpretative tradition offers considerable advances over positivist approaches especially in its abolition of the division between individual and society. Nevertheless, this research tradition is also limited by its ideological presuppositions. As Fay points out, there is in this tradition:

... no room for an examination of the conditions which give rise to the actions, rules and beliefs which it seeks to explicate, and, more particularly, it does not provide a means whereby one can study the relationships between the structural elements of a social order and the possible forms of behaviour and beliefs which such elements engender (Fay, 1975:83-84).

Moreover, the specific conditions in which interaction is located are characterised in interpretivist research in a positive rather than a negative way. Such conditions are regarded as positively facilitating social interaction by "providing shared meanings around which action is structured" (Layder, 1981:39). But such conditions could also be characterised in a negative, more critical way as limiting behaviour by imposing constraints upon the human agency of social actors. Reality in the interpretivist tradition, then, is regarded as being unproblematically lived out in the "continuous, passing, moment-to-moment experience of acting individuals" (Layder, 1981:35) whose "meanings, beliefs, practices and actions ... are congruent with one another in so
far as they are understandable" (Fay, 1975:86).

Such a perspective does not provide any means of addressing or even recognizing either structural conflict within a society or contradictions among the supposedly common meanings, beliefs, practices and actions. Instead, there is an implicit conservatism in the assumption of an inherent continuity of the society and the rejection of conflict - historical, structural or situational - which might generate change (Fay, 1975). As Leyder points out about symbolic interactionism, for instance:

"... the symbolic interactionist cannot even posit the problem of the relationship between interaction and structure. First ... [because] the interactionist ontology rejects such a dualism, and second, even if such a dualism were possible, there would be no means by which the idea of an external and determinative structure could be theorized, since that would require some form of rational argument which is prohibited by the stricture upon the emergent and grounded nature of theory (Leyder, 1981:38).

The essential relativism of such a position denies any analysis of the power relationships within which social beings operate, and of the underlying nature of the "structural patterns of social relations [that] pre-exist the individual and generate specific forms of social consciousness". (Sharp, 1982:48).

But the interpretivist tradition is even more deeply conservative in that interpretative research presents and reinforces an image of society in which social tensions are rooted not in relations of domination and alienation but merely in the breakdown of communication between actors over perceptions of their own and others actions, practices and beliefs. As Fay explains:

The upshot of this is profoundly conservative, because it leads to reconciling people to their social order, and it does this by demonstrating to them that, contrary to their initial beliefs which had caused the
breakdown of communication in the first place, actual social practice is inherently rational ... In a time of upheaval the interpretive model would lead people to seek to change the way they think about what they or others are doing, rather than provide them with a theory by means of which they could change what they or others are doing, and in this way it supports the status quo (Fay, 1975:91).

Sharp and Green point out that the model of mutual and coherent social interaction that characterises the phenomenology-based interpretative approach "is very similar to and perhaps a constituent part of the liberal democratic approach to freedom and democracy" (1975:26). In liberal democratic theory, as in interpretivist thinking, "in spite of the affirmation of the value of the individual and the importance of his freedom, there is a failure to take account of the social constraints on freedom arising from the particular way in which society is organised" (Sharp and Green, 1975:26). The extent to which interpretive thinking mirrors in important ways the tradition of liberalism should not be overlooked. The comparison is particularly useful because it makes clear that, like the political and discursive tradition of liberalism, the interpretive tradition of research and social explanation is contradictory in that, within its common sense perspective upon social and political relationships, there are elements of good as well as bad sense (Gramsci, 1971). The contradiction is perhaps most apparent in the emphasis in both traditions upon the individual. The interpretivist emphasis upon individual perceptions and interpretations is analogous to the liberal tradition's
elevation of person rights over property rights, and individual freedoms over the demands of the political and economic "system". In this respect one should not disregard the liberating potential of these traditions nor lose sight of the fact that significant "political advances of the left have been expressed, justified and organised ... in terms of extensions of liberal discourse" (Gintis, 1980: 196-197). Such discourse, however, while sometimes serving popular interests, "can and has been used by both sides in the struggle for power and control ... [But,] given the current imbalance of forces within the state and given the emergent economic crisis ..., the employment of liberal discourse in this case may lead to more gains going to the most advantaged groups in our society" (Apple, 1982:125).

Perhaps the most serious limitation upon the emancipatory potential of both liberalism and the interpretivist tradition is that, although neither simply reinforces the status quo but instead affords contradictory opportunities for social change, both represent individual and group behaviour as being detached from its historical and structural location. Hence, while a perspective which values the individual and personal over the "system" must always offer some (limited) possibilities for emancipation, the essential internal contradiction is that such a focus is too restricted and does not enable understanding of ways in which entrenched economic and political structures bear
down upon people in particular contexts so that their apparent freedom is curtailed within broader social, economic and political arrangement. As a result of this contradiction, and given the strength of entrenched interests, there is a tendency for both traditions to unwittingly reinforce such arrangements.

The phenomenological preoccupation with micro contexts in which actors construct meaning seems, Sharp and Green argue:

... to be capable of "grasping" only a limited type of social encounter, that between free and equal partners in a truly "liberal" society. This raises the question of the implicit value orientations and ideological biases of phenomenology when applied to the structure of the social world. Is there not a connection to be drawn between its one sided view of man, as free, self-realising, cooperative, and the political world view of liberal democracy ... (which) tends to accept as a given the basic macro structure of a modern industrial society, its socio-political and ideological features ...? (Sharp & Green, 1975:28).

Sharp and Green regard meaning construction as necessary for an understanding of micro settings but their basic claim is that researchers must also seek to understand how macro structures also materially affect the world view of acting subjects, setting limits and conditions upon individual
experience in such micro situations. Phenomenological, interpretivist research, therefore, in addition to positivist research, "may be performing an ideological function in that the constraints of the structure, the oppressive face of social reality, may be masked" (Sharp and Green, 1975:28).

(d) An Appropriate Approach for the Study of C.B.C.

This study confronts the classic problem that faces students of organisation theory – that of relating large scale macro explanations of social and cultural structures to the much smaller scale micro explanations that speak to the experience of participants in particular organisations, schools, and communities. The problem is clearly of special significance for researchers who are attempting to address fundamental questions of social production, reproduction and transformation:

These difficulties are both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical issues are largely those of relating macro to micro events and explanations, and of embracing rather than excluding the normative, evaluative elements of explanation, interpretation and action. The empirical issues are largely those of deciding what kinds of evidence count in attempting to deal with such theoretical problems; of whether large scale survey analysis excludes the thick description needed for adequate explanation or whether the abundant detail yielded by ethnographic techniques is bought at too high a cost in terms of generalisation (Bates, 1982b:55).

All of these issues are confronted in this study of continuity and change at C.B.C. The theoretical problem of attempting to understand the nature of reproduction and contestation at Christian Brothers College makes it imperative that the methodology of the study is one which allows the observer to penetrate the level of immediacy of everyday action.
and to develop an awareness of history and of the agency-structure dialectic as analysed in chapter one. The micro situation must therefore be rendered comprehensible at least in part by means of the theoretical framework which has been developed and which may mean that the researcher will view the meaning of the situation in terms that may differ from those of the actors.

This study's emphasis upon continuity and change, reproduction and transformation rules out any research tradition which is steeped in conservative or liberal predispositions which benignly regard the status quo as unproblematic. In the following section, an argument will be made that critical ethnography affords understandings and explanations that largely address the criticisms of the positivist and interpretivist traditions that have been outlined in this section. Such a critical ethnography, while taking advantage of the advances of the interpretative tradition over positivism, will depart from more traditional ethnography in significant ways - especially in its use of theory, which will enable the researcher to address questions of reproduction and transformation, and, related to its theoretical perspective, in its appreciation of the dialectic between human interaction and social and organisational structures.

3. CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

There seems to be little disagreement any more with the view that "research is infused with assumptions about the social world and is influenced by the researcher" (Burgess,
1981). It should be emphasised that this is as much the case for quantitative as for qualitative research as has been demonstrated time and again (Fay, 1975; Bernstein, 1978; House, 1980; Bates, 1980; Becker, 1983). But ethnographers have been defensive about the notion of the ethnographer as his/her own major research tool (Ruby, 1980; Sanday, 1979) and so have been concerned to develop their methodologies to a point of considerable refinement in order to demonstrate the claims of ethnography to be a rigorous science (Woods, 1982). This defensiveness has something to do with the entrenched relative status of the positivist paradigm. As Becker puts it:

[Ethnographers] are not neurotically and unrealistically defensive, either; they are defensive because they are always being attacked. Ethnographers of education do not receive the professional courtesy that allows unavoidable and irremediable flaws in one's methods to go unchallenged (1983:100).

In the post-Kuhnian world, perhaps, ethnographers should begin to throw off some of their defensiveness. And if ethnographers were less defensive they might argue more about issues like interpretive and critical ethnography rather than about methodological purity.

One value of ethnographic research, according to Thomas:

... is its focus upon how people enact a social world by conferring and negotiating meaning through social interaction. Yet ethnography may not carry this project of social construction far enough. By overemphasising the given, ethnography rarely rises above the immediacy of the examined situation. By accepting as unproblematic the social features observed in a particular situation, ethnography can represent (in its often discursive and formulistic style) a naïve realism within which a correspondence between categories of analysis and the objects they mirror is assumed. In brief, ethnography may present a distorted image of how human social subjects actually do the work of producing a social world (1982:129).
This last point recalls the notion of the ethnographer as his/her own major research tool. The ethnographer, therefore, "emerges imprinted in part with the peculiarities of his/her own private negotiation with one particular organisation" (Woods, 1982:6). Researchers never simply hang around waiting for something to happen. They invariably and inevitably carry so much theoretical (and cultural) baggage inside their heads that what they look at, what they look for, and how they interpret what they "see" can never be totally impartial.

What is being suggested here is that, contrary to the hopes of "naturalistic" investigators (Magoon, 1977), the basis of interpretive ethnography, "grounded" theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), is very problematic. It is not simply something that is obvious or apparent when uncovered. "Theory does not simply 'emerge' or 'come into being'. Though it is argued that it is grounded in the facts of the situation it is not immediately revealed ... at some stage there must be a 'leap of the imagination'" (Woods, 1982:2). This leap will reflect the preferred categories of the ethnographer (Thomas, 1982).

Any cumulative approach to ethnography, whether descriptive, interpretive or critical, requires some form of dialectic between data and theory (see, for example, Malinowski, 1922). But it should be recognised that what is being called here a dialectic is indeed a problematic relationship. If the canons of critical research are to be taken seriously, there is no sensible distinction between theory and data – for the generation of data through observation and participation involves selection and
interpretation that must reflect judgements that are theorectically based. In most ethnographic research, however, a theory-data distinction, with a notion of theory being derived from the data, is usually maintained. In this particular sense, ethnography actually preserves one of the tenets of positivism. The argument here is that rather than sustaining any formal distinction between theory and data, these should be seen as a duality, an essential dialectical interplay, rather than as a dualism.

One kind of cumulative work, in keeping with a traditional anthropological/ethnographic approach (e.g. Smith, 1979) involves making comparisons across sites as the ethnographer shapes and re-shapes "grounded theories" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and more general theories as she or he tries to more fully account for the emerging data. Such comparative and cumulative work requires more than simply theory that is grounded in a single set of data from one site. Such an orientation is clearly conducive to the production of theory as much as to the collection of data.

Another kind of cumulative work in ethnography is to proceed from some already well-formulated theory - especially if the theory is somewhat contentious, as is that of reproduction and contestation which is central to this study. As Woods cautions, such an application of theory to practice, as it were, "is never a simple matching of theory against data. Rather, the theory provides guidelines for interpreting the data" (1982:20). Indeed, "ethnography can contribute to certain theoretical areas as a corrective, ... material is discovered that raises questions" about existing theory (Woods,
1982:22). In this way, a dialectic between theory and data is
maintained which can lead to a more sophisticated and better
understanding of the situation being researched and to more
complete and better theory. The theory that is critiqued in
the process of the research, however, (or the theory to be
interrogated by data and vice versa) does not arise merely
idiosyncratically. In the C.B.C. case, as was discussed in
chapter one, it emerged and was seen to be relevant during the
preliminary research which raised the foreshadowed problem for
this study and which had stimulated consideration of particular
theories and their relevance to C.B.C.

A more explicit linking between theory and data than is
usually the case in the conventional ethnographic tradition
represents a move towards what has lately become known as
"critical ethnography" (Maseman, 1982; Thomas, 1983; see also
Simon, 1983). According to Maseman:

"Critical ethnography" refers to studies which use a
basically anthropological, qualitative participant
observer methodology but which rely for their
theoretical formulation on a body of theory deriving
from critical sociology and philosophy (1982:1).

This definition raises once again the ontological issues and
considerations of human nature which, in addition to
epistemological issues, pervade research methods (Bernstein,
1978; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As Maseman explains:

Critical approaches are distinguished from
interpretive approaches primarily by their connection
to theoretical perspectives which are linked to a
general theory of society and a concept of social
structure which exists beyond the actor's perception
of it (1982:9).

Such an ethnography, then, is ontologically grounded in the
dialectic between human behaviour and social and organisational
structure (Giddens, 1979; Benson, 1977a). And to return to the relationships between ideology and educational research, and the interests with which research is inevitably allied (Bates, 1982c), the political implications of organisation research now can be more clearly seen. For to consider the social and organisational relationships in schools as simply organisational and structural realities - as both "objective" and interpretive research do - and "to present them as if they were naturally occurring phenomena, historically neutral and obviously necessary, is to mystify people and to act to render them powerless. By helping people solely to adapt to 'what is', you help to maintain what is" (Simon, 1983:238). A dialectical, critical ethnography, on the other hand, considers organisations from a viewpoint which is clearly stated by Benson:

Dialectical theory, because it is essentially a processual perspective, focusses on the dimensions currently missing in much organisational thought. It offers an explanation of the processes involved in the production, the reproduction, and the destruction of particular organisational forms. It opens analysis to the processes through which actors carve out and stabilise a sphere of rationality and those through which such rationalised spheres dissolve (1977a:12).

If social structures, social relationships and organisations like C.B.C. are seen as being in a continual state of "becoming", researchers will ask different questions about them than if they are trying to describe or even explain "what is". As Foster, elaborating upon Benson's dialectical approach, points out:

... a social world, if indeed it is subjectively created, is created within the confines of an existing social structure which provides its own definitions and meanings. But it also allows for the critique of that structure so that people may transform it. A
second dimension concerns the concept of totality: that one must see the organisation as a unit in context, the context of the larger social system (1983:29-30).

A critical ethnography, then, through a dialectical approach, represents an attempt to deal with both broad social structural issues and issues of participants' social action in everyday life (Maseman, 1982; Thomas, 1983; Willis, 1977). Thus, such an ethnography is able to address relationships between myth and ideology, social behaviour and social structure. Or as Thomas observes:

"... a critical ethnography offers an opportunity to examine how participants in a given social setting actively create meanings that generate the human practices out of which structures emerge. In this sense the gap between micro- and macro-analysis dissolves, in that ethnography is necessarily a means of examining how social structure and interaction are connected (Thomas, 1983; see also Collins, 1981a).

Such a critical ethnography would be able to expose the contradictions, located in time and space, that allow for the possibility of organisational and ultimately of social transformation.

4. PARTICULAR ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF C.B.C.

Clearly, any positivistic or quantitative methodology for this study of Christian Brothers College would be incompatible with the foreshadowed research problem, the substantive theories of reproduction and transformation that inform it, and the critique of conventional organisation theory that were discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, the research must involve a critical approach which takes account of the critique of traditional research paradigms. Such an approach must enable questions of reproduction and transformation, and of the
dialectical relationship between agency and structure, to be addressed. And since, in order to begin to answer the research questions that have been posed, it will be essential to understand the day to day life of human actors within C.B.C, in the way that they, themselves, understand it, a qualitative research methodology, a critical ethnography, is appropriate.

The focus upon continuity and change will direct attention to the variety of interpretations of C.B.C. participants and to the "competing ideologics [which] create inconsistencies, contradictions, and strains which need to be understood" (Popkewitz, 1981:7). In order to elicit the variety of perceptions and interpretations regarding continuity and change, ethnographic techniques will be used so that "the intricate relationships between processes and interactions are made available rather than bare statistical data" (Watkins, 1981:7).

(a) **Issues in Ethnographic Research at C.B.C.**

In this section three particular aspects of the ethnography are discussed, each of which is relevant for this study. Firstly, the nature of participant observation and the importance of grounded theory are addressed. Secondly, the problematic role of the researcher as also a teacher at C.B.C. is examined in terms of the need to establish "critical distance". Thirdly, the diverse sources of information and means by which information was gathered are discussed.
(i) Participant Observation

In ethnography, anthropological and sociological as well as critical, the stock in trade of the ethnographer is an intimate understanding of the research site. Such understanding is best achieved by means of the familiarity that is gained by long-term participant observation (Smith, 1979; Ogbo, 1981; Wilcox, 1982):

[Participant observation] refers to the practice of living amongst the people one studies, coming to know them, their language and beliefs through intense and continuous interaction with them in their daily lives. This means that the ethnographer converses with the people he studies, works with them, attends their social and ritual functions, visits their homes, invites them to his home - that he is present with them in as many situations as possible, learning to know them in as many settings and moods as he can (Berreman, 1968:337, in Ogbo, 1981:6).

The research for this dissertation involved just such long term participant observation. The researcher was a full time teacher at Christian Brothers College for five years, and was a part-time teacher there during the year in which the bulk of the data was collected. Such full participation ensures that:

... one becomes aware of the subtle nuances, brief references that may have meaning only within that system, gaps between the professed and the actual, and disparities between official and unofficial pronouncements (Rist, 1978:23. See also Ball, 1982; Bullivant, 1978; Lacey, 1976; Wolcott, 1975).

Hence, events and relationships may be understood and interpreted in the same way that the subjects interpret them as they make sense of their everyday world. Early, partial understandings of the social situation of the research site produce foreshadowed problems and grounded theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The latter notion is explained by Smith and Geoffrey:
The argument we are making is that our observations make us privy to an immense number of sequences of events. As we try to shape these into empirical and conceptual order, hypotheses arise. In checking back to the written record we keep looking for the exception to our generalisations that would make the model less credible. In all of this it is not possible to attach clear .05 or .01 probability statements. Nonetheless the strategy seems significant and important (1968:261).

In this approach, in contrast to traditional educational research hypothesis testing (Overholt and Stallings, 1976), Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate that theory should be regarded as being in a continuous state of development or "discovery" as the researcher's understandings of the site and its actors shape theories that are "grounded" in the research data. These theories can be continually reshaped as further data emerge. In Smith's case, grounded theories lead to model building as the antecedents and consequences of concepts or events that seem significant are mapped (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968; Smith and Keith, 1971; Smith, 1982). More complete explanations result from locating the emerging grounded theories within a framework of more general theory (Magoon, 1977) so that the researcher may "build abstract interpretations and formulations" (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968:260) and also critique general theories (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968). The understanding of the site that may lead to such rich explanation requires, however, "first and foremost, a long period of residence" (Ogbu, 1981:6).

It is important not to undervalue the importance of grounded theory in this research project. But any emergent grounded theories in this research were seen in conjunction with the theoretical framework that was developed in chapter
one. As was pointed out in the discussion of critical ethnography in a previous section, grounded theory does not simply emerge from a familiarity with the research site and its actors, but is influenced by conceptual schemes and broader social theories which the researcher, consciously or not, brings to the research site. In fact, any notion of critical research demands that the researcher maintain a critical perspective.

(ii) Critical Distance

Full participation over a long period of time carries with it the danger of the researcher "going native" (Rist, 1978; Schatzman and Strauss, 1972); that is, of becoming so intimately involved in the day to day life in the research site that the researcher, like the participants, begins to take for granted the events and patterns of interaction with which he or she has become familiar. The danger in the C.B.C. case is that during a particularly long period of teaching at the school, during which time the foreshadowed problem and methodology for this study were evolving and preliminary data were being gathered, the researcher may have developed presuppositions and taken for granted certain assumptions about the "reality" of the site. And as Kluckhorn maintains, "It would hardly be a fish who discovered the existence of water" (in Wolcott, 1975:115). An important part of the methodology, therefore, was to develop a partial sense of detachment, or critical distance. This was achieved in two ways.

Firstly, meetings between researcher and supervisor were important in bringing the research problem and substantive
theories into focus during a long period prior to the commencement of the research as well as during the research and subsequent analysis (see Prunty, 1981, for an extended discussion of the supervisor-doctoral candidate relationship). Such sessions afforded a kind of retreat from the overwhelming minutiae of C.B.C. life, and a chance to indulge in theoretical sampling (Smith, 1979) and revision as questions of continuity and change, reproduction and contestation were pursued.

Secondly, for a relatively brief but immensely important period of the research, during which much of the data that are displayed in this dissertation were generated, the researcher was joined in the study of C.B.C. by three colleagues, Richard Bates and Peter Watkins from Deakin University and Louis Smith from Washington University, St. Louis (Bates, Smith, Angus, Watkins, 1982). This period, too, was important for establishing critical distance.

The interaction with Smith, in which an "insider-outsider" perspective (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968; Whyte, 1955) was established, was particularly significant and led to a series of long, tape-recorded conversations in which the history of C.B.C. and of Catholic education in Australia, and issues that were developing as concerns for C.B.C. administrators, staff, parents and pupils, were discussed. These discussions proved useful for conceptualising emerging grounded theories (Smith, 1979) and relating them to the substantive theoretical perspectives which informed the research. In addition, during bi-weekly research team meetings over a period of six weeks, all materials generated by each researcher, field-notes, documents, transcripts of interviews, were shared. This led to
lengthy and lively analysis of the data and review of theoretical positions, thus ensuring that full involvement in the research site was balanced by the "detachment ... necessary to construct the abstract reality: a network of social relations including the rules and how they function - not necessarily real to the people studied" (Powdermaker, in Smith, 1979:361).

Such critical distancing facilitated the interrogation of theoretical bases and the continual modification of the direction of the research in keeping with the ethnographic notion of foreshadowed problem. This was the pattern during the research as a whole so that, as far as this dissertation is concerned, like Peshkin:

At no particular point, until the book was written, could I have articulated its contents; yet the book was being written all the time (Peshkin, 1982:52).

(iii) Sources of Information

Another problem of participant observation in schools is summarised by Hammorsley:

... it seems likely that those teachers with whom I was more closely associated are overrepresented in my data ... unintentional and unprincipled, though probably inevitable, sampling was occurring (Hammorsley, 1982:19. See also Ball, 1982).

In the C.B.C. case, such associations meant that the researcher spent more time with some teachers than with others. These included, especially, a male lay teacher of senior classes with whom the researcher worked closely and shared many educational and political ideas; an elderly Christian Brother, vice-principal of C.B.C. who, although nearing retirement, was still attempting to understand and
reform his Order; a former Christian Brother, coordinator of the primary section of the school, who was also undertaking postgraduate study; the youngest Christian Brother in the C.B.C. religious community, who was thinking about new possibilities for the religious mission of the Brothers; and a female lay teacher with whom the researcher shared mutual friends and acquaintances from another state in which both had lived. These associations were based partly upon working proximity and mutual interests, but in each case there was also personal regard for these people that led to friendship. Such "sampling" of informants, while it may partially restrict the "full picture" of the site (Wolcott, 1975:112), is inevitable according to Smith:

In our view ["sampling"] lurks behind every decision the investigator makes when he elects to be here vs there, to spend more time here rather than there, what array of documents to read, of people to interview, of settings to hang around. At the data level the question is always, "Has one seen the nooks and crannies of the system as well as the main arenas to give a valid picture of the system?" (Smith, in Ball, 1982:7).

The lengthy period of participation afforded insight into many "nooks and crannies" of C.B.C. and an understanding of its dynamics and of the values, assumptions and beliefs, negotiations and contradictions which make up its operation and organisation.

The data-gathering period of prolonged participant observation concluded with a phase of tape-recorded interviews. During this period, and coinciding with the presence of Bates, Smith and Watkins on site, all nine of the teaching Brothers on the staff, all staff in major or minor administrative positions, and most of the remaining lay staff
took part in lengthy open-ended interviews, often on several occasions. Some teachers and administrators were "shadowed" for varying periods of time, and all staff members were observed in a variety of settings and took part in many informal conversations.

Less comprehensive data from pupils was gathered by classroom observation and from discussions with groups of students. Limited data from parents derived from conversations with them and from observation of and participation in activities organised by the school's parent associations. Years of residence in Newburyport gave some insight into general community attitudes towards C.B.C., the principal educator of Catholic boys in the area.

Document analysis provided a further data source. The principal, "Brother Carter", made available all documents at his and the school's disposal. These included his own correspondence, memos, internal reports, school records, daily bulletins, year books, information compiled for the Catholic Education Office, the Christian Brothers journal, and historical and religious documents including the "Constitution and Statutes" of the Order.

A variety of ethnographic techniques, then, especially participant observation, interviews and document analysis, were used during the study in an attempt to understand the dynamics of C.B.C. Such methodology has, as has been indicated, a number of advantages for the researcher. It allows deductive rather than inductive analysis (Overholt and Stallings, 1976; Prunty, 1981) as the researcher tries to make sense of a social setting and manipulate hypotheses to fit the emerging data
rather than vice versa. Using such a methodology, therefore, the researcher:

... can study and analyse aspects of human reality naturally without the contrived settings of the controlled experiment. From the emergent patterns and from the observations an analytical framework can be constructed (Watkins, 1982:113).

(b) A Critical Ethnography of Continuity and Change at C.B.C.

The concepts of continuity and change in the foreshadowed research problem embrace connections between issues of everyday social activity at C.B.C. and broader social, cultural and structural issues that relate to such interaction. Moreover, attention to the internal dynamics of C.B.C., and upon administrators and teachers in the specific circumstances of processing change, enables a more holistic view of the nature of continuity and change in a school than is provided by many ethnographies.

In this way the research partly balances what Wilcox calls, "the inordinate amount of attention focussed [by ethnographers] on teachers and children" (1980:31). As she points out:

... an understanding of the pressures of governance as it actually takes place in concrete situations, and of the values, assumptions and beliefs which guide it, is essential to an understanding of the process of change (1980:32).

However, although the scope of this ethnography must necessarily be limited to a specific and contained site of social interaction, it nevertheless involves an investigation of the everyday world of concrete individual actors "who are themselves constituted through historically specific structural forms and processes and are acting within historically specific institutional contexts and situations" (Sharp, 1982:51).
Therefore, any understanding of the present context in which continuity and change are negotiated or contested requires an understanding, also, of the relevant history which has led to that context.

In order to understand the problems of stability and change in C.B.C. it is necessary therefore to place the current, specific circumstances of a single Catholic school, Christian Brothers College in Newburyport, within the historical and structural perspective of C.B.C. itself and of Catholic education in Australia. In this way, by investigating both contemporary and historical contexts, the study will move to some extent towards the critical standpoint which Ogbu advocates:

For greater theoretical and policy relevance, micro-ethnography needs to be integrated with macroethnography through a kind of analytical framework ... [which] examine[s] how schooling is linked to other institutions. In this way ... studies demonstrate how societal forces, influencing beliefs and ideologies of the larger society, influence the behaviour of participants in the schools (Ogbu, 1981:13).

As Ogbu concludes, therefore:

An adequate ethnography of schooling cannot be confined to studying events in school classrooms, the home, or playground. One must also study relevant society and historical forces (1981:15).

The focus upon contemporary events and issues at C.B.C. thus becomes deeper as they are interpreted not only in the context of competing perceptions which shape them and give them meaning, but also in the light of the historical and structural forces within which C.B.C. and Catholic education are framed.

In keeping with the tradition of ethnographic research since Malinowski (1922) and the Chicago School (Thomas, 1983),
the research questions for this thesis were generated through theoretical study in conjunction with an intimate familiarity with the research site. Contemporary educational ethnography, however, particularly in the American, anthropological tradition, has lost much of the dialectic between theory and data in favour of uncritical and atheoretical description and story-telling (Thomas, 1982, 1983). In the vein of an emerging critical ethnography (Maseman, 1982; Thomas, 1983) this dissertation represents an attempt to interrogate data with theory and vice versa (Whitty, 1981). And the theory which emerges as most relevant to the C.B.C. case, in relation to both the research emphasis upon continuity and change, and upon C.B.C.'s historically, socially transformative purpose, is that of reproduction and contestation. Therefore, this research, by bridging the dialectic of theory and data, seeks to develop a more complete understanding of both Christian Brothers College and of the theoretical concept of reproduction, simple notions of which are both challenged and extended by the C.B.C. case.

5. CONCLUSION

A critical ethnography, as opposed to conventional ethnography, insists upon an ongoing awareness of the fundamental human agency of social actors while simultaneously remaining aware that the subjective consciousness of individuals may conceal underlying structural relationships which are capable of distorting and limiting, or of enhancing and enabling, negotiated systems of meaning (Sarup, 1984; Sharp, 1982). Meaning systems and individual perceptions are not taken at face value to produce explanations that are simply
those of the actors. Thus the essential dialectic between theory (or competing theories) and data parallels the human level of experience within social structures in that the actors' consciousness, rather than being taken for granted, must be linked to broader, general theories of society which may exist beyond individual consciousness.

But the question of "how to locate ethnographic accounts within wider theoretical statements" (Bates, 1982c:4) remains contentious. And although data do not speak for themselves but have to be interpreted in the light of some common sense or substantive theory, as Bates points out:

Some recent [ethnographic] attempts illustrate only too well the dangers of imposing pre-formed theoretical explanations on somewhat reluctant data (Sharp and Green, 1975) or of extrapolating from possibly unrepresentative data to large scale explanations of social process (Willis, 1977) (Bates 1982c:4).

This thesis, therefore, attempts specifically to illuminate the process and mechanisms by which the macro forces of two society-wide institutions, the education system and the Catholic religious system, are both reproduced and mediated, through the everyday lived experience and perceptions of human agents, at the level of a single institution. Such mediation, given the essential human agency of C.B.C. participants, will never simply enable the automatic reproduction of prior arrangements, but will instead allow also for moments of contradiction which will signify new social or institutional forces, or the beginnings of new organisational paradigms (Brown, 1978) or cultures (Schein, 1984).

With this in mind, the following chapters recount the perceptions of C.B.C. participants of the educational
experience that the school provides. In the next chapter, the
description and explanation of that experience begins with an
analysis of perceptions of the Brothers at C.B.C. of the
historical emergence of the school as the largest and most
prominent Catholic school in Newburyport. This history will be
seen to be especially significant in relation to a number of
traditions, historically associated with the Christian Brothers
Order, which, the data suggest, are currently being contested
at C.B.C.
CHAPTER 3:
THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN BROTHERS SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter argued that a critical ethnography must be situated both historically and socially. Accordingly, in the following chapters the contemporary situation of C.B.C. and C.B.C. participants is analysed in relation to the school's historical and social context. This task begins with an examination of the question of what constitutes a Brothers' school.

The Congregation of Christian Brothers has had a long association with the provincial city of Newburyport. In the late nineteenth century the Brothers' fledgling Motiviate — the training centre for young men who aspired to become Brothers — was situated there. Early this century the Brothers' first enterprise in Newburyport was the founding of St. John's Orphanage on the outskirts of the city. Later, St. Patrick's parish school was conducted by the Brothers in the city's central area. By 1935, demand for Catholic education for boys in Newburyport was such that Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.), a complete primary and secondary, day and boarding school for boys, owned and operated by the Christian Brothers' Order, opened on the grounds of St. John's Orphanage, which was subsequently removed to premises on the new fringe of the expanding city to make room for the growth of C.B.C. In the late 1960's C.B.C.'s local Newburyport identity was confirmed when its boarding operations were discontinued,
according to pupils and teachers of the time, so that more places could be made available for local boys. St. Patrick's parish school gradually evolved into a primary and junior secondary school and later, in the 1950's, as a result of the burgeoning post-war industrial growth of Newburyport, became St. Patrick's Technical School.

C.B.C., Newburyport, thus became one of a network of Christian Brothers' schools which have dominated the secondary education of Catholic boys in Australia during the past century. No other religious Order conducting schools for boys ever approached the size and influence of the Congregation of Christian Brothers – indeed, despite the many Orders of religious brothers in Australia, to many Catholics the word "Brothers" refers only to the Christian Brothers. It is surprising, therefore, that Brothers' schools have attracted little serious study. In fact, given that almost a fifth of Australian school children attend Catholic schools, there has been a dearth of investigation of any aspect of Catholic education (Praetz, 1980).

This chapter examines the historical character of Christian Brothers education as perceived by the Brothers of the C.B.C. community. Challenges to the established mission and to the Brothers' traditions are also discussed.

2. THE BROTHERS AND THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF CATHOLICS

(a) Service to the Needy: Establishing a Catholic Middle Class

One area of agreement amongst the nine teaching Brothers at C.B.C. is that the Christian Brothers throughout Australia have been particularly successful at educating working class boys
for placement in middle class careers. In the first half of
the twentieth century this was considered to be of crucial
importance, in "establishing a Catholic community that could
stand on its own feet in all sorts of areas of society" to the
point where "these days, now, you have got people with Catholic
backgrounds as leaders in these groups".

The class mission which is suggested here, however, is much
more complex than a simple attempt to ensure that Catholics
made good in Australian society. The rationale behind the
Brothers' determined policy to educate for upward social
mobility has several dimensions - the most fundamental being
that such concern for working class boys is seen as a direct
link with the aim of the founder of the Order, Brother Edmund
Rice, to assist the needy of early 19th century Ireland.
Interviews with all of the Brothers at C.B.C. are punctuated by
references to the founder and claims that the Christian
Brothers have continued in Australia the work which he began in
Ireland. They agree with Brother O'Hara, a veteran of
forty-five years teaching in Brothers' schools, that:

... there are Catholic people now in good positions
... and in their day, without the Brothers' schools,
they would not have had the opportunity. They may
have had the ability but not the opportunity to get
where they are today. And when you look at the
founder starting [in 19th century Ireland] - there
were so many poor and they couldn't get jobs and there
was no education for them. So he did what he could
then to help the poor to sort of get some status.

During the first half of this century the Catholic
population of Australia was predominantly of Irish extraction
and firmly located within the working class - a state of
affairs which partly explains the strong demand for Christian
Brothers' schools, since the Brothers' had previously
established a formidable reputation in the country in which the
Order was founded—Ireland. As Brother Sterling explains:

[The Christian Brothers in Australia were] targeting
in on Irish immigration ... so you would find that we
were catering [for the Irish] and that the Irish
Catholic priest would bring us and invite us into
certain areas.

The Irish background of Australian Catholics predisposed them
to rally together to combat the anti-Catholic prejudice that
was perceived to be an integral part of a society dominated by
the "Established" Church of England (Fogarty, 1959).

Doubtless, instances of discrimination, particularly during the
depression, did much to reinforce the celebrated "ghetto
mentality" of Australian Catholics (Campion, 1982; Selleck,
1978). Brother Gordon recalls that time:

We did have this move up in socio-economic level of
the Catholic, mainly Irish. The problem was getting
jobs during the depression—and not only that, there
was a lot a sectarianism. There were a number of
firms that wouldn't employ Catholics and who would
blatantly admit it. It was in the paper which was
accompanied by a little suggestion that "no Catholics
need apply"—there was no secret about it. You had
the Freemason influence as well.

Good examination results were a high priority for Catholic
boys to enable them to qualify for entrance to the public
service—one means of escaping prejudice in employment.

Again, Brother Gordon explains:

Once [Catholic students] achieved that level of
matriculation ... where were they going to get jobs?
The answer for a vast majority of those people was the
public service because they had nowhere to go. And
the result was that those fellows, who moved into the
public service in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, they are
occupying the important positions now in the public
service.

Catholic children in Australia were therefore defined as
"needy"—victims of their class location and of perceived
widespread discrimination which made examination success and
the resultant public service entrance or, later, university
scholarships, especially important. The educational mission of
the Christian Brothers is thus associated with a mission of
justice and defence of the human dignity of Catholics.

But the religious component of an attempt to shift the
class location of Catholics is more complex yet. Brother
Gordon explains the nexus between social advancement and
religious and moral influence:

'... It was an aim that was being tackled by the Archbishop
and the Brothers were just working under his
directions. It was also to enable Catholics to move
into positions of influence ... so that the message of
Jesus might be heard in those areas.'

Brother Sterling places the need for such moral leadership and
Catholic witness in a modern context:

'If those educated Catholics then have the money
behind them, the know-how and the expertise, for
example to get into public office – for example, we
will say in the medical field – there are so many
points that are raised in the medical field these
days. Now, have you got people with Catholic
background leaders in these groups? ... If we haven't
got people educated in all these fields that can lead
us, we have fallen down. For example, in the
university. Now, if you have got a few people with
fairly high moral standards in the university they can
sort of project ... comments ... that can be used to
counteract others that are not so moral.'

C.B.C.'s history illustrates the attempt to produce a
Catholic middle class. One explicit purpose for its
establishment was to assist Catholics to gain access to
positions from which they had been largely debarred in the
eyearly decades of the century due to their working class
location and the almost exclusively Anglo Protestant nature of
secondary education. As Brother Hourigan summarises the
sentiments of his religious colleagues, all of whom are
unqualified in their approval of the service that their Order has afforded Catholics:

[The Brothers] had to get students into positions. You know, most of them were from working class families ... [and] the idea was to get them to pass exams and get them into the public service and so on ... And what has happened of course is that Catholics have got into those positions ... and now they have become middle class.

(b) A Reappraisal of the Mission of Service

Despite the perceived success of the Brothers' service, some amongst the C.B.C. community of Brothers wonder whether the original mission of Edmund Rice is now being pursued as rigorously as it should be. They speculate about ways in which the founder's mission of assisting the needy through education could be more appropriately applied. Brother Sterling, indeed, wonders whether the current apostolate has diverged from the founder's intention in that "needy" boys should be a more conspicuous target of the Brothers' educational enterprise:

I would wonder ... if Edmund Rice came to the city, where would he go? ... he went to the slums outside Waterford. What we ought to be doing is heading towards the housing commission estates.

This opinion does not indicate that Brother Sterling disapproves of the Brothers' work to date – merely that he sees a need for change now that one task has been completed:

**Question:** Brothers ... seem to think that they have done a good job in the area of educating the working class Catholic and kind of raising the social standing of Catholics in the community. Would you agree with that?

**Brother Sterling:** Yes, but we have not taken the next move.

**Question:** Which is?
Brother Sterling: The next move is - having in a certain area lifted a certain class to a certain level - do we stay with that upper level or do we head to the working class suburbs and do the same trick over again?

In one telling comment, Brother Sterling sums up his view that the Brothers' mission has been diverted from what it once was, and also indicates the nature of his motivation to commit his life to a teaching vocation:

... I didn't enjoy teaching rich people - otherwise I would have joined the Jesuits.

Interestingly, Brother Sterling has another reason for preferring that the Brothers withdraw from many of their established schools like C.B.C. and concentrate their resources in areas of underprivilege. He, with most of his colleagues, feels that one reason for the massive decline in entrants to the Order, to the point where the Notiviate is virtually empty, lies in the excessive materialism of middle class society. Products of the economically underprivileged suburbs of the major cities may, he believes, provide a richer harvest of vocations to ensure the continuation of the Brothers' work.

According to this argument, it would seem that the apparent success of the Christian Brothers' schools in promoting Catholic boys into the middle class may, ironically, have partly contributed to the decline in entrants to the Order - a decline which has forced a reappraisal of its future. Indeed, the very survival of the Order is threatened because of a dearth of vocations. Almost to a man, the Brothers, whose presence at C.B.C. has declined to a mere twenty percent of the total teaching staff, explain that the materialism and lack of discipline that they believe characterises modern society is
largely responsible for the lack of vocations. Brother Gordon's summary is again typical:

I think it is more the consumerism of our society, our concentration on our material possessions ... which is, to a large extent, excluding concentration on the more important spiritual values - which, I think, is one of the reasons why perhaps religious vocations have somewhat diminished.

It seems that the products of Brothers' schools learnt too well the middle class values required for upward social mobility.

Some Brothers at C.B.C., then, argue that the class-based concept of "needy boy", the intellectual link with the original mission of Brother Edmund Rice, should be redefined. They claim that the aims of the founder should be re-applied by identifying those most in need and moving to assist them in whatever way is appropriate. This would mean that the economic or class criterion would be only one means of determining need. For instance, Brother Ian Dowsett is one who feels that the Brothers' educational mission requires:

... the Brothers to basically be able to provide some sort of help and support, particularly in education, for those who are needy ... In a place like C.B.C. ... one of our fundamental concerns has got to be those kids who are in some sort of special need, whether it's some sort of psychological need, maybe the cases of financial circumstances ... kids with some sort of social need or things like that ... I don't know how we're covering all those needs on an organised school basis ... It's a matter of priority, isn't it? Somewhere along the line decisions have got to be made.

This consideration is the basis of the call by some Brothers at C.B.C. for a reassessment of financial priorities to allow for the establishment in the school of an adequate remedial programme for secondary students with special intellectual needs.
(c) A Facing Tradition: C.B.C., Exclusion, and Needy Boys

Rethinking the concept of "needy boys" seems to have led to some reservation about the very small number of Brothers' schools which, unlike C.B.C., charge relatively high fees. Even though, even in such cases, the mission of serving the needy, the spiritually needy, can still be claimed, Brother Jones expresses the general unease:

Some would argue, and argue very correctly, that the spiritual poverty of those kids [at the expensive Brothers' schools] is as great as the others and that they are just as much deserving of our endeavours ... but we were fundamentally founded to help those who had nothing at all.

The data indicate general agreement amongst the C.B.C. Brothers that the profits from the high-fee schools should be directed to support the "poorer" schools, as occurs in the Brothers' provinces in South Africa and America. Nevertheless, a discomfort concerning these schools prevails in the minds of many at C.B.C. Brother Parsons, an itinerant Brother who visits many Brothers' communities in his role of Vocations Director, explains that many Brothers would "feel uncomfortable teaching kids whose parents are paying $700 a term". Presumably, these Brothers feel that catering for the sons of people who can afford to pay $700 a term (compared to $150 at C.B.C.) is not serving the poor and "needy". The rather strained link with Brother Edmund Rice's mission of service to the poor was somewhat reinforced during a staff meeting at C.B.C. when the headmaster explained that his reluctance to raise fees was a direct consequence of continuing the mission of the founder; keeping fees to a minimum follows the tradition which Brother Edmund Rice established. Brother Carter added:
If you are asked the question, 'What are you doing for the poor?', that is the answer.

The fees at C.B.C. are certainly modest by private school standards - about $150 a term compared with well over $1,000 at Newburyport College and Newburyport Grammar. But even such a relatively minor expenditure may be beyond the means of some Catholic families in Newburyport, especially those with several children to educate. Hence, some economically needy children may well be excluded from C.B.C. because of fees - although concessions are often made for such children, as Brother Gordon points out:

**Brother Gordon:** Supposing a lady came along to the school, as has happened to me as headmaster, and has said to me, 'Now, I have five sons, I am a widow and, as far as I can see, will never be able to pay any fees for any of these five boys. Where do I stand?' Now, I felt on that occasion, and I would still feel if I were confronted with that situation again, that I wasn't voicing my own personal opinion, that I was voicing the opinion of the Congregation when I said to that lady, 'Forget about fees, you will never be asked to pay any fees'.

**Question:** And if a man in your position had said, 'No, hard cheese, go somewhere else?'

**Brother Gordon:** Personally, I would have regarded him as having acted contrary to the traditions of our Order going right back to the founder himself, who not only educated numerous children for nothing but fed them and clothed them as well. So I would regard that as a definite binding tradition.

This "binding tradition" is an excellent illustration of the mission of serving the needy and also, perhaps, of conscious attempts to illuminate a fading tradition which must be occasionally highlighted so that it remains in public view.
For one could argue that many working class parents would be reluctant to humiliate themselves by asking for fees to be waived, and others would be unaware that such concessions are available. Thus, some needy boys amongst those most affected by poverty fail to gain access to C.B.C. Indeed, if consideration of the definition of "needy" leads to its being broadened to include the spiritually needy, as Brother Jones advocates, and the intellectually needy, as Brother Dowsett advocates, then C.B.C. can be seen to be excluding those boys in the Newburyport community who are, arguably, most in need.

A second controversial element is the introduction of entrance tests. The use of the A.C.E.R "Test of Learning Aptitude" has ensured that only those students whose ability is measured as "average" or above are admitted to C.B.C. Another criterion for admission is a "religious qualification". Parents are expected to be practising Catholics who have demonstrated their support for Catholic education by sending their children to Catholic parish schools for their junior primary years. The service to the needy provided by C.B.C., then, would appear to be somewhat in doubt as long as some children from families characterised by economic, intellectual and spiritual poverty are excluded. The data indicate that, in fact, C.B.C. is aligned very much with lower-middle and middle class boys, and a few boys whose parents' aspirations for them include the hope that a C.B.C. education will help to locate them in the upper reaches of Newburyport society.

But, as Brother Dowsett argued, even given the current clientele of C.B.C., some changes in priorities might be required if C.B.C. is to better respond to the needs of the
very large slice of Newburyport Catholic boys who attend the
school. The headmaster and many of his co-religious, however,
are steeped in the tradition that service to Catholic youth is
synonomous with encouraging them to gain academic credentials:

Brother Carter: What they [pupils] need is qualifi-
cations, right? ... Now, the context in
which we work is to give them a
Catholic education as far as we can in
a framework which is set very much for
us by [the Higher School Certificate
external examinations board].

The emphasis that has historically been placed upon examination
results and qualifications by Catholic schools in general, and
Christian Brothers' schools in particular, is widely
acknowledged, (Fogarty, 1959; Leavey, 1972; Selleck, 1978).
Brother Carter connects the importance of results, and a
curriculum which leads to the negotiable credential of the
Higher School Certificate, to the Brothers' historical mission
of elevating Catholic boys through the social and economic
hierarchy of Australian society.

Anecdotal evidence of widely experienced Brothers attests
to the efficiency of their schools in ensuring that pupils
achieve the best results that they are capable of:

Brother O'Hara: I know someone who went to Jesuit
College and, when it was time to pass
his matric, [his parents] sent him back
to the Brothers ... The methods whereby
people taught at Jesuit College - now,
I am not going to say that they are
true, but this is the thought behind it
- they don't tend to push them so
much. Now, if you go to a Brothers'
school they will try and get the best
out of you and, if you are able to get
through, they will get you through.

Good marks were regarded by Brothers as an indication of their
own teaching prowess as well as affording pupils an opportunity
for social and economic mobility:
Brother Dowsett: Well, I think especially the older Brothers, because they were brought up very much in the times that they had to more or less sustain Catholic education in lots of ways, and they had to encourage good results in the students so that they could get on.

Question: Because of the Irish background?

Brother Dowsett: I think that would be one of the reasons ... but I think they were very strongly brought up along the lines that they had to be successful and good teachers - and if they were very good, they achieved great results.

One reason for the emphasis on results was that entry into the professions, commerce and the public service depended upon performance in public examinations. Another reason was that results provided tangible evidence to Catholics themselves, and to a public still regarded by them as hostile, that the Catholic schools, especially the Christian Brothers' schools, were as good as the state schools (Fogarty, 1959; Pracht, 1980). This obsession with results, however, had its own cost as will be discussed later.

(d) Social Mobility and Service to the Needy: A Summary

Conversation with Brothers at C.B.C. about the mission and historical intentions of their Order is dominated by references to their attempt to achieve upward social mobility of Catholic youth by means of educational certification. There is overwhelming agreement amongst the community of Brothers that their Order has been extremely successful in this regard and has contributed significantly to the creation of a Catholic middle class. This emphasis upon upward mobility is linked by the Brothers to the mission of "service to needy boys" which
characterised the work of the founder of the Order in Ireland during the Penal Laws. Catholics in Australia in the early 20th century were also defined as needy, as victims of prejudice and of the Anglo Protestant domination of society. Schools like C.B.C. were founded to enable Catholic boys to escape the working class and enter white collar employment, often through entry to the public service by means of examinations. By entering the middle class, it was hoped that Catholics would "spread the message of Jesus".

Although there is approval amongst the Brothers at C.B.C. of the historical emphasis upon upward social mobility, several Brothers believe that the efforts of the Order should now be explicitly redirected towards the needy. Some believe that C.B.C., for instance, now caters mainly for relatively affluent Catholics and that the needy would be better served if the Brothers were to concentrate their efforts in areas of poverty where the task of encouraging upward mobility could be repeated. This would be in keeping with the widely held view that the Brothers were "fundamentally founded to help those who had nothing at all". There is also a belief that middle class Catholics have surrendered to the materialism and consumerism of middle class society to the point where Catholic youth are unwilling to undertake the rigors of religious life. Vocations, it is thought, would be more abundant in poorer areas.

At C.B.C., the mission of assisting the poor is at least acknowledged in a reluctance to raise fees. Even the modest fees, however, exclude some Catholic children, and others are denied entrance to C.B.C. by entrance tests of intellectual
ability and religious formation. Some Brothers maintain that, even for those pupils who do gain access to C.B.C., the care and service to pupils that would cater to their personal needs is limited by an emphasis upon examination results.

3. BROTHERS AND LAY TEACHERS

(a) A Declining Brothers' Presence

The fact that less than twenty percent of the teaching staff at C.B.C. are Brothers needs to be emphasised, for their influence upon the school appears to be far greater than that proportion suggests. Indeed, one lay teacher, recently appointed to the C.B.C. staff, was most surprised when this figure was pointed out to him:

Terry Irving: I hadn't realised that you know. It just shocked me. You walk into a job and you notice so many things, and there are so many things that you just don't notice ... Of course it's true, but I hadn't noticed that.

Question: Is that because their influence is so strong in the school anyway?

Terry Irving: I think that they still have a firm grip on it, put it that way ... You must remember also that the chapel and the actual structure of the place ... are constant reminders, constant symbols that exist. That is a guiding influence. And so in a lot of ways it is very effective.

The image of C.B.C., which is reinforced by the disproportionate influence of the minority of Brothers on the staff and the religious symbols of the school, derives from days when the Brothers were teaching in schools that could literally be called "Brothers' schools".
I started teaching in 1932 and until ... 1961 I had not taught in any school in which there had been more than one lay teacher. That was '32 to '61.

The term "Brothers' school" is still very current, however, regardless of the minority number of Brothers at schools like C.B.C. Indeed, C.B.C. is still regarded as a "Brothers' school" in spite of the fact that there are so few Brothers.

Brother Gordon explains his current understanding of that phrase:

I would understand [a Brothers' school], in these days, as a school that is being run according to traditions of the Christian Brothers. That school is being run by the Brothers and by like-minded lay teachers - and that word 'like-minded' is very important.

The like-minded lay teachers whom Brother Gordon would like to see maintain the traditions of C.B.C. might be in short supply. In fact, as will be seen, the data indicate that most of the lay teachers have, at best, an ambivalent view of the Brothers' traditions, especially those related to rigid physical discipline and narrowly defined curriculum, and only partly share their once stable value system. Moreover, a shift from many of the traditional values on the part of a number of the Brothers is also indicated by the data. This shift has implications for the future of the Brothers' educational mission.

Some Brothers also emphasise traditional elements of discipline, solid work, religious observances and examination success which contribute to C.B.C.'s image. The crucial element in this image, of course, is the presence of the Brothers. As Brother Carter explains:
... [The parents] want at least a Brothers' presence. Whether it achieves what they think it achieves is yet another thing.

The concept of "presence" is extricably tied up with that of "a Brothers' school". It refers to the Brothers' indirect effect upon the religiosity of boys and upon the nature of a school imbued with Brothers' traditions. The consensus view of the Brothers at C.B.C. about this issue is close to that held by Brother McKie:

**Question:** You obviously see a difference between having the number of Brothers just to run [a school] in that you've got one as headmaster and one as deputy headmaster ... and then it's another thing to have enough Brothers to give it, what shall we call it, the Brothers' tone?

**Brother McKie:** That's what I think, too. You need the other Brothers there too. You need a good sprinkling of Brothers in the school to keep on our system ... the kind of tone, the religious aspect.

**Question:** Would you favour ... pulling out and having fewer schools with all religious?

**Brother McKie:** Well, I look upon it this way, ... personally, that a lot of parents would prefer us, even though our numbers are smaller ... to remain on as we are rather than pull out altogether ... I think that we are doing better for the kids by staying on.

**Question:** In as many schools as you can?

**Brother McKie:** Yes, without making [the number of Brothers] too small.

The number of Brothers required to maintain a sufficient "presence" in a school like C.B.C., however, is a matter of opinion. And just what the "presence" contributes to C.B.C. is very difficult for even the most experienced Brother to explain:
Brother McKie: In our training we try to adopt an attitude, even say, in the various secular subjects. We try to give it a kind of spiritual background ... That is, you are not preaching Christian Doctrine in other periods, but one of our traditions right back to the time of the founder was, for example, to say the Hail Mary as the clock struck at every hour. Now, the more lay teachers you get in, they haven't been brought up on those traditions and I think we lose out on that as far as a Brothers' school goes.

Question: Do you think that is something very important that you are losing?

Brother McKie: I feel it is. It's something that our founder started and we would have liked to have kept going. And, you know, the lay teachers have been brought up on different systems and so on. I'm not saying they're not dedicated or anything like that — but there are different things, like, for our Order, that we expect.

The point that Brother McKie makes about the "spiritual background" with which Brothers attempt to invest all subjects is important and should be stressed because it bears upon the more general concept of "a Catholic school", which is perhaps somewhat taken for granted by the Brothers. A major consideration of the Catholic Bishops in inviting members of religious orders from Ireland and Europe to found schools in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the belief that these men and women, who had dedicated their lives to the mission of the church, would be more effective than lay teachers in promoting the religious and moral development of children. This viewpoint was a natural consequence of the perceived role of Catholic schools as that of providing a totally Catholic atmosphere so that Catholicism could be more readily inculcated into the hearts and minds of
the pupils. Indeed, Cardinal Moran, using in 1889 the warlike
to have dominated the historical debate
about church versus state education, referred to the education
question as a "crusade", stating that "Catholics would never
consider the victory complete until they had schools purely
under the religious orders" (in Fogarty, 1959: 268). A similar
message, one which stressed the role of Catholic schools in
providing the moral training and reinforcement of Catholic
values necessary for the survival of the faith, was still being
proclaimed during the 1940's and 1950's by the Catholic press,
including the "Advocate":

... unless Catholicity pervades their studies, unless
it pervades their play, unless it seeps into every
fibre of their being, it cannot take full, deep root
in the hearts of our children, nor can it influence
their characters as it should (in Praetz, 1980: 25).

Thus, Brothers McKie's concern that the religiosity of members
of his Order should provide a continual "spiritual background"
to all subjects and all aspects of the school day is well
grounded in Catholic tradition.

(b) Lay Teachers and Diversity

As will be seen in later chapters, the data indicate that
Brother McKie is also correct in his implied belief that many
lay teachers at C.B.C. share values that only partially overlap
with those generally held to be part of the Brothers'
tradition. Several of the longest serving lay teachers are
former Brothers who have developed a degree of ambivalence
towards their former Order. A larger proportion were educated
at Christian Brothers' secondary schools, some at C.B.C.
itsel. These teachers have also developed an ambivalence
towards the Brothers and the traditional Brothers' school. Part of the personal mission of most of these teachers is to ensure that C.B.C. provides a "better" education than that which they, themselves, received. Memories of their own school experiences are often clouded by recollections of punitive strappings and a restrictive, authoritarian atmosphere. Some of their ambivalence concerns the particular brand of Catholicism which was emphasised in Brothers' schools. A still greater heterogeneity has been produced at C.B.C. by the appointment of a number of women to the formerly almost exclusively male secondary staff. The diversity is further deepened by the presence of a substantial minority of non-Catholics on the staff. In addition, open disagreements between senior Brothers further compound the heterogeneity of C.B.C. as a Catholic educational institution.

It would appear, then, that Brother Gordon's ideal of Brothers and like-minded lay teachers maintaining the traditions of the Christian Brothers is far from the reality at C.B.C. Perhaps this point partly explains Brother Carter's determination to ensure that even minor administrative positions are held by the few available Brothers:

I think those who want to work in [Brothers'] schools are going to have to realise that they are working within a pattern and they don't shift the boundaries.

He favours measures to ensure that lay teachers do, in effect, become more "like-minded":

Interviewer: ... maybe other Orders are intending to consolidate and saying that is the best way to go.
Brother Carter: We have looked at that too. We understand it. But I would think that until the point is reached of a decision of moving out and leaving the whole thing to [lay teachers] we have to employ people who are willing to be part of a Brothers' school ... What I think is necessary is ... that you would have to have a place where these people could be trained into the workings of the Brothers' school and then they can make the decision whether they want to join that or not.

In fact, however, something like the reverse of Brother Carter's ideal is occurring at present. Instead of lay teachers being trained in Christian Brothers' institutions, younger Brothers are now the products of a more secular training. This has been a response, mainly, to the savage drop in entrants to the Order which has occurred over the past fifteen years which raises important questions about the very future of the Christian Brothers' enterprise. Hence, Brother McKie is speaking of the past when he refers to the Brothers' traditions and values being formally reproduced in their own training institutions.

Question: All the Brothers, I guess, had a fair amount of common ideas about how schools should be run.

Brother McKie: Well, that's part of our training. In our training colleges you would get [our own] methods of doing things through our schools. Of course, they've been adapted as the years go by. [Brothers] are all going through the same set of training and so on.

Brother Ernest, however, now in his forties, recalls being amongst the first group of Brothers to attend university as part of their teacher training more than twenty years ago. He regards the experience as having had a "liberating influence" upon himself and colleagues. He recalls, for instance, the
contrast between the freedom of university life and life in the
Novitiate where Brothers were forbidden to read newspapers
until they were twenty-five years of age. Many of the
university graduates of that time, according to Brother Ernest,
left the Order in frustration because of their inability to
achieve reforms.

The present diversity amongst Brothers and lay teachers
alike indicates that the Brothers' educational mission is
becoming fragmented at C.B.C. There is a call by a growing
number of Brothers and lay teachers to implement changes.

(c) Brothers' Attitudes Towards Lay Teachers

As indicated throughout this chapter, the feeling amongst
both religious and lay teachers is that parents support an
image of C.B.C. which derives from days when the school was
almost entirely staffed by Brothers. One aspect of this image
is the impression that the Brothers are firmly in charge of a
tightly run ship. While Brother Carter and some others,
usually but not necessarily the more elderly Brothers, strive
to maintain this image in spite of their small number compared
to lay teachers, almost as many of the C.B.C. Brothers insist
that lay teachers should be admitted to senior administrative
positions. That the division on this issue is not determined
exclusively by age, that is, old versus younger Brothers, is
demonstrated by the alliance between the relatively youthful
Brother Ian Dowsett and the veteran Brother Gil O'Hara. Their
opinions coincide on many other issues as well. Both are
definite in their view that C.B.C. should break out from the
minority control of the Brothers. As Brother Dowsett explains:
Well, I think [the Brothers] will have to change, there is no doubt about it. One thing that concerns me a bit is there are fewer numbers [of Brothers]. I don't think all places are quite necessarily the same as here at C.B.C., but here we will be retaining most positions of authority, and just on the law of averages, I just wonder whether we are continually going to have people with necessary leadership qualities. I am sure that there would be some Brothers that certainly haven't got those qualities but are thrust in a position ... I certainly think positions of deputy headmaster in a school like C.B.C., [and] school coordinators and other positions as well [could be given to lay teachers]. It concerns me that we are very reluctant to give up some of those positions - at least the appointments that have been made so far [at C.B.C.] seem to me to indicate that, as I read into it.

Brother O'Hara takes heart from the appointment, in another Province, of a lay deputy principal for one of the Brothers' prestigious schools. He sees this as indicating an end to the Brothers' maintenance of absolute control in their schools. Many of his colleagues agree with him that lay teachers, provided they are committed Catholics, are the only hope for the continuation of their schools - even though they will inevitably become very different places. Brother O'Hara is annoyed by those Brothers who will not accept the need for such change:

Question: How does [a majority of lay teachers] change what the Brothers will do?

Brother O'Hara: Some have accepted this fairly well and others have found it difficult to take. Those who find it very hard to take, I think, are very unrealistic in the times that we live - and I think they are also unrealistic looking back. ... They think of the "good old days", which really gets me up the wall because they never existed - and I can't see why they can't see they didn't exist. I know what they mean - but there were never any good old days. Good old days of teaching 72 kids all day!
(d) **Religions and Lay Teachers: A Summary**

Christian Brothers College is still perceived as "a Brothers' school" by Brothers, lay teachers and parents. The overwhelming "presence" of the Brothers obscures their minority representation on the staff. They are obvious because of their distinctive clothing, because of the religious tone of the school, and because they dominate authority positions. Nevertheless, there is considerable concern amongst the C.B.C. community of Brothers regarding the influx of lay teachers into the school. On one hand, some Brothers, usually but not necessarily the more elderly ones, are concerned that the long-established Brothers "system" and traditions are under threat. They believe that lay teachers do not sufficiently share the Brothers values. On the other hand, it is apparent that established values are being contested even within the Brothers' Order. Several Brothers welcome the changes and wish to challenge the notion of "a Brothers' school" with its emphasis upon rigid control by members of the Order.

Without doubt C.B.C. is becoming increasingly heterogeneous. The recent appointment of a number of non-Catholics, and women in particular, has increased the diversity of what was, until quite recent years, an almost totally male, Catholic preserve.

4. **THE BROTHERS, PUPILS, AND OBEDIENCE**

(a) **The Pupils' Perceptions of Brothers**

Brother Hourigan is concerned that, even during the few years he has been at C.B.C., the number of Brothers in the school has decreased. There are no Brothers in the primary
section of the school, only one in the year 7 and 8 area (the area co-ordinator), three in the year 11 and 12 area, and the remainder are clustered in the year 9 and 10 area. Brother Hourigan is co-ordinator for years 9 and 10.

Question: Was that a deliberate policy to have at least one year where the kids have a fair amount of contact with Brothers?

Brother Hourigan: At least this way [pupils] are going to get one year in the class [with Brothers]. But then again, you have got no Brother in the primary school and [only] one in year 8. ... If a boy starts in year 3 he might not come into contact with the Brothers quite a bit until year 9.

Brother Hourigan claims that the C.B.C. pupils "lose out" in not having more regular contact with Brothers. But explaining the benefits which children gain from being taught by Brothers as opposed to lay teachers is extremely difficult for Brother Hourigan and for other Brothers. The more basic question of the essential difference between religious and lay teachers is also fraught with difficulty:

Question: Why is the Brother doing the job any better than the lay teacher?

Brother Hourigan: This question came up in Rome when I was there; it has come up over here [in Australia], and the answer given there [in Rome] was that how Brothers are different from lay teachers is not what they do but what they are. They are consecrated to God, their vows, and they have been especially chosen, and they have a special relationship with the class so that they are not there primarily as teachers ... It is not what we do, it is what we are.

The ideas of dedication to the will of God, of vocation and consequent grace from God, are deep seated in Catholic tradition and belief. The mission of working for one's own
salvation further complicates the issue of devoting one's life to the education of Catholic children. Brother Dowsett attempts to explain this commitment in temporal, secular terms:

I think we probably see ourselves as fairly available to the students - or we hope we are because we're in general on site most of the time ... if they need any sort of help at any stage. I think, hopefully, too, that the way our training has been developed has encouraged us to try to be aware of the problems all sorts of kids go through ... to help us be looking out for those in special need of help in some way.

Brother Dowsett's discussion of his role as a Christian Brother at C.B.C. bears strongly upon his definition of "needy". He would be disappointed to learn that the data from pupils point out very strongly that they perceive the Brothers at C.B.C. to be out of touch with them and unaware of their needs. Pupils claim that they do not talk to Brothers about their problems, preferring to discuss such matters with those lay teachers whom they believe "are more in the world and understand the same sort of life". This is despite the fact that Brother Dowsett, as an individual, is highly regarded by most pupils, many of whom claim that he "is the perfect example of a Christian Brother. If they were all like him they would be okay".

Such comments indicate that Brother Dowsett is at least successful in that part of his personal mission which is to counterbalance the increasingly aging image of the Newburyport community of Brothers:

Brother Dowsett: ... the image of the Christian Brothers is someone who is relatively old and I thought they need somebody young here just to show [pupils] that it is not all that situation - although obviously we are getting older and I think we would be one of the oldest communities,
The image projected by the Newburyport community causes much concern to Brother Dowsett. At thirty-three years of age, by far its youngest member, he is aware that many Brothers, particularly of his age group, would be reluctant to join the aged C.B.C. community:

It has got a bit of a reputation ... I think there would be a lot of Brothers that wouldn't like to come here given the present community, or the community as it has been the last few years. A lot of them see it as a fairly static kind of place and not much room for initiative and that sort of thing.

The pupils' image of the Christian Brothers is, naturally, a product of their classroom interactions with the Brothers of C.B.C.

(b) The Brothers and Classroom Discipline

The firm, sometimes repressive or even brutal discipline which has historically been associated with Christian Brothers' schools in Australia is legendary and has inspired works of fiction (Blair, 1976; Morris, 1945) as well as serious criticism (Radic, 1972). Most lay teachers at C.B.C. speak of this reputation as being "fearful" but claim that, in recent years, physical punishment has rarely been used. Many of the Brothers, however, feel that imposing and maintaining a strict standard of discipline is an important part of the Brothers' mission. The connection is explained by Brother Gordon:

Question: You seem to think that a fairly high standard of discipline is an essential starting point?

Brother Gordon: Yes, for a Catholic school. I truly believe that no person can be a Catholic unless he has got self discipline.

Question: Could you elaborate a little on that?
Brother Gordon: Well, self discipline means the ability to be able to do what we don't feel like doing at the moment, or to be able to refrain from doing what we feel like doing at the moment. And on many occasions, our following of Jesus as Catholics will require us to do or not to do things that we feel like doing or don't feel like doing, and unless we are self disciplined we will just not be able to face up to those situations. And I am convinced [that] ... one of the reasons why there is a fall off in faith, particularly amongst youth, is that they have not got sufficient discipline to be Catholics. You wouldn't expect them to understand about discipline because their whole lives have been so easy ... They have never had to exercise real self discipline, to face up to the self discipline of Christian life. You require a real miracle of grace for such people.

The Pauline view that self discipline is an essential prerequisite of Christianity partly explains the traditional emphasis of the Christian Brothers on obedience and control. Brother Gordon's claim that this mission is made increasingly difficult due to the affluence and materialism of the modern generation is echoed by a number of colleagues.

Another element of the Brothers' emphasis on discipline and rigid classroom control derives directly from the mission of educating Catholic boys for upward social mobility. Brother Hourigan explains that "strict discipline" was seen as a necessary and integral part of that broader mission:

This strict discipline came from Ireland, an Irish tradition, and also that they had to get students into positions. You know, most of them were from working class families.

As suggested earlier, an argument can be advanced that the very success, claimed by Brother Hourigan, of educating an earlier generation of Catholic boys for placement in the lower and
middle reaches of the middle class may have contributed to the lack of vocations that has placed the Order in a state of jeopardy. A number of Brothers, including Brother Gordon, advance views which support such an argument:

Question: Would you say this lack of discipline is related to the decline in the numbers of entrants to religious Orders?

Brother Gordon: Yes, quite so ... In the world where the situation required self discipline we had to do without things. I suppose that particular generation [was] more disciplined than later generations. Therefore, you would expect fewer people would be able to face up to the discipline that would be required for the religious life, and I think this is generally conceded — that affluent societies don't produce large numbers of religious and don't produce a very high standard of religion of any kind, really.

As has been noted, a similar argument leads Brother Sterling to conclude that concentrating the remaining Brothers in a few schools in economically disadvantaged areas would result in a greater number of vocations.

In earlier days each Brother taught his own class for most of the school day and many received great satisfaction from the ongoing contact with pupils that, in spite of large classes and rigid discipline, such an arrangement facilitated:

Brother Gordon: Those kids were [a Brother's] family, and they are his job, they are his recreation, they are everything. And that is why, whether they like it or not, they are going to get taught! God help me if they didn't, you know. The idea was that these kids can't see the necessity for education now but I can see it, and it's just too bad they can't, but they've still got to learn it.
The centrality of discipline in the traditions of the Brothers is strongly established by the data. An element of contradiction enters, however, when some Brothers talk about their relationships with their pupils. On the one hand, a Brother's class was everything to him, according to Brother Gordon, yet, on the other hand, he hints at repressive means of guaranteeing good examination results. And results were a major source of satisfaction for the teacher as well as an important aspect in the Brothers' educational mission:

If the kids ... didn't know how to read and spell and do their sums, well, their results would be bad. That was a kind of added incentive I suppose ... the idea, too, that you'd done your job, that you'd taught those kids even against their own judgement. There would be no other point of your going into the classroom unless you could walk out with that satisfaction ... so those kids had to learn it, that was all there was about it. It just had to be done. I think that was one of the reasons why we did have a pretty high educational standard.

The somewhat paradoxical nature of the traditional relationship between Brothers and pupils is well illustrated at C.B.C. by Brother Sterling, known to his pupils and some of his colleagues as "Brother Bash". Although various degrees of physical punishment are sometimes used at C.B.C., he, alone amongst the present teachers, still maintains something like the "brutal discipline" which past pupils of C.B.C. remember from some years ago. Yet this same man devotes much of his out of school time to coaching boys for a number of sports including cross-country running and gymnastics, which he established single-handedly at C.B.C. His teams have been immensely successful, but Brother Sterling may be only half joking when he explains this success by saying, "If you kick them hard enough they'll win often enough". Devoting himself
to sports coaching is an important element in Brother Sterling's personal mission, and he is openly critical of other teachers whom he believes are not as dedicated as he. He sees his coaching activity as an important balance against his authoritarian classroom behaviour and the disciplinary role which he adopts as area co-ordinator of years 7 and 8. Without this balance, he believes, he might be cast into the role of an ogre. Yet students appear to resent Brother Sterling and he is genuinely wounded when pupils, whom he believes he has helped, seem cold towards him:

I had one kid who has won four state championships. In his first two years he has been in two winning teams - and he doesn't acknowledge my presence. ... There are some guys that I have coached for state championships and they would almost go out of their way not to meet you.

Harsh discipline gets results in the form of academic and sporting success, but it also creates fear and resentment.

(c) The Obedience of the Brothers

It is perhaps ironic that Brother Sterling, who is most insistent on absolute obedience from his pupils, is himself critical of the unquestioning obedience that is demanded of members of his Order. In his mid-forties, and the second youngest member of the C.B.C. community, he remembers earlier brushes with authority in other places because of offences like wearing a watch and riding a bicycle without wearing a hat. He believes that the insistence of his superiors upon rigid obedience in trivial matters devalues the spiritual commitment and fulfilment of community life, and he questions the priorities of the Brother Visitors, or religious inspectors of
the Order, who in the past have criticised his minor infringements of trivial rules...

but there was little on, 'Was I finding enough time for prayer?' — things that really mattered. ... A lot of us just conformed to these things just for harmony rather than make waves. Well, we will take C.B.C. for example — at this school I will go along with [superiors] just to keep harmony.

Brother Jones, only slightly older than Brother Sterling, has even more bitter memories of the rigid obedience imposed by former superiors. He reports that he and his colleagues were permitted to receive and send only one letter each month, and that his deepest sadness was caused by his minimal contact with his family — particularly his mother who was ill for many years of her life:

I never knew her as an adult ... I came to Newburyport and I was allowed to go back to the city once every three months to see her, and it was terrible.

Obedience meant sacrifice, and Brother Jones resents any devaluation of the sacrifices he and his confreres made in those days when their vocations were tested:

One thing I do hold against this present time ... is what they have taken away from us is our sense of mission. The thing that made all of those sacrifices meaningful and possible was that you were sacrificing yourself for Catholic education. ... And what hurts me at times is that some of our own young fellows, because they belong to a different age, they even think a lot of the stories that we have about our training are highly exaggerated.

Even though some of the extremes of what Brother Ernest calls "absolute obedience" are a thing of the past, the tradition of rigid authority appears to have left an important legacy at C.B.C. It seems logical to argue that the "absolute obedience" which so characterised relationships within the Christian Brothers' Order has undoubtedly influenced the
emphasis upon discipline and control which is a noticeable feature of C.B.C. classrooms. And a school in which relationships are based upon obedience, order and discipline is likely to be one in which many other issues, such as curriculum pedagogy and evaluation, are, as is discussed in later chapters, very narrowly defined.

However, just as a number of Brothers are redefining the concept of "needy" as it derives from the founder, so also is the concept of obedience open to some interpretation. Again the relatively junior Brother Dowsett and the very senior Brother O'Hara are in agreement on this issue.

Brother Dowsett: I think authority and obedience, they come basically from the Latin word, to listen, and I think there has got to be a lot of listening between those in authority and those other Brothers.

Such an insight is no doubt of great comfort to Brother O'Hara who, according to just about everybody at C.B.C., seems to be in conflict with his headmaster. If obedience is a two-way matter then Brother Carter may be partly at fault, too. Some tension with authority, particularly during the term of headmastership of Brother Carter, is reported by a number of Brothers, some of whom have managed to avoid conflict by directing their energies into personal missions which greater flexibility within the Order has allowed. For some of these Brothers, however, change in the Order seems minimal and they are hopeful that an era of rapid and significant change is approaching. For others, the changes that the Congregation has faced in the past two decades have been shattering. One area that some Brothers feel has changed for the worse is that of classroom organisation.
(d) Classroom Organisation

The emphasis on obedience within the Christian Brothers' Order ensured that classroom discipline was rigid. Many Brothers feel that the school organisation which assigned one Brother to one class for most or all of the school day meant that a Brother could develop close relationships with his pupils in spite of the large numbers in any class:

Question: What was different about a school almost entirely staffed by Brothers?

Brother Bourke: Well, a lot of things about it. In most of those years you went into a class and stayed there and taught the whole year. ... So you lose that personal contact that you used to have. At one time, you would open the door at 9.00 and shut it and you were there all day.

Brother Bourke, Brother Gordon and others resent somewhat that lay teachers are trained as subject specialists and that their majority numbers at schools like C.B.C. have necessitated a school organisation which precludes the traditional arrangement of each Brother being responsible for his own class. This is an area of concern for these Brothers for several reasons. One is that they believe that standards of discipline have declined because teachers now do not spend enough time with each class to get to know them well and control them properly. Another is that they believe that boys are no longer sufficiently exposed to "Brothers' influence". This last point becomes an especially significant aspect of the Brothers' religious mission:

Brother Gordon: I think that we were more concerned about the actual getting in some sort of a relationship with a particular group of boys. ... It is very difficult to teach a class religious
knowledge if you don't teach them anything else. We do regard that religious knowledge class as being fairly important - a period a day. ... To teach that class that you've really got no contact with is not the easiest thing in the world.

This factor, combined with the more general "lack of presence, if you like, lack of witness" of the Brothers, which has been caused by the reduction of contact between Brothers and students due to changed class arrangements, compounds, according to Brother Hourigan and others, the problem of materialistic values of pupils and so reduces the chances of promoting vocations amongst them. Some of the Brothers who hold those attitudes most strongly are understandably frustrated that their pupils are not as compliant as those of some years ago - possibly because the current pupils see that their own futures depend on things other than just examination results - such as family and school networks (Watkins, 1984).

The young Brother Dowsett attempts to explain the nature of this problem which faces some of his senior colleagues:

They did pretty good service to the church - I think they realise that. Some of them ... still see their job as to really get in there and teach very vigorously. In lots of cases kids feel, perhaps, a bit different and take things a lot more for granted, and some Brothers get frustrated because the response they get is now a lot less than they would have got in the past when kids really realised their whole future was very dependent on the way he got stuck into his studies.

It comes as no surprise that the Brothers who hold the attitudes described above tend to have minimal contact with lay teachers. For such Brothers, and others, the traditional educational enterprise of the Christian Brothers was part of their golden era. They recall days of large classes, heavy
workloads and extra-curricular duties with satisfaction. Those were days of certainty for the Order, and of a determined unity of purpose. Strong discipline and sound Irish Catholic values were inculcated into generations of Australian Catholic boys as they were instructed for examination success and upward social mobility. But a crisis of numbers in the Order, an influx of lay teachers and a changing world has shattered the certainty that once characterised the mission of the Christian Brothers.

(e) Crisis in the Brotherhood: Problems and Possibilities

One elderly Brother claims that he is glad that he "lived in [his] time" because he is most pessimistic about the future of the Brothers and of Catholicism and moral standards more generally. This view contrasts with that of others who foresee that one response to the present crisis of vocations is for the Brothers to embark upon new, exciting and challenging missions. These may require a radical departure from the Brothers' traditional educational mission, but drastic changes, according to Brother Dowsett, can be justified by appeal to the founder and his concern for the needy:

One tradition that a lot of the old Brothers have got that I, personally, am beginning to question a bit ... is that the place of the Brothers - basically their job - is to be teaching in school. ... I don't necessarily see that as fundamental through our tradition. I sort of see the tradition of the Brothers to basically be able to provide some sort of help and support, particularly in education, for those who are needy.

Indications are that, in the broad scheme of things, the group which favours substantial change within the Brothers' schools and their mission is growing within the Order. Brother Dowsett is encouraged by the decision of the Provincial Council
of a neighbouring state to allow a small team of Brothers to conduct emergency social work in the depressed areas of the capital city. He foresees that such a postulate will be attractive to a number of younger Brothers, including himself. The headmaster of C.B.C., Brother Carter, takes pride in the missions that the Brothers have established outside Australia in Fiji and New Guinea and foresees the possibility of the Christian Brothers "lifting the people in those countries the way we have done here". Brother O'Hara is encouraged by the gradual erosion of the Brothers' minority control in other Provinces and in other schools.

The press for change in the mission, it seems, particularly from younger Brothers, has become too strong for the Order to ignore:

Question: [Brothers doing social work and not teaching] is a pretty big change, isn't it?

Brother Gordon: It's a tremendous change, yes.

Question: Wouldn't there be, surely a fair amount of reaction amongst some of your long standing members to such a change?

Brother Gordon: Oh yes. There would have been an equally strong reaction among some of the others if it hadn't been there.

Consideration of altered missions is particularly distressing to conservative, elderly Brothers who derived immense satisfaction and comfort from the unity of purpose and clearly defined, unproblematic educational goals which once characterised their mission. The loyal dedication of these Brothers, who shouldered immense workloads in undertaking the difficult task of educating children in overcrowded classrooms
and with few resources, had its own rewards - as some of their younger, more imaginative colleagues can appreciate.

Brother Dowsett: I think the main sort of tradition that has been passed on to me in school, for example, you know that Brother Bourke has got a famous statement that says, "If someone says to you, 'What have you got to do to be a good Brother or teacher?' he just says two words, "Be there!"

I sort of think that in lots of ways [that answer sums up] the tradition of faithfulness, dedication, hard work.

Not all of the C.B.C. Brothers, however, are as understanding towards their elder confreres as Brother Dowsett is. One point of view that was strongly stated by at least two Brothers is that the morale of many Brothers is very low, not only because of the drought of entrants to the Order, but also because of what one called "the sniping" of older Brothers at younger Brothers. They said that many of the older Brothers, not necessarily in the C.B.C. community but more generally throughout the Order, hark back to the "old days when everything was fine in the Brothers' world". These elderly Brothers are said to have been extremely critical of the younger and middle-aged group whom they blame for contributing to the state of affairs in which the Order now finds itself. One Brother suggested that many elderly Brothers comprise a faction which prefers to withdraw into a few schools simply to revive "the glories of the old days".

The presence of factions highlights the crisis in the Brotherhood which extends far beyond C.B.C., but which is being played out there as it is in many Brothers' schools through the Province and throughout Australia. The educational mission of the Christian Brothers, therefore, remains in flux.
(f) Brothers, Pupils and Obedience: A Summary

The theme of obedience is strongly associated with the Christian Brothers - both in their relationship with pupils and in the control of Brothers' lives. Discipline is seen as an important aspect of the Brothers' mission and of Catholicism. It is associated with self-denial, strength of character, and service to a demanding God. It is also seen as having been necessary in pushing students to achieve maximum results in examinations.

Amongst the Brothers at C.B.C., who are concentrated at the year 9 and year 10 levels of the school, there is concern that pupils do not have sufficient contact with Brothers to benefit fully from their "system" and traditions. There is a suggestion that stacking the year 9 and 10 area with Brothers is a deliberate policy to ensure that the boys have reasonable contact with Brothers at least at that stage of their school careers. This in no way, however, according to most Brothers, compensates for the demise of the Brothers' traditional method of classroom organisation in which each Brother was almost entirely responsible for one class. Such an arrangement, it was argued, maximised both classroom discipline and the religious formation of pupils.

The contradictory relationship that seems to exist between Brothers and pupils - that of strict disciplinarian and also devoted counsellor - was illustrated by the case of Brother Sterling. Despite the concern of Brothers for the welfare of pupils, pupils avoid the Brothers, even the much respected Brother Dowsett. The remoteness, and in many cases the age, of Brothers does not inspire the confidence of pupils who prefer to share personal concerns with lay teachers.
The history of unquestioning obedience to rules and to superiors has left an important legacy at C.B.C. Symptomatic of shifting values within the Order, however, is the redefinition of the notion of "obedience" by some Brothers to emphasise its origins in the Latin word "to listen". For these Brothers, obedience should not be unquestioning compliance but the result of mutual communication and understanding.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Brothers at Christian Brothers College believe that their school and their Order have contributed to the upward social mobility of Catholics. They have helped to create a Catholic middle class and to produce Catholic leaders in society who could "spread the message of Jesus". They argue that such achievements demonstrate the success of the historical mission of their Order of assisting needy Catholics and of combating prejudice which, they say, in the first half of this century, largely excluded Catholics from white-collar employment and the professions. The Brothers directed their pupils especially to the public service where entry was decided by examination results.

While proud of their apparent success in this original mission, however, there is a feeling amongst many Brothers that their apostolate should now be reconsidered with a renewed emphasis upon serving the needy. This would strengthen the link with the aims of the founder. Some suggest that attempts be made to identify the special needs of pupils rather than merely following the established practice, exemplified by Brother Carter, of simply encouraging pupils to gain academic
credentials. Others suggest that the Brothers should move from
their now "successful" schools like C.B.C., and especially from
their more expensive schools, to schools in less affluent areas
where the pattern of upward mobility could be repeated. It is
felt that schools in such areas would yield more vocations than
the now largely middle class schools in which youth is
characterised by materialism and consumerism rather than
spiritual values. There is some unease about the maintenance
of the more expensive Brothers' schools and even about the
relative comfort of C.B.C. clients. But although the
reluctance of the headmaster to raise fees acknowledges the
tenuous link with the original mission of the Congregation of
Christian Brothers who were "fundamentally founded to help
those who had nothing at all", even modest fees and the
entrance qualifying tests exclude some of Newburyports "most
needy" Catholic children.

An attempt is made at C.B.C., especially by the principal,
to preserve the "traditions of the Christian Brothers", in
cluding an emphasis upon examination success, religious
education, discipline and hard work. The concern amongst many
Brothers is that their minority representation on school staffs
is becoming insufficient for them to maintain the
distinctiveness of Brothers' schools. Lay teachers are seen to
only partially share traditional Brothers' values, and many
Brothers, especially the more elderly, believe that only
"like-minded" lay teachers should be employed. The exclusion
of lay teachers from positions of responsibility at C.B.C. is
seen as part of the attempt to preserve the Brothers' "system".
One area of special concern is that the appointment of lay teachers has forced a change in the traditional pattern of school organisation in which each Brother was almost entirely responsible for all lessons with the one class. In such an arrangement, a concerted emphasis upon discipline, hard work, and religious formation was facilitated, and vocations could be encouraged. As well as being challenged by lay teachers, however, there is evidence that values within the Congregation of Christian Brothers are also contested. This is seen in the confusion over what the mission should be. Some Brothers, for instance, believe that lay teachers, given the decline of virtually all Catholic religious teaching Orders and the reliance upon lay people to sustain Catholic education, should be treated more equitably in Brothers' schools. Certainly, pupils at C.B.C. prefer to deal with lay teachers and regard the Brothers as being out of touch with their lives and their needs.

The rigid obedience which has traditionally characterised hierarchical relations between superiors and subordinates in the Order and which has left its legacy at C.B.C. is also being contested. Discussion of educational change amongst the Brothers, however, is limited because the predominant issue within the Order is the crisis of membership and the implications of this for the Brothers' "presence" in the schools. Some regard the situation as a "catastrophe". For others the crisis affords an opportunity to reexamine established practices and traditions, such as the mission of service to the needy and the nature of obedience, and to consider the possibilities of a new and exciting apostolate in changed circumstances.
CHAPTER 4:

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the nature of religious education at Christian Brothers College is examined. The sense of crisis in the mission of the Christian Brothers, which emerged in the previous chapter, is seen to be reflected in the confused and uncertain approach to religion within the school. Although religious formation is said to be the essential justification for the existence of independent Catholic schools, there seems to be no agreement at C.B.C. about what should count as religious education.

2. A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

(a) A Religious Ethos

There is agreement amongst Catholic educators that Catholic schools should be different from their State and Protestant counterparts. Indeed, the long struggle to maintain an independent network of Catholic schools is founded upon the premise that Catholic schools are different (Fogarty, 1959, 1964; O'Farrell, 1977; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 1976). The essence of that difference, according to the argument, is that in Catholic schools there is no clear division between religious and profane knowledge. Instead, the teachings of the Church should infuse all lessons of the school day, and prayer and religious symbolism should permeate the consciousness of teachers and pupils.
Any outsider to C.B.C. can readily discern a religious difference that marks it off from other sorts of schools. The impressions of Smith, who spent six weeks working in C.B.C., illustrate the point:

As a non-Catholic and only casual visitor to parochial schools in America, I was overwhelmed by the religious ambience of the school. The prayers at the beginning of most classes, the religious statues, pictures and symbols, and the formal religious classes seemed everywhere. The Brothers, their community, their participation in all parts of the curriculum and in all kinds of activities provided a presence through the school. Visits by local priests and priestesses from elsewhere in Australia and around the world extended that feeling of omnipresence (Smith, 1982:17).

Symbols of Catholicism pervade C.B.C., but uncertainty exists regarding the penetration of religious symbolism and activity into the consciousness of pupils and of teachers. At best, the religious imagery serves as a constant reminder of the shared religious purpose of the faith community of teachers and pupils. At worst, the artefacts and symbols provide merely a superficial religious gloss to legitimate C.B.C.'s separate existence. Certainly, as shall be illustrated in the following, the impact of it all upon the boys is variable - the contrast being most apparent in the reactions of primary and senior secondary pupils regarding the importance of religion in their school lives.

The C.B.C. primary school appears to offer real opportunities for religious involvement. For instance, the significance to pupils, parents and teachers of the preparation of primary pupils for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist is marked. Smith captures the essence of this religious experience:
... the involvement of the primary boys in the Reconciliation experience, the close participation of parents, and the preparation by teachers seemed as vital and meaningful as any religious ceremony could be (Smith, 1982:17).

The boys who were making their first Confessions did so in the C.B.C. chapel and were joined by their parents and teacher in a liturgy conducted by the school chaplain, but which had been planned and prepared by the teachers and pupils, and in which all actively participated. On the Sunday following the Reconciliation, the boys made their first Communion in their parish churches, joining children who had been prepared for the sacrament in their parochial schools. The Reconciliation and Eucharist mark the culmination of careful preparation and instruction in the primary classrooms of C.B.C. and demonstrate a serious attempt to make the school a "faith community" in accordance with the emphasis of the second Vatican Council.

For John Carlton, a Christian Brother for twelve years and then fourteen years a lay teacher at C.B.C. in Newburyport, it is this concept of a "faith community" that provides the rationale for Catholic education in a post-Vatican II context. Church teaching, he argues, should be based upon a theme of social concern:

**Question:** Isn't the whole justification for a Catholic school that Catholic education is somehow different?

**John Carlton:** That's right - a Catholic school should be different.

**Question:** In what way?

**John Carlton:** There should be a whole atmosphere about the place. There should be concern amongst the pupils and co-operation. There should be a spirit of concern for people in the community, for the under-privileged, and a desire to help.
Question: Couldn’t you say that any good school would encourage attitudes like that?

John Carlton: Oh yes – but in a Catholic school you should have all this tied in with the teaching of the Church. It should support Church teaching.

In the religious venture of attempting to develop a faith community, the coordinator of the C.B.C. primary school, Cameron Pont, is assisted by Gavin Smith to give priority to the religious orientation that they both believe C.B.C. should display. Gavin is prominent in the organisation of liturgies and religious camps and is encouraged to do so by his coordinator. Cameron Pont is concerned, however, that the religious attitude that Gavin has somewhat reinforced in the primary school is not so apparent in the much larger secondary section:

I would say that in the senior area of the school there are rarely times when they come together ... The junior school meets at least once a fortnight, which is probably not often enough, but they meet specifically as a community to share in prayer time. Now that, to me, seems to be some achievement at least. [But] that doesn’t seem to be the general tenor of the school ... We [in the primary] have got a person named Gavin Smith who is very keen and he makes no secret of the fact that this [religious activity] is his forte and he is encouraged to do this.

The religious purpose of C.B.C. is made explicit also in several primary classrooms. Margaret Fitzgerald’s is typical. Simple prayers are said with feeling, the words often being composed by the pupils themselves. A statue of the Virgin Mary stands upon an altar which is tended by pupils and, as in all classrooms at C.B.C., a crucifix hangs above the blackboard. The walls and noticeboards are tidily decorated with posters and examples of students’ work, many of which are of a religious nature. Throughout the day the formal period of
religious education is regarded as important and necessary, but references to religious and moral matters occur at many other times. Margaret's relationship with her students suggests that the degree of pastoral care she bestows is high. This situation comes close to what John Carlton regards as the ideal:

'It's in the primary schools that we really need Catholic education. And the real strength is that the class teacher is the religion teacher and so religion can come into all subjects."

Although Catholicism seems more deeply pervasive in the primary school than in the secondary, this is achieved without the presence of any Brothers on the teaching staff. Cameron Pont, however, was previously a Christian Brother for twenty years before leaving the Order some sixteen years ago, and Gavin Smith left the Christian Brothers' Order six years ago just when he was due to make his final profession.

Even within the apparent Christian harmony of the primary school, however, there are discordant notes. One of the more serious of these is sounded by John Carlton who, despite the religious ideal that he describes, believes that there are limits to the religious effectiveness of even primary schools:

'The trouble is you'll never get real Catholic education unless you have the right sort of teachers - you've got to have teachers who are committed to their religion - and I just don't think you are going to get that."

In this matter it seems relevant that two primary teachers claim that, although they teach religious education, they do not practice religion. They also claim that their purpose in undertaking Catechetics courses is merely to safeguard their jobs and to facilitate a transfer in employment to other Catholic schools. At present, however, most of the concern
about the religious ethos involves the secondary rather than the much smaller, largely autonomous, primary school - and within the Newburyport community, C.B.C. is thought of mainly as a secondary school. For these reasons, much of the discussion that follows deals with the secondary section of C.B.C. and the place of religion within it.

The ideal of a thoroughly pervasive Catholic ethos, then, is not matched by the present circumstances of C.B.C. The ubiquitous presence of religious symbols seems, at least in the secondary school, not to penetrate into the consciousness of pupils. And while, in the primary school, the explicit religious purpose of C.B.C. is more apparent, the commitment of some teachers to the religious mission is questionable.

(b) The Place of Religion

Bates argues that although the consensus at C.B.C. is that "parents send their boys [to the school] because they want them to have a good Catholic education", ... what constitutes a good Catholic education in the modern post-Vatican world is a matter of debate" (Bates, 1982b:58). But according to Brother Dowsett, one of the depleted generation of post-Vatican Christian Brothers, that debate is not openly or formally confronted at C.B.C. In his opinion, the place of religion in the school is extremely problematic:

We do have a very particular and very strong aim to promote the religious education of the students who come to the place. If you look at a timetable, the kids have a religion period each day. So technically, on the surface, that's a very important aim and some attention is being given to it timewise. I often question how effective it is for lots of reasons. I wonder as a staff, particularly, just how clear we are on our goals. Since I've been here (almost three
years) we haven't had formally any session where we've got together just to thrash out what we are trying to do. What are our goals in the school? What are our goals in the religious education? I suppose some people would say, well, that's just understood, we try to develop the faith of the students - but ... I question to a certain extent that everybody has a pretty fair idea of exactly what we're trying to do.

Brother Dowsett's concern that staff consensus be sought regarding the religious aims of the school reflects the faith community orientation of post-Vatican Catholicism. He can find little evidence, however, to indicate that religion is taken seriously by the staff as a whole. His emphasis upon the "surface" attention given to the teaching of religion recurs in the accounts of several teachers and raises questions about the priority that is given to religion at C.B.C.:

**Question:** What is the strength of the religious education element in the school's programme?

**Cameron Pont:** Not as good as I would like it to be. I think that if the school sets itself up to be a church school then its number one priority should be the teaching of that religion that they say they are going to teach. The matriculation results are damn important, but the most important thing - the fact that they had their daily religious education lesson - that was a good thing, too. But if an extra period was to be taken, it was always the fifth period - which happens to be the religion period. This is a little cock-eyed view of things.

The cock-eyedness of this situation is, of course, that treating religion period as a time for administrative purposes suggests that, in the balance of priorities at C.B.C., the scales are tipped towards an emphasis upon examination results over religious education. School assemblies are held during the period usually allocated for religious instruction for year
12 pupils so that valuable time is not taken from the academic subjects for which end-of-year external examinations are held. In fact, the timetable was drawn up by David Welsh with this in mind:

One thing we do is timetable all year 12 religion at the same time [and] all year 11 at the same time. That is a good thing because if we want to see the whole grade for any reason at all ... they are not taken away from academic subjects.

At other year levels, too, the religion period rather than others is used for organisational matters. If the religion period itself is not sacrosanct, this may also indicate that religion does not pervade the entire life of the school in the way that some teachers would like it to:

**Question:** What about the religious life of the school outside the religious education classes?

**Peter Montini:** Well, there isn't much sign of it really. The chapel is used by a few boys at lunchtime and they might go up and pray a visit. Now every teacher is supposed to say a prayer at the start of the period and I don't know if that happens all the time ... I don't think there is all that much evidence of it being a Catholic school other than the fact that there is supposed to be a prayer said at the start of the period, the religion class, and that there is a statue or similar in every room. Other than that, I don't think religion plays a very important part in the school although there is the underlying theme that that is what we are here for - and that this is the difference between this school and, say, a normal high school - the fact that there is some sort of religious theme going through the school.

Peter Montini's association with C.B.C. has been a long one. He was a pupil there during his secondary years and returned nine years ago as a beginning teacher. He is
uncritical of the place of religion (or lack of it) at the school but perceives a contradiction between the "underlying theme" that marks out C.B.C. as being different from other schools and its only partial translation into religious practice.

More critical of the religious life of C.B.C., or rather, of the perceived absence of a sufficiently strong religious focus to distinguish it from other schools, is Cameron Pont. Like John Carlton, he is a long serving ex-Brother and lay teacher who argues that the school's religious orientation should be more publicly visible in its daily life:

We have tried for years to say that the chapel ought to be a focal point of the school and [that] if people are going to pray then they ought to come to the chapel. That seems to me to be the spot to meet daily to pray ... There is nothing organised in the senior school where they come together as a community.

Cameron argues that another way in which school activity could give greater meaning to the religious lives of its pupils is to incorporate the activities of the school into the Church calendar. He is disappointed that other teachers apparently do not share his concern:

We don't live out this church year. As when Eastertime comes we ought to be all doing something pertaining to Easter. We all ought to be doing something pertaining to Christmas and so on. But we don't do that.

Some other teachers agree that C.B.C.'s religious focus should be more explicit. Brother Jones, for instance, searches for the "radical difference" between Catholics and others, and argues that the school's priority should not be upon examination results but upon the faith of pupils:

I believe very clearly that, if we are not a committed Catholic school, I see absolutely no point in our
existence at all ... I will put it in a negative way which is perhaps wrong - but ... if I felt kids were coming here because Mr Carlton was a crash-hot teacher and Brother Jones was a crash-hot teacher and Mr Y. was a crash-hot teacher - well, I see no point in that kind of exercise at all. There are plenty of crash-hot teachers in all kinds of other schools. I keep asking myself what is the radical difference between ourselves [as Catholic educators] and others. And, as a Catholic, I believe that it is developing the faith of students, number one - but not just in a sort of a narrow "I will pour religion down your throat" sort of thing ... I believe with fellows in year 11 and 12 that they have to be converted at that age.

The religious orientation should not mean, however, that other pursuits are neglected, but rather that they become invested with deeper meaning. Such an orientation assumes that religious thinking informs all school activities - including sporting and academic ones:

Question: Do you think there is a tendency in Brothers' schools to emphasise the [examination] results?

Brother Jones: Yes, it comes over like that ... I started to think about it a lot and I have worked it out this way. Hopefully, the fact that they have been winning football and ... that they can do well in their exams to me should be a sign of something deeper and something far better - that we are succeeding in the [religious] mission.

It is clear, then, that there is amongst both lay and religious teachers a strong feeling that the religious orientation of C.B.C. is not as strong as it should be. The chapel, the church calendar, and even the daily period of religious education are typically overlooked in the day to day activity of the school. And even though Brother Jones is able to regard the examination and other successes of C.B.C. boys as being symptomatic of success in the religious mission, the more common view of his colleagues is that an "academic emphasis" has overwhelmed and displaced the religious purpose of C.B.C.
Religion and C.B.C. Priorities: Only Good Catholics Need Apply

Implicit or explicit in many of the comments that have been noted above is the suspicion that religion is, in a de facto sense, not the main priority of a significant number of staff members, and that the policies of the school also fail to confirm the formal priority that many teachers believe should be given to religion in a Catholic school. According to Brother Dowsett, formal religious devotion and not merely a humanitarian concern for students is required:

Our staff are normally fairly dedicated people who care for the welfare of students so that doesn't worry me at all ... I am just concerned a bit on occasions where people are on the staff who project an image to the students that religion might not be important to them - that is another issue altogether. ... Students are getting perhaps from some teachers [the view that] religion is not too important but basically they are here for just academic studies. I question whether this school would be the right place for those students and those teachers, too.

An interesting point about Brother Dowsett's statement is his view that teachers and pupils should be committed to their religion if they wish to remain at C.B.C. The view contrasts directly with that expressed by Brother Jones; namely, that boys, whether nominal or practising Catholics or not, need to be "converted" to the Catholic faith by their religion teachers. It is a view that nevertheless is widely supported at C.B.C., especially amongst teachers of religion, and one which is reinforced by the official entrance policy of the school. In a situation in which there are more applicants than there are places, preference is given to boys whose parents have "demonstrated their commitment to Catholic education" by sending them to Catholic primary schools. The application form
and accompanying letter from the headmaster suggest that only good Catholics need apply. Boys who enrol at C.B.C., in year 3 or 4 (the most junior grades in the school) are automatically included amongst those prepared each year to make their First Communion. Those joining the school in later years are expected to have already made their First Communion. Cameron Font, the coordinator of the primary area, believes that the Catholic commitment of parents should be even more carefully examined prior to admitting applicants. He argues that a religious test for parents should be applied that is just as rigorous as the Test of Learning Aptitude by which prospective students demonstrate whether or not their scholastic ability is sufficient to qualify for entrance:

We don't interview the parents — we test the child but we don't in fact interview the parent. We haven't very much knowledge of whether that Christianity is being followed up at home ... I think what we ought to do is talk to the parents and discuss their background and their concepts of Catholic teachings. But in actual fact we don't do it. We make assumptions.

Given the weight of research, both in Australia and overseas (Leavy, 1972; Flynn, 1975; Brothers, 1964; Greely, McCready, McCourt, 1976; Fahy, 1980), which indicates that the religious effectiveness of Catholic schools upon pupils is directly related to the religiosity of their homes, such religious screening prompts the argument of one senior lay teacher that:

You are really backing a winner from the start as these kids come from [good Catholic] homes. It makes teaching them a piece of cake.

Despite the "religious qualification" for entrance, however, many teachers believe that not all pupils do in fact
come from "good Catholic homes". There is a feeling that some parents send children to C.B.C. so that the school will provide the instruction in religion that is lacking in the home. Some staff, in fact, talk about parents who "expect us to bring their kids up for them". In Brother Ernest's opinion, C.B.C. offers "security" for such parents:

Parents send their sons to Brothers' schools so that parental functions can be done there that are overlooked, perhaps, at home ... [Although] the role of Catholic schools is partly to assist parents in their obligations in the raising of their children, naïve Catholic parents delegate or abrogate their responsibility in this regard by sending their children to C.B.C.

Teachers also argue that a number of parents send boys to the school for other than religious reasons - mainly because of C.B.C.'s emphasis upon an academic curriculum and its reputation for discipline and examination results. Brother Jones is critical of the attitude of many parents:

There is too much of this, "If I send the boy to C.B.C. the Brothers - and that means everybody [on the staff] - if they wave a wand then John will get his H.S.C. and he will be a marvellous kid as a result."

There is amongst some teachers, especially religion teachers, criticism of parents who regard the essential function of C.B.C. as being the preparation of candidates for the H.S.C. examination. Yet, as has been seen, some members of staff strongly believe that the prominence which should be given to the religious mission of the school has been usurped by that given to academic achievement. They point to the admissions policy as evidence that the school's orientation is primarily towards examination results. Only some Catholic boys of Newburyport attend C.B.C., others attend St. Patrick's Technical School or Vianny College. Most of the remainder
attend the many state schools in the Newburyport area, with a minority attending one or other of the two expensive Protestant private schools in the city. To qualify for entrance to C.B.C., boys must live in the section of Newburyport that is zoned to C.B.C. rather than to Vianny College (although a number of boys transfer from Vianny to C.B.C. at year 11 since Vianny's programme terminates at year 10). Then a judgement about a boy's suitability to join C.B.C. is made on the basis of his score on the A.C.E.R. produced "Test of Learning Aptitude" (T.O.L.A.). At that point, some parents are instructed that their children have not "qualified for entrance" to C.B.C. and are counselled to send them elsewhere - usually to St. Patrick's Technical School whose curriculum is seen to be "less academic" than that of C.B.C. The issue is far from settled, however:

Cameron Pont: If a lad can't cope here we usually suggest he goes to St. Patrick's where he still receives a Catholic education.

John Carlton: Our case is that we are not denying anyone a Catholic education.

Brother Fisher: But it doesn't work that way. That's kidding no-one. It'd be better to say, "You can't cope here, you'd be better going to a state school with proper facilities".

Theresa Billings: We send ours to St. Patrick's and they send theirs to Central Tech.

The use of St. Patrick's Technical School to accommodate pupils who are deemed as academically unsuitable for C.B.C. continues throughout the junior secondary years. During that period a number of pupils who are considered to be "weak" but who managed to overcome the T.O.L.A. hurdle are diverted into technical education:
John Carlton: I can't see why a student should be rejected as long as a parent wants the kid to have a Catholic education ... 

Cameron Pont: In year 7 we rejected several non-Catholics and several who were well down on the tests ... We recently rejected one grade 3 boy low on the scale. He got tuition and applied again and was accepted.

Brother O'Hara: The ones you refused must have been well down - because a couple who got into year 7 were very weak. I was able to get them into St. Patrick's.

C.B.C.'s selective entrance policy seems well established. It is clear, however, that selectivity on the basis of ability is contested. Moreover, some teachers believe that screening of prospective pupils on the basis of their religiosity and the religiosity of their parents should be much more rigorous. Such a policy would be in keeping with Brother Dowsett's questioning of whether C.B.C. is the right place for religiously uncommitted pupils and teachers. Such an entrance policy, it is argued, would somewhat redress the priority that is apparently given to an academic emphasis over a religious emphasis as is indicated by the rigor with which the Test of Learning Aptitude is exercised.

Virtually all participants agree that those students who have made it to C.B.C. should receive "a Catholic education." The uncertainties revolve around the priority given to religious education and its place in the curriculum.

(d) C.B.C.'s Religious Ambience: A Summary

A rich religious symbolism and imagery is very noticeable at C.B.C. The chapel, crucifixes and statues atop buildings and in rooms, the clerical dress of the Brothers, are most
conspicuous and give an impression of a religious unity of purpose. The internalisation of all of this by pupils and teachers, however, is seen to be quite variable. Moreover, the unity suggested by the prevalence of religious artefacts is far from absolute.

The data indicate that the emphasis given to religion and religious instruction in the primary area of the school is more pronounced and more consistent than in the secondary section. Primary pupils may well be more susceptible to religious zeal than older youths but, nevertheless, the primary coordinator is pleased that the religious purpose of C.B.C. is made explicit in his area by incorporating school events into the Catholic calendar, and by encouraging his staff, especially Gavin Smith, to give priority to religious aspects of the curriculum such as preparing the boys to receive the Sacraments.

By contrast, the religious orientation of the secondary school is diluted as religion competes with other priorities — such as an academic emphasis. The predominance of academic over religious priorities is discernible in both the timetable and C.B.C.'s entrance requirements. There is a strong feeling amongst teachers that a press for H.S.C. examination results comes largely from parents — and that some parents expect also that the school will take over parental obligations regarding religion. While there is consensus that C.B.C. should provide "a good Catholic education" there is little discussion, certainly in any formal sense, about the religious purpose of the school. At present, there is a strong feeling that the "surface" treatment of religion masks a lack of any deep institutional commitment to what many believe should be the fundamental purpose of C.B.C.
3. THE LAICISATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(a) **The Brothers' Religious Traditions**

Although historically C.B.C. has been staffed by Christian Brothers, the decline of the Order and the expansion of the school means that only twenty percent of the teaching staff are now Christian Brothers. In the previous chapter it was noted that many of the remaining Brothers are concerned that the influx of lay teachers into the school over the past 15 years has endangered some of their religious traditions. One such tradition, that of saying the Hail Mary on the hour, has grown into a Brothers' saga and is recalled in a poem by the Irish Catholic poet, Gerald Griffin. As Brother McKie tells the story of the poem:

In Ireland one time during the penal periods they were not allowed to have religious emblems in the classes or anything like that — they had to be put away in the press. They had to be brought out of the press at the start of religion period and then they had to be put away again. The Brothers kept on going with this Hail Mary [on the hour in spite of the penal code] and this lady rushed in and said, "The inspector's coming down the road". And [the Brother in charge of the class] said, "Stop the clock until he goes".

[The poem] shows the attitude they took. By these practices you tried to give the kiddies a religious idea of the background and so on — [But] not just as they did in the penal period in Ireland, confining it just to their religion period.

One can understand Brother McKie's concern that the religious traditions of the Christian Brothers are under threat from the influx of lay teachers into Brothers' schools. The reproduction of a formal religious culture was more feasible in those days when C.B.C. was staffed almost entirely by Brothers. The Catholic message that was transmitted to the pupils was then perceived to be constant and uniform — and kept
so by means of the reproduction of the Brothers' religious traditions in their training institutions. Clearly, much less consensus about the importance of religion and aspects of religious belief and practice exists amongst lay teachers whose backgrounds are extremely diverse compared with those of the Brothers at C.B.C., all of whom went virtually straight from Christian Brothers' schools into a religious community. Despite this, a predominant "Brothers' view" of religion is assumed by the Christian Brother administrators to pervade C.B.C. This is illustrated, particularly, by a taken-for-granted attitude towards prayer:

Question: Is there a school policy on [curriculum] or a school booklet for parents or for new teachers?

Marie Campagna: No, we just get a little file at the beginning of the year telling us what to do as regards to prayer and regards to parking and regards to yard duty and things like that.

Just as teachers are directed to do their yard duty on certain days, so they are directed to begin each lesson with a prayer in accordance with the established Brothers' tradition. In many cases, however, prayers are not said at all, or are said in a perfunctory manner. Even an extremely committed teacher of religion doubts the value for her class of saying prayers just to comply with school policy.

Bernadette Healy: Probably half of [the staff] would never have bothered [to say prayers with their classes] but I thought, "This is the school policy and I must do it". But I notice some teachers who have been here longer than me - who have been here up to eight to eleven years, and probably more used to it - they always say the morning prayer and they say special prayers and grace before and after meals and this and
that. But we don't do that and I don't think it really matters too much. We say a morning and night prayer now.

Bernadette's compromise regarding the number of prayers said with her class during the day is similar to that arrived at by several other lay teachers. She explains her initial confusion and compliance with the prayer directive as being due to the fact that she taught in a Jesuit school before joining C.B.C. and finds the Christian Brothers "a different breed altogether". Many of the long-serving staff members whom Bernadette believes pray for much of the school day are former Christian Brothers or ex-members of other religious Orders. Amongst the more recent appointees, however, are some who rarely if ever say prayers in class, and some who say the prayers for their own reasons. One reason given in interviews with teachers is that a prayer at the beginning of each lesson is an excellent device for settling the class:

You walk in, they stand at their desks, there's no talking, they say the prayer, and as they're sitting down you go straight into the lesson without having to get their attention.

Others stated that they said the prayers simply because they were concerned about keeping their jobs.

Clearly, Brothers have good cause to believe that some of the long-standing and cherished traditions are under threat.

(b) Teaching Religious Education

The data indicate that few lay teachers, at least in the secondary areas, are as willing as Bernadette Healy to take classes in religious education. This is especially the case, of course, for teachers who are not Catholics. Thus, the task
of teaching religion in the secondary school falls mainly to the Brothers:

Interviewer: Brother Carter gave me a thing from the Catholic Education Office. What I found interesting was the number of non-Catholic lay teachers - there is about 30%. Is that a problem for timetabling?

David Welsh: No, it is not a problem for timetabling because we do have enough teachers for the religious education. We are not stuck. Perhaps one day it will become a problem but as long as we keep the Brothers it won't be - because if they teach nothing else they could teach religion ... Mind you, we have got Catholics on the staff here who won't teach religion - they don't feel qualified to or don't want to ... What we have to do is double up classes - Brother Carter teaches two religion classes in the day, I teach two, Brother Gordon teaches two, Brother Bourke teaches two.

Implicit in what David Welsh says is the view that religious education can be treated as a discrete unit for timetabling. Yet the essence of Catholic schooling is that Catholicism should pervade the entire curriculum. While such an approach to religion was possible when C.B.C. was staffed by religious who had committed their lives to the reproduction of the Catholic faith, the religious theme becomes fragmented when non-Catholics and luke-warm Catholics are employed as teachers. A way of thinking that treats religion more and more as a separate subject is also indicated by the incidental remarks of some teachers:

Interviewer: Is [religious education] the area that really concerns you about the laicisation of a Brothers' school?

Brother Hourigan: No, it wouldn't. You get lay teachers who have done catechetical courses.
Interviewer: At this school you have a fairly wide range of lay people and I would imagine that you have not only a variety of commitment amongst Catholics on the staff, but a large number of non-Catholics on the staff as well.

Brother Hourigan: But these non-Catholics wouldn't have religion periods.

Again, religion is treated as a subject that is separated out from other subjects, one that Catholic lay teachers can be trusted with, at least at junior levels, provided they have acquired the requisite religious knowledge by taking an appropriate course - a point reiterated by the religion coordinator, Brother Graham:

Interviewer: Would parents prefer Brothers generally but particularly in this area?

Brother Gordon: No, I wouldn't say so ... I would say the main reason for [Brothers taking religion] is the lay teachers, by and large, didn't want to do it ...

Interviewer: I would have thought that of all the areas that have now been challenged by the influx of lay teachers into Catholic schools that this is the particular area where there would be most concern.

Brother Gordon: Yes, I would agree with that. As you know, in the Catholic teachers' colleges now there is an emphasis on theology and catechetics ... I really believe that a person who is in a state education college, who has got the idea of moving into the Catholic system, that that person would be strongly advised to study theology and catechetics ... because as the number of Brothers gets less it is going to be important for lay teachers to move into this area.

At C.B.C., however, the only lay teacher (apart from ex-religious) who trained at a Catholic teachers' college is Peter Daniels. Although he taught year 8 religion in his first
year at C.B.C. He teaches no religion classes now because he is fully occupied teaching Accounting to senior classes. Moreover, Daniels, although a committed Catholic, is not regarded highly by the principal, Brother Carter, because of early problems of controlling junior secondary classes — particularly his religion classes. Although he is still willing to teach religion, Daniel's allotment keeps him away from the "difficult" junior secondary area.

Because few lay teachers are prepared to teach religious education in the secondary school, the teaching of religion at most year levels falls mainly to the Brothers. But, as the case of Peter Daniels illustrates, a teacher with appropriate training and willingness to teach religion may be excluded from the religious education program for other reasons. Moreover, as will be seen in the following, other teachers feel pressured to take religion classes.

| (o) The distribution of religious and lay teachers |

Apart from David Welsh, who was once a Christian Brother, all teachers of religion in years 9 through to 12 are Brothers. Yet only one Brother teaches only one of six religion classes in the year 7 and 8 area. No Brothers teach in the primary area. Through his years of association with C.B.C. as both pupil and teacher, Peter Montini has developed his own theory about the distribution of religious and lay teachers to religion classes:

Interviewer: On the whole, you don't actually think religion plays a very important part [in the life of the school]?
Peter Montini: No. You see, I don't think that really all that many teachers let it play all that much of a role.

Interviewer: Quite a few lay staff do teach religious education.

Peter Montini: Well, I think it is more by just being asked to rather than actually wanting to. They have just been told, "Well, here is your teaching load and that includes R.E." ... I think you will find as you get higher up the school that if there are lay staff teaching religion they were either Brothers themselves or people who are very much involved in that sort of life - and it is not just anyone that is told to do it ... I think up there it is regarded as being more serious and what you say lower down the school perhaps doesn't matter.

At least one teacher of religion in the junior secondary area feels that he is simply plugging a timetable gap by agreeing to take a religion class:

Interviewer: There are a number of lay teachers who teach religion ...

Jim Morris: I'm one of them - which is crazy to me because I have got no background [training in religious education].

Interviewer: How do you come to be teaching religious education?

Jim Morris: I went here [to C.B.C. as a pupil], I suppose. Doesn't it make sense to you?

Interviewer: Did you volunteer for [R.E.]?

Jim Morris: No, I was asked. And at that time if you want a job you will do anything.

Interviewer: So how does your teaching of religious education differ from the teaching that you received?

Jim Morris: Well, for a start, even if you wanted to include all the Church dogma, I couldn't.

Interviewer: Because you are not sufficiently familiar with it?
Jim Morris: Yes, that's right. I think my R.E. would be more social education oriented rather than religious ... I don't think I am fulfilling their [the Brothers'] expectations of what R.E. should be. But it is just convenient that I am plugging a gap.

Jim's inference that he is prepared to take religion classes simply because he needs the job adds support to the claims of the timetabler and the religion coordinator that lay teachers are unwilling to teach religious education. This is not true of all lay teachers, however. Peter Daniels would like to teach religion but has not been offered any classes in it. John Carlton, who has left C.B.C. and is now headmaster of a Catholic regional high school, expresses disappointment that "in my last few years [at C.B.C.] they [the religious administrators] never asked me to teach religion". Carlton's disappointment is tinged with a professional regret or jealousy that David Welsh, an ex-Christian Brother like himself, is perhaps considered "safer" to teach senior religion classes than he is.

Only at the junior levels, therefore, are lay teachers trusted to teach religion. At more senior levels the predominant Brothers' view of religion is promoted by Brothers and the "safe" David Welsh.

(d) Diversity in Religious Education

The attitude of Peter Daniels and John Carlton towards the teaching of religion is certainly in marked contrast to that of another lay teacher who claims that he was pressured to take a religion class, and who joked in the staffroom:
I've been teaching religion for two terms and I haven't mentioned God yet. I reckon that's pretty good going, hey.

This teacher, Peter Daniels and Jim Morris are all former pupils of C.B.C., but Peter Daniels is the only one who is willing and trained to teach religious education. Jim Morris's answer to the question of how he came to be teaching religious education - "I went here, I suppose" - is fraught with meaning. In his opinion, the assumption of the C.B.C. administrators is that an ex-C.B.C. boy can be trusted with the teaching of religion - at least to junior secondary classes. Moreover, he, along with his fellow teachers of R.E., is expected to devise his own syllabus (although provided with very broad guidelines issued by the Catholic Education Office).

A minority of teachers at C.B.C. are non-Catholics and, as is apparent from some of the above extracts, their position is the subject of some unease on the part of several teachers who are concerned that the Catholic ethos of the school needs reinforcement. Cameron Pont, for instance, while aware that his opinion of non-Catholic teachers is not shared by all of his colleagues, takes a strong line on this matter:

I perceive this to be the main activity of this school - to provide a Catholic education. And I think we ought to have personnel in the school to do this, and I think that if we are in the Catholic tradition then we ought to employ Catholics. Now that view is not shared by everybody and I am not sure that it is the right view - but I think that we ought to be a Catholic school in the Catholic tradition.

Some Catholics teachers who are relatively new to C.B.C. did not expect to find themselves working with non-Catholics:

Bernadette Healy: The thing that surprised me was the number of non-Catholics on the staff. I automatically assumed that [being a Catholic] would be a criterion for
getting in here – and really, when I
applied for the job, I thought that was
the only thing I had in my favour.

But, according to Cameron Pont, even employing Catholics
exclusively does not necessarily guarantee the preservation of
a Catholic ethos:

The great problem facing Catholic education today [is]
teachers who don't necessarily share the ethos of a
Catholic school. We have many more qualified teachers
these days, but the best qualified are not necessarily
the best teachers in Catholic schools. They must
identify with the Catholic school.

Indeed, some teachers feel that luke-warm Catholics are a
greater threat to the religious ethos of C.B.C. than
non-Catholics.

Judging the extent to which teachers identify with the
Catholic ethos of C.B.C., however, is no easy matter. It
appears that many lay teachers are reluctant to take classes in
religious education and also feel uneasy talking about
religion. Moreover, there is clearly no consensus regarding
what counts as religious education or what emphasis should be
given to it. In such circumstances, the promise of a deeply
felt religious unity that is suggested by the openly displayed
religious symbols is not realised at C.B.C. The pervasive
imagery disguises the fragmentation of the once uniform
reproduction of a formal and traditional religious culture that
was the concern of a wholly Christian Brothers' staff. But it
does more – it also suggests a confidence and an unshrinking
resoluteness regarding religion that is not found within C.B.C.
(e) Lay Teachers, Religious, and Religious Education: A Summary

A C.B.C. education was once literally education by Brothers. Since the second Vatican Council, however, a depleted number of Brothers and an increasing number of lay teachers has meant that the proportion of Brothers has sharply decreased to the point where Brothers now comprise only 20% of the teaching staff. This has necessitated the scheduling of some lay teachers to teach religious education classes — although, at present, lay teachers, with the exception of David Welsh, take religion classes only in the primary and junior secondary grades. Brothers and David Welsh, formerly a Christian Brother, teach all religion in years 9 to 12.

The situation of lay people teaching in Brothers' schools causes regret for some Brothers — but of special concern is the fact that lay teachers must take some classes in religious education. There is a feeling amongst some that Brothers' traditions are jeopardised since the formal reproduction of a religious culture is no longer wholly the preserve of the Christian Brothers. There are strong doubts about the religious fervour of some Catholic lay teachers and about the wisdom of employing non-Catholics. Moreover, many lay teachers are reluctant to take religious education classes. Reservations about lay teachers are partly responsible for the emergence of an attitude towards religion that treats it largely as a discrete subject with its own timetable slot. The almost exclusive use of Brothers for religious education in senior classes indicates a feeling that the teaching of religion is more important or more difficult at that level.
The only lay teachers who can be entrusted with the task of assisting Brothers in the religious education of senior students are ones like David Welsh, who has demonstrated his loyalty to C.B.C. over many years - so much so that he is often referred to by pupils as "Brother Welsh".

The treatment of religious education as a separate subject to be dealt with in individual classrooms diminishes the Catholic pervasiveness that is regarded as the essential difference between Catholic schools and others. It also leads to a situation in which the religious purpose of C.B.C. is far from uniform. Individual teachers of religion must determine their own curricula. In these circumstances, the question of what counts as religious knowledge becomes very problematic indeed.

4. WHAT COUNTS AS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

(a) Where Do You Pitch Your Teaching?

At least one point upon which there is agreement at C.B.C. is that religious education is an extremely difficult subject to teach well. According to the religious education coordinator, part of the difficulty is caused by the varying degrees of religiosity amongst pupils:

You have got those who come from strong Catholic families ... You have got the students who come from nominal Catholic families in which there is little or no Catholic practice in the home ... They send their children here for various reasons - one is perhaps as a kind of sop to their own consciences, they are kind of saying, "We are not teaching [our children] any religion but they are being taught it at school". And some of them might be sending their boys here because rightly or wrongly they think they are better off than elsewhere - they might be taught mathematics, for example, better here than they would elsewhere ... So you have got a tremendous range of students in your
class and the question that each religious knowledge teacher has to ask himself or herself is, "Well now, where do you pitch your teaching?"

The varying enthusiasm of parents and children for religion highlights another problem – that of the underlying purpose of religious education:

You have got the other question, of course, that has to be faced. What are you doing? Are you teaching them religious knowledge? Are you teaching them the teachings of Jesus as expressed by the Catholic Church? Or are you trying to persuade them that they should follow those teachings? Or both?

In the mixture of instruction and persuasion that makes up religious education as described by Brother Gordon, Brother Jones gives priority to persuasion. His view is that boys, no matter how religious their backgrounds, must be "converted" to the fullness of their faith during their school years. Those members of staff who were pupils at C.B.C. some fifteen years ago, however, recall that, for them, religious education involved didactic instruction, the rote learning of Catechism answers and drill in ritual responses. While the threat of retribution ensured at least a token reproduction of old-style Irish Catholicism, the lessons seem to have largely ignored some major concerns of the pupils. As Peter Montini describes those days, they involved:

Fear. Fear in the sense that you have to do this, or you must do this, or else! Sex was never really brought in and, in thinking back to those six years [that I was a student at C.B.C.], I think that there might have been one or two times when a priest might have walked in and, without any kind of introduction, they started drawing and writing things on the board and that was it – that was the whole thing. We used to have a film once in a while on sex education – black and white faded film – but that was the only time that it was ever mentioned ... Mainly, [religious education] was learning definitions off from books, catechism and that. In Form 6, I can remember, we had more of the discussion-type approach
in which we used to actually read part of the bible and speak about how it applies to everyday life, and marriage was sort of brought up - not on the sexual lines but more on the decent human side of it, decent human love and so on, and the laws of marriage and the sanctity and so on - and that was mainly what it was all about then. But there was a lot of just learning, learning off definitions and, you know, what is grace, sacraments, and so on.

Such unimaginative and uncritical presentation of "religious knowledge" was at least straightforward enough not to require teachers to concern themselves much with Brother Gordon's question of "Where do you pitch your teaching?" And Brother Jones's intention of "converting" his pupils to appreciate the full dimensions of their faith was certainly not addressed. Such matters have become more contentious, however, since the Second Vatican Council.

(b) The Vatican Council and the Transformation of Religious Education

Peter Montini's last years as a pupil at C.B.C. coincided with the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council which shattered many of the religious "certainties" that had previously characterised Catholic religious instruction. Some feel, however, that the full impact of Vatican II was not felt by the Congregation of Christian Brothers. Indeed, one Brother claims:

When the religious Orders were asked to change after the Vatican Council, the Christian Brothers changed least of any Order - and this province changed the least of any Christian Brothers' province.

Nevertheless, the teaching of religion, especially for younger Brothers, has changed substantially, if at a somewhat slower pace than for some other Orders. For Brother Hourigan:
One of the things I am concerned about now is putting the ideas of Vatican II into practice ... This is another big area which has opened up in religious education and one of the aims of the course is making the students more appreciative of the life of Christ and the human side of Christ — but in the past the emphasis has been on the ten commandments and the kind of negative type of approach ... whereas the emphasis these days is living Christianity and not just learning about it.

But a second change which has had an impact upon religious education in Brothers' schools, the influence of which began to be felt soon after the Vatican Council and has been growing ever since, has been the influx of lay teachers and their involvement in the teaching of religion. All but one of the lay staff who teach religion in the secondary school, David Welsh, and most of those teaching in the primary school, are relatively young Catholics whose ideas about religion have been profoundly influenced by the Vatican Council. Some of them, like Bernadette Healy, appreciate the difficulties of some elderly Brothers whose religious security has been shaken by the Council changes and whose life in the religious community has been disturbed by outsiders:

[Brother Callaghan] is obviously still very much way back before Vatican II — and yet I shouldn't say that because I don't know him all that well — but, you know, he strikes me that way. But then I find that the Brothers that are like that tend to keep very much to themselves ... They have sort of been overtaken by the general movement of Catholic theology and social changes and, for them, it has probably been a lot harder because they went into an Order — they chose that very conservative, strict, disciplined type of life that they were looking for — so they probably find it harder to change than some of the others.

Cameron Pont, formerly a Christian Brother himself, supports the view that many Brothers feel a sense of insecurity in dealing with lay people, especially with women. He goes further and suggests that a reluctance to interact openly with
outsiders is a product of their training. The resultant discomfort of some Brothers in sharing their personal beliefs with lay intruders, Cameron argues, militates against the incorporation of religious activities into the shared life of the school:

Interviewer: [You say that] the celebration of an annual and weekly cycle of religious events is not all that strong.

Cameron Pont: No, it isn't strong - and I think that probably comes from the fact that the Brothers are reticent. They are not willing to show their emotions and speak out in public. They are rather shy men and that is part of their tradition and part of their training. They are supposed to keep to themselves fairly well. I think it is not a good thing - it is one of the reasons why I chose to opt out [of the Order] even after twenty years [as a Christian Brother].

Some religious education teachers, young lay teachers in particular, are concerned that the traditional attitudes of some older Brothers, with their emphasis on didactic teaching methods and authoritarian classroom control, inhibit the creation of the sort of classroom atmosphere that would be conducive to a post-Vatican style of religious education:

Christine Hawke: If you spoke to someone here who taught it [even] five or six years ago [they'd say] it is really different now. There are a lot of people, like some of the older Brothers, who say they don't believe in all this, sort of, "rubbish" that is being taught now - who see it more into the individual and the way he feels and who would call it social studies. You could call it what you like - but it is coming under religious education.

When Christine Hawke and other lay religious education teachers, and some Brothers, talk about the "pre-Vatican" or
"post-Vatican" attitudes of their fellow teachers, there is no doubt that the former term conveys disapproval. These teachers have some difficulty, however, in describing what a post-Vatican religious education course should look like and tend to fall back on very general, even simplistic, statements of intention:

Peter Daniels: There is more an emphasis on understanding rather than specific knowledge – it is more, well, a love of God type attitude rather than a fear of God attitude.

It is statements like these about religious education that concern Brother Jones. Although he thinks that "the greatest blessing of Vatican II was the recognition that Catholicity is not simply priests, brothers and nuns", he is not entirely pleased with what passes for religious education in "the confusion after Vatican II". He contrasts C.B.C. now with the certainty of former days when "the teachers were pretty well all Brothers and certainly all the Brothers were taking religion lessons". In his opinion:

What is being dished up under the heading of religion is no more than, sort of, situation ethics or, you know, "love thy neighbour" in vague general terms – but the boys don't know their doctrine.

There is at C.B.C., therefore, a great diversity of opinion about appropriate approaches to the teaching of religious education. Both content and pedagogy of religious education are contested.

(c) Pedagogy and Religious Education

In contrast to Brother Ernest who complains that the boys "don't see the depths", Brother Jones is critical of religious
education teachers because he believes that "we don't challenge [the pupils] enough". As a teacher of year 12 English and religion, he "want[s] to make the two [subjects] equal" and so hands out "reams of paper" during both English and religion periods:

What I do in religion is probably too hard but, to me, it would be unkind if [pupils] left school and had no concept of what the Reformation meant. Or I ask them, "Why are you a Catholic in Newburyport today? What do you know about the history, and why have religious orders? Why have Catholic schools?" And then [I] go back through the whole doctrinal thing and the mystery of establishing the Church and keeping it going.

Brother Jones has no doubts about what counts as religious knowledge:

I always start off with the concept that Christ is, well, if Christ is not God then we are wasting our time, and so you start with the divinity of Christ. He claimed to be God, therefore you must go to the Old Testament to see that he fulfilled the prophecies. And then I like to do the Acts of the Apostles, particularly after you have done the Easter mystery and prepared them for that - and you see the infant Church and then, at least in a cursory fashion, you would take them through.

From this perspective the definition of religious education is non-problematic. But for another teacher, one who has undergone a dramatic shift in the way in which religion is taught, religious education is definitely not as simple as it once was:

It seems to me that a couple of years ago it was question-answer, question-answer, question-answer. I did teach it a couple of years ago - they learnt! You just told them, "This is this and this is that". But now everything has changed the other way ..., and it is up to them to begin to form their own values and feelings. And things like that you can't teach - I mean, you prepare the situation, but you can't say, "You have got to learn this and you have got to learn that." It is up to them to discover for themselves.
Such a pedagogical approach demands that the teacher abandon the role of dispenser of knowledge and custodian of "Catholic" morality and treat seriously the personal knowledge and values that pupils bring with them into the classroom. This, in turn, requires tolerance of a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty regarding what is to be defined as religious education. And for an inexperienced, albeit enthusiastic and committed, religious education teacher like Christine Hawke, adopting an open pedagogy carries with it two particular problems. Firstly, lessons lack structure and a clear sense of direction and progress:

It is a really difficult subject to teach. You can't really teach it ... You can't really state an objective and then say, "At the end of this lesson these children will have grasped this concept".

The second problem is a more complex one which requires a little unravelling. It relates to the difficulty of establishing the type of pupil-teacher relationship that will facilitate an open approach to religious education:

It should be a more open relationship so that you can sort of sit around and discuss - and therefore the teacher should be more the leader of the group rather than the teacher of the group.

This latter problem has proved to be insurmountable, for the present at least, for Christine Hawke:

You have got the situation of the boys. You can't do that with the boys here because they are conditioned that the teacher is up there [at the front of the class] and he or she is the authority. And if you go against that, well, they can't handle it.

Religious education teachers are not the only ones who have experienced difficulty in attempting to transform the authoritarian teacher-pupil relationships that have been dominant at C.B.C. Moreover, a number of teachers,
particularly of some year 12 subjects, believe that, ironically, C.B.C.'s authoritarian conditioning of students inhibits their self-expression, creativity and ability to formulate individual opinions to the point where their examination performance is hindered. Les Cunningham, for instance, who has taught Higher School Certificate English at C.B.C. for several years, holds that:

The kids from here who fail H.S.C. English don't do so because they can't spell and put the commas and full stops in the right places - but because they have difficulty discussing issues in conceptual terms.

While little, if any, data was produced to support an interpretation that the "authoritarian conditioning" is responsible for low scores, several teachers believe that Les Cunningham is correct in this conclusion.

The type of classroom relationship that might encourage personal expression, however, is, as will be illustrated in subsequent chapters, foreign to the traditions of the Christian Brothers. Brother Gordon, the religious education coordinator, points out that an authoritarian school with emphasis upon discipline ensured that:

When the children are taught they stay taught ... so those kids had to learn it, that was all there was about it.

While such attitudes towards the appropriate relationship between teachers and pupils prevail, an open climate of sharing in the exploration of values and of faith is difficult for Christine Hawke and her colleagues to establish.

(d) **What Counts as Religious Education: A Summary**

Although there is little agreement at C.B.C. about what constitutes religious education, there is no doubt that it is
regarded as a difficult subject to teach. Part of the
difficulty stems from the substantial differences in the
religiosity of pupils, and in their Catholic home backgrounds.
Moreover, getting the right mix of persuasion and instruction
is a matter of judgement and individual approach to religious
education.

The recent history of Catholicism, however, has greatly
compounded the difficulty of teaching religious education. In
particular, the second Vatican Council has brought about
substantial changes in the Church and an orientation towards
religious instruction that stresses the development of a "faith
community" of teachers and pupils in a "living" Christian
environment. Some Brothers, especially more elderly ones who
had adjusted to life in a conservative and strict religious
Order, have had difficulty adjusting to the more modern
attitudes. This is noticeable, particularly, in the didactic
and authoritarian pedagogy which such Brothers have retained
and which more progressive religion teachers claim impedes the
development of an open and sharing attitude towards religion.
At least one Brother, for instance, still uses a "pirate" set
of the generally discredited Green Catechism - a version of the
century old "Penny Catechism" - in his year 10 religion class.

Teachers with "post-Vatican attitudes" - usually, but not
always, the younger religion teachers, and usually, but again
not always, lay teachers - are concerned that the heterogeneity
of approaches to religious education not only hinders the
fostering of a "faith community", but also obstructs any
school-wide planning of religious activities and policies.
Rather than pervading the curriculum, then, the place of religion at C.B.C. and what counts as religious education depend upon the orientations of individual teachers.

5. RELIGION AND THE CURRICULUM

(a) The Individualisation of Religion

The data indicate that the treatment of religion at C.B.C. is extremely variable and that C.B.C.'s religious purpose has been diffused into individual classrooms or, more accurately, into individual religious education classes. There is no evidence of an overall policy regarding religion. Instead, religion is seen as an individual enterprise rather than as one which pervades the curriculum:

Question: What are the rituals of the religious life which are being experienced by the children that have been sent here for a good Christian education?

Bernadette Healy: I think it varies from teacher to teacher, class to class, and probably area to area. I don't know.

Even a committed teacher of religion feels that the intrusion upon the individual efforts of religion teachers of the only school-wide religious exercise that springs to mind is a negative one:

Question: How intrusive is the religious life in the curriculum or the experience of the school?

Bernadette Healy: Well, as a Catholic and as a religion teacher I don't think that it is. I think that depends entirely on the teacher, the individual ... Probably the once a month exposition [of the Blessed Sacrament in the school chapel] is fairly intrusive – most people feel that it is and even I feel that. But Brother Carter likes to have that and I don't see that it does any harm – but I
feel that it is a bit irrelevant to the kids ... It is something that went out a bit and probably wouldn't happen in a more progressive school, I wouldn't think, and it is a bit of a time waster. But I don't find that there are many things, the odd mass. Actually, I don't think there is enough.

One other instance of a school-wide religious exercise was the daily recitation of a decade of the rosary during October, the month of the year traditionally devoted to the Virgin Mary. The practice has been recently discontinued but has left a stronger impression upon Peter Montini than the semi-regular Founder's day mass:

There is often a Founder's day mass. In October we recite the rosary. They have - or they did have, I don't know if it is going to happen this year - everyday the boys assemble in the yard and just sort of face the science block where the headmaster stands, or there will be another teacher there, who will be reciting the rosary and all the students answer. And that only usually takes a minute or two ... And that is the only time when the school as a whole prays together on a regular basis ... Other than that you will have the odd mass or two ... - there is the poor man's mass and maybe there might be another one during the year - perhaps for a priest who has returned who was, say, an old boy of the place, or if there is a death or something - but it has to be really something special.

Despite the general agreement that religious events which involve the whole school are rare, at least one event, the poor man's mass, is referred to by a number of teachers. The purpose of the mass is explained by one of the primary staff:

We had the feast of the Sacred Heart which in this diocese is devoted to the poor man's mass day. For the past few years there has been a collection of goods and things like that and all areas, I think, had a liturgy.

Students are asked to bring non-perishable foodstuffs for the poor man's mass and these are distributed to the poor of Newburyport by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The magnitude
of contributions from the different classes is perhaps enlightening. By far the greatest response invariably comes from the primary classes and decreases with age throughout the school. This is further evidence of the contrasting attitudes towards religion of junior and senior classes that was noted earlier. Not all senior students, however, take the occasion lightly. A small group of them are members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and these encourage boys throughout the school to contribute generously to the poor man's mass.

Some primary teachers are able to use the poor man's mass as a stimulus for learning projects. However, when it comes to religion being incorporated into other subjects, some secondary teachers have experienced difficulties:

Heather Verdun: I don't know, perhaps we don't talk about [religion] a lot ... I know, some of the things that I have said in English sometimes, or in politics, about social justice apart from being just the decent thing to do, what about our Christian response? And they look at you as if you are something from outer space.

Clearly, Heather believes that her pupils have learnt to maintain a strict boundary between religion and other subjects. She is concerned that staff and pupils, she believes, do not talk freely about religion and she attributes the puzzlement of students at the introduction of religious issues into other subjects to a lack of any such open discussion. Religion remains largely a private concern in what is outwardly and publicly a Catholic enterprise.

One of the few instances in the data of an individual teacher carrying religion beyond the religious education lesson, at least in the secondary school, is provided by the teacher in charge of the drama society:
David Welsh: [I choose] plays of a good calibre as long as they don't offend. I would never choose anything offensive, even to the point where I do sometimes censor the play leaving out bits and pieces here and there which are not right for children to perform together with our Catholic principles.

Although in this example Catholicism is applied in its narrowest, moralistic sense, it demonstrates a carry-over of religion from religious education lessons into other areas. It is again, however, an individual effort.

Religious education teachers, then, vary in their approach to the teaching of their subjects. In the uncertainty that is associated with influx of lay teachers into C.B.C., and the aftermath of Vatican II, and in the absence of any apparent school focus, religious education has become a matter for individual teachers in their own classrooms rather than an institutional theme.

(b) The Coordination of Religious Education

Cameron Pont, whose years of service at C.B.C. are exceeded only by David Welsh's, is disappointed that, in his opinion, the religious thrust of the school has been weakened during his time there. He suggests that a lack of religious coordination throughout the school has contributed to the blunting of its overall religious purpose. This is evident now, he believes, in the haphazard planning that surrounds religious education, and which thus dissipates the religious purpose into a number of disconnected individual efforts:

I would suggest that C.B.C., over recent times anyway, hasn't had as its main thrust being a religious school. We often have made sure that we have a religious instruction coordinator - but the two
religious education coordinators previous to Brother Gordon did very little indeed. Now, I don't see that as being a number one priority of the school. And if people are going to say that this is a religious establishment - well then it should be, ought to be, the priority. We should be meeting to plan strategy and how effectively this is going to be carried out - not leaving it to some haphazard kind of organisation through the school.

A more comprehensive and integrated approach to the place of religion in the C.B.C. curriculum is unlikely to grow out of Brother Gordon's coordination, however. He sees his role as one of offering passive support rather than active leadership:

As far as being the religious knowledge coordinator is concerned, the role that I see as mine is to assist the religious education teachers in whatever way they want to be assisted - that is, if I can assist them.

As he explains, his job as coordinator is made all the more difficult because of different approaches and attitudes towards religion and the teaching of it that exists within C.B.C.'s heterogeneous staff:

The teaching of religious knowledge is, to a very large extent, left to the individual teacher - the reason for that being, that while a certain approach would appeal to one teacher, another teacher wouldn't be comfortable with that approach, and that is why there is no religious knowledge syllabus as such. There are guidelines which have been produced by the Catholic Education Office ... They are guidelines only - the actual way in which those guidelines are implemented is, to a very large extent, left to the individual teacher.

The mix of post-Vatican and pre-Vatican orientations towards Catholicism and of religious and lay teachers of religious education is complicated even more by differences in pupil-teacher relationships and in attitudes towards what counts as religious knowledge. From what Brother Gordon says, it appears that there is little communication or exchange of views between teachers holding different viewpoints:
Question: You see your role as advising the teacher if he seeks advice?

Brother Gordon: Yes ... but I am not the only one they can ask - there are people that might be teaching in that same area that would possibly know more about it than I would ...

Question: What if they don't ask for advice and you are not entirely confident about the way they are handling religion?

Brother Gordon: Well, to start off, I wouldn't know how they were handling it really and, as in every other subject, teachers have to feel their way and find their way with advice from others.

Question: Is there any mechanism for the religion teachers to report to you in some way or for you to contact them and talk over what they are doing?

Brother Gordon: Not really, that is something that we might be able to implement later on ... It could be that on occasions we could, say, get all the year 8 teachers or all the year 7 teachers to get together and share ideas and talk about material that is available.

One area in which Brother Gordon has acted to encourage integration across subject areas is in sex education:

I wanted to make sure that there was some coordinated sex education throughout the school and I just wanted to make sure that it was coordinated with what was being done in the biology section. There was no real problem and everybody agreed that the courses that were presented by the Biology people should be done in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 and that [religious education teachers] would be able to reinforce it with the moral and human relations aspect of it and then that would carry on into marriage in years 11 and 12. Everybody was quite happy about that.

Brother Gordon has a much greater time allocation for coordination of religious education than his predecessors. Unlike them, he also has charge of a renovated room which serves as the Religious Education Centre. Such innovations mean that C.B.C. complies with guidelines from the Catholic
Education Office. They also suggest a renewed emphasis upon religious education. But whatever plans Brother Gordon has for sharing of ideas in the future, for the present, the teaching of religion remains the preserve of individuals:

In C.B.C. it is left virtually to the individual teacher as to what is going to be taught.

(c) Religion and C.B.C. Students

It has been noted that the response of senior students to the religious aspects of C.B.C. appears to be less wholehearted than that of primary pupils. The evidence suggests that a more casual attitude to prayer and religious education generally begins to appear at about year 8 level:

Marie Campagna: In my year 8 we follow our own sort of syllabus or whatever and I tend to use a lot of social issues. I don’t really stick to biblical things. I find that they are not, sort of, contrary to anything in the Catholic religion ... they seem pretty content in that respect ... At prayers they sort of stand up and they have that respect ... but that becomes meaningless after a while ... They just know that they have to stand up.

Certainly, interest in the school chapel at that age seems to be minimal;

Question: Isn’t the chapel, for instance, really essential for the religious life [of C.B.C.]?

Marie Campagna: ... I am not sure whether the boys are allowed in there at any time they want or if they have to have permission. They probably would - but none has ever asked me. They just see it as another room in the school.

By the time students reach years 11 and 12 the opposition of a number of them to religious education is more apparent. The librarian supports the tales of a number of teachers who
recount occasions when they have discovered in the school library large numbers of absconders from the compulsory daily religion classes. Many of these senior pupils simply absent themselves from the classes and spend the time working on other subjects. The two reasons typically given by pupils for such behaviour are summarised by Heather Verdun:

From what the kids have said, and from what some of the other teachers have said, a lot of the R.E. that is being taught in the senior school has no relevance to the boys. Especially in H.S.C. a lot of them resent the fact that they have five periods a week in R.E. and they would rather be doing something else [related to] H.S.C. which is the be all and end all.

Talking with senior students at C.B.C. one soon learns that the daily religious education lesson is regarded by many as a waste of time. This is partly because it takes time away from academic subjects that are seen as more important, and partly because the lessons are regarded as being "bible bashing" which is "the same thing that we had every year I've been here". Several teachers are sympathetic to the second objection to the religion lessons:

Don Reynolds: What they need in religion is how to live in the modern world, not this academic stuff they give them. Most of the kids in my form are cheesed off with religion and the church and the whole bit.

Question: Do you think the formal teaching of religion here does more harm than good?

Don Reynolds: I do. They're not interested in the academic side of it. It should be the liveliest, most open lesson of the whole day. Everyone should have a point of view and they should discuss it. But I've seen the classes - you can see in their eyes that they're not with it.

Question: Religion is really the justification for this separate system of Catholic schools, isn't it?
Don Reynolds: That's exactly my point. The whole system is supposed to be based on religion and yet some of [the Brothers] are so cold. I probably notice it more than others because I've come in after years in [the State] system.

Don Reynolds' final comments recall a point made earlier by Christine Hawke - that an open sharing of ideas and an open approach to topical, social issues in religion classes requires a particular type of teacher-pupil relationship that is not widespread at C.B.C. The pedagogical style that is typically associated with the Brothers does not invite frank student input into religious education - and this, more than anything else, seems to have disillusioned a large number of pupils.

The belief of Don Reynolds that many pupils are "cheesed off with religion and the church and the whole bit" seems to be readily supported in conversations with senior students. As Smith points out:

... the participation in activities such as the before class prayers seemed perfunctory and with little involvement and meaning. Second, some of the comments of the boys, and usually the older ones, in various informal conversations carried the flavour of "I go to mass because my mum makes me" (1982:17).

Closer examination, however, reveals that many have a vital interest in religion but have difficulty in accepting some of the tenets of Catholicism. They want to air their doubts and objections and to discuss areas of controversy in the Church but feel that there is no forum for them to do so. Those who have been critical of Catholicism during religion periods claim that they have been told, "If you don't believe in the Catholic religion you shouldn't be at this school". Echoing Don Reynolds, these students argue that "religious education does more harm than good in terms of what the Brothers are trying to
achieve" because "they turn you off religion completely". The overwhelming message from senior students is that they want religious education to address their personal crises of faith and their moral difficulties. It appears that at C.B.C., however, the soul-searching and religious doubts that so often accompany adolescence do not count as issues for religious education. It is for these reasons that many senior students regard religious education as "a total waste of time" and refer to religion classes as "rest periods".

Many senior students find that they can talk more easily with lay teachers than with the Brothers who are their religion teachers because "the Brothers don't understand the problems we have - they're sort of different". One teacher of senior classes, who is identified by both fellow teachers and students as "a good bloke" whom boys can talk to, is Jim Karn. His familiarity with them and their confidence in him is apparent to others at C.B.C. This leads to comparisons between him and some Brothers:

Heather Verdun: From the boys' point of view the laicisation of the staff wouldn't be a bad thing because I think most of them feel that the Brothers are too remote from reality ... [but] people like Jim Karn - the boys really love him and he is seen as being a real human being ... I think most of them feel that the Christian Brothers are not really in touch and they don't really know what is going on and the pressures that the kids are under.

Jim Karn is certainly critical of the religious diet that senior students receive, and of some of their teachers:

I'm bugged if I know what they do in religion classes. No, that's not quite true - I do know because they tell me. Bloody Davo (David Walsh) and Mother (Brother Carter) just bible-bash all the time -
the first letter to the Corinthians and all that
stuff. I suppose that's all they can do because they
wouldn't have a bloody clue about life. What the hell
could they tell the kids. The only religion teacher
they've got any respect for is poor old Gil O'Hara].
Apparently he tries to get them thinking and talking
about these things and is pretty open with them.

He is also critical of students who disregard much of what they
are told in religious education but do not persevere in
challenging their teachers:

"Etiquette brings respect, and respect equals love."
This is what they're doing in religion. They all
laugh about it, but when I tell them they should
challenge Mother about statements like that they
haven't got any answer. They laugh at him but they
accept it anyway.

Such acceptance without conviction, he argues, leads the
products of C.B.C. to be unquestioning and compliant in wider
social concerns:

We've been doing this in legal studies - custom and
the law, and the way that a lot of law comes from
customs. But they just won't see that schools are
agents for promoting certain customs and values that
then underline the laws. ... Some aren't sure whether
it's against the law to commit adultery. I asked
them, "Well, just what is actually wrong with
adultery?" Do you know what I got? "It just is, it's
a sin". They won't question these things and see
where they come from. They've been told something's
right or wrong so they accept it even though they
don't follow it.

He adds:

I suppose I'll get the boot from here one of these
days for talking about these things.

Many teachers feel, however, that the religious
effectiveness of C.B.C. will be minimal until more people are
prepared, like Jim Korn, to engage in critical and open
dialogue regarding religion and other aspects of the school.
But, for the present, the "surface" treatment of religion,
diverse opinions about what counts as religious knowledge, and
about the style of pedagogy and relationship between teachers and pupils that is appropriate for religious education, have yet to be confronted at C.B.C.

(d) The Curriculum, Pupils and Religious Coordination: A Summary

Despite the uniform Catholic mission that is suggested by the prevalent religious images and artefacts, religious education at C.B.C. has become a matter of individual interpretation and responsibility. Of the examples of school-wide religious activities revealed by the data, the monthly exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is generally regarded as a negative intrusion, and the unpopular daily recitation of a decade of the rosary during October has been discontinued. The poor man's mass, on the other hand, is held in conjunction with the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and is prepared for carefully within some religious education classes. It is an occasion when pupils can demonstrate a concern for those less privileged than they, not only by praying for them, but also by donating foodstuffs to be distributed to the poor of Newburyport by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Apart from the small group of students who are members of the Society, however, most enthusiasm for the occasion, and certainly most of the donations, comes from the junior classes.

Teachers suggest that a casual attitude towards religion becomes apparent on the part of many boys by year 8 level and that this hardens for a large number during their senior years. Some year 11 and 12 students absent themselves from
religion classes, and many more claim that religious education is irrelevant and a waste of time. Many claim that the time allocated to religious education would be better spent on "academic" subjects that are examined for the Higher School Certificate. The most serious criticism of their religion classes, however, is that they do not address the genuine religious concerns of young adults - questions of personal faith and morality. The apparent exclusion of such matters from religious education, and the reluctance of many students to discuss personal matters with Christian Brothers who are seen to be somewhat remote from the "real" world, leads some of them to confide in lay people like Jim Karn rather than their religion teachers.

Karn is critical of his confidants for not being more persistent in challenging the traditional opinions and assumptions of their religion teachers. His view that C.B.C. students are trained to be compliant finds some support amongst his colleagues. He believes that the bland acceptance by pupils of what they are told by Brothers conditions them to be unquestioning in wider social circumstances.

Many teachers believe that a critical and open dialogue regarding religion and other aspects of C.B.C. - dialogue which could accommodate objections to the religious programme such as those raised by Jim Karn and others - is essential if the "surface" treatment of religion is to be penetrated. At present, however, the heterogeneity of staff and their attitudes towards the teaching of religion makes any concerted attempt to address religious issues unlikely. Thus,
coordination of religious education is minimal and individually committed teachers fight their own good fights in their separate classrooms.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A decline in membership of the Christian Brothers, the increase in number and proportion of lay teachers - including non-Catholics - in Catholic schools, the transformation of Catholicism and the shattering of the old religious certainties by the second Vatican Council, have all deeply affected religious education at C.B.C. No longer is religious education wholly the concern of Brothers. No longer is there consensus about what counts as "a good Catholic education". As Bates concludes:

The reproduction of old style religion through catechism based rote-learning and drill in ritual responses backed up by threats of retribution ... appears to have given way to a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty (Bates, 1982b:58).

The ambiguity and uncertainty that presently characterise religious education at C.B.C. is in no way more apparent than in the absence of critical and open debate regarding Catholicism. C.B.C. does not openly and directly address the current controversy within the Church. In fact, coordination of religious education is purposely vague and remote so as to enable teachers with very different approaches to religious education to operate in an unthreatened and unquestioned manner. Thus, religious education has become largely a series of separate, individual undertakings as some teachers pursue their own religious efforts from within their own classrooms.
Only in the relatively small primary area of the school is there much evidence of a cooperative approach to religious education. By contrast, the religious ambience of the much larger secondary school is less pronounced. There, religion competes successfully with other priorities such as academic ones. This is apparent in the timetabling of lessons which reflects the emergence of an attitude towards religious education which treats it as a discrete subject unit that is to be entrusted to Brothers or to "safe" lay teachers. Senior classes in religious education, particularly, are generally taken by Brothers.

Both the treatment of religion as the concern of individual teachers within their own classrooms, and its reduction to a discrete subject within the curriculum, limit the extent to which Catholicism pervades the school. Thus, not only is the traditional justification for separate Catholic schools questionable in the case of C.B.C., but also the establishment of a post-Vatican "faith community" becomes increasingly difficult and unlikely. Hence the frustration of some religious education teachers, those who hold post-Vatican attitudes, with colleagues who are "way back before Vatican II". Moreover, an open, sharing approach to religion - involving both teachers and pupils as a necessary prerequisite for a "faith community" - is impeded by the authoritarian and didactic pedagogies of some teachers, especially elderly Brothers. In particular, their approach to religious education excludes consideration of the "crises of faith" that are common amongst young adults - a major source of discontent of senior students regarding religion.
While many lay teachers are reluctant to take classes in religious education, or even to talk about it, students claim that they prefer to discuss religious and other problems with lay teachers rather than with Brothers. The life of Brothers is regarded as being too remote, whereas lay teachers are thought to generally share with them a more or less common reality. Teachers like Jim Karn, then, are privy to some confidences of senior students — amongst them being their discontent with religious education. Karn believes that these students have learned compliance — that they accept without conviction what they are told by Brothers — and that this leads them to be socially and politically conforming in a broader sense.

Despite the pervasiveness of religious images and artefacts at C.B.C., then, the place of religion is problematic. The promise of a deeply felt religious unity that is held out by the surface symbolism not only camouflages the fragmentation and contestation of what counts as religious education, but also belies a tentativeness in confronting any religious controversies. Although individual teachers of religion determine their own curricula, a predominant "Brothers' view" of religion persists, and teachers who adopt more "progressive" attitudes towards prayer and religious education feel that they are diverging from that which is expected by C.B.C.'s religious administrators, the Brothers' community, and parents of C.B.C. pupils. On the surface, the statues are in place, regular lessons in religious education are timetabled, the religious education coordinator is granted a time allocation to coordinate the subject — it is business as usual. According to
Brother Ernest, his confreres, especially many of those older than he, are concerned about "preserving the Brothers' securities". The impression that C.B.C. is a stable and traditional "Brothers' school" persists, therefore, despite the multiple changes that are gradually transforming religious education - beneath the seemingly untroubled surface - within individual classrooms.
CHAPTER 5:

MAINTAINING A BROTHERS' SCHOOL: ADMINISTRATION AT C.B.C.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many of the themes of this chapter have already been foreshadowed in the two previous chapters of the ethnography. It was apparent in chapter 3, for instance, that the minority control of C.B.C. by Brothers is an issue of considerable administrative importance. There was also evidence in chapter 4 that coordination at C.B.C. and decision making are problematic matters which require investigation. Of particular importance in Christian Brothers' schools, however, is the position and role of the headmaster.

2. THE HEADMASTER & C.B.C.

(a) Headmasters of the Christian Brothers' Schools

Principals in most schools are in positions of considerable power. In private schools the power is even more pronounced because principals are de facto employers of staff and managers of businesses as well as administrators of educational programmes. In these cases, there is a greater expectation than in state schools that the principal will impose his own style and vision upon the school. In Catholic schools like C.B.C., which is conducted by a religious Order, the authority of the principal is further strengthened by the vow of obedience which ensures the compliance of those members of staff who are also members of the Order to the directions of their superior – the principal. In many cases, although not at
C.B.C. at present, the roles of superior of the school and superior of the religious community are held by the one person. At C.B.C. the deputy headmaster is the religious superior. For non-religious at C.B.C., the moral authority of the Christian Brothers whose school C.B.C. is – in terms of tradition and expectations as well as ownership and administration – militates for a less systematic, but nevertheless pervasive, compliance with the wishes of the headmaster.

Because of the strength of the position of the principal in Brothers' schools, a logical starting point for any discussion of the administration of C.B.C. is with its headmaster, Brother Carter, and the tradition of headmastership that he has inherited.

Talking with the brothers at C.B.C., one soon becomes aware of legends of "great men" who have been principals of Brothers' schools – tireless, dedicated and inspiring leaders who have followed in the footsteps of the Irish founder of the Order, Brother Edmund Rice. Among these are hard men like Brother Ambrose Treacy who, as first Australian Provincial in the late 19th century, canvassed huge areas of south-eastern Australia on horseback gaining donations to support the early tentative "foundations" in Victoria. Another, more recent figure is Brother Kelty, a man whose control over pupils was such that, as Brother Jones remembers him:

I have lived with these fellows, I have watched them operate. I have never heard [Brother Kelty] call an assembly to order. They just stand.

This man, through a complicated system of elections and appointments, eventually became Superior General of the
world-wide Congregation of Christian Brothers and supervised their operations from Rome from 1972 until 1978. Still another revered Brother is Brother Dominic Ryan, now a retired member of the community of Brothers at C.B.C., who during his career has been principal of some of the Brothers' most prestigious schools in several states. His record of gaining extraordinary results in external mathematics examinations is well established - and past pupils of C.B.C. remember vividly the fear that was the goad which ensured maximum effort from his students.

The list of such men, the sagas about whom prompt the most junior member of the C.B.C. religious community to refer to them as "folk heroes", goes on. The ageing Brother Bourke, who as a young Brother was part of the foundation of C.B.C. in 1935, recalls:

If I thought about the number of men that I have lived with and the outstanding qualities that they have educationally, they would have to have had a big effect [on raising the social level of Australian Catholics]. One was Brother Purdon that founded Rostrevor ... while he was also lecturer at Adelaide Uni. Another one was Brother Joyoe ... He could teach anything at all. ... He looked after all the sport, ... he looked after the night study and put [the boarders] to bed, and then he went down to the boiler room with a candle - and that is how he got his degree.

One thing that stories of legendary Brothers of the past have in common, apart from being tales of extreme dedication to the Brothers' mission, is that they describe leaders whose control over their institutions was absolute:

Br Sterling: In the olden days people were put in charge of schools because ... they were a good strong boss in the community and this made them a good headmaster.

Question: The language you used then - "a good strong boss"?
Br Sterling: Well, everybody would line up at the same time and the same place and all the minute things would be done.

Question: There is a lot of priority on control and so on?

Br Sterling: There was a lot.

The tradition of headmasters being "strong men" who would brook no interference with their unchallenged regency over their schools has left an important legacy at C.B.C. Cameron Pont, who was himself a Christian Brother for some twenty years before leaving the Order, and who has been a lay teacher at C.B.C. for the past sixteen years, has had considerable experience of a number of headmasters. He believes that the administrative structure of the school preserves the headmaster's absolute authority:

The administration of the school is one man and that is the headmaster. For better or worse we have that. What his priorities are – that will be what will happen.

With so much authority vested in one man, one would expect that different headmasters would leave their individual mark upon C.B.C. for only the time it takes for the incoming headmaster to exert his own unique influence upon the school. But the evidence from Brothers and others who have had a long association with C.B.C. indicates that such is not the case. Brother McKie, for instance, was on the staff at C.B.C. for many years before retiring from active teaching. He has remained there in his retirement:

Question: Does the school take on a different stamp with each new headmaster?

Br McKie: Not a great deal. It would naturally take a certain amount of change, [but] all [headmasters] coming from the same sort of training and so on – there is a certain degree of stability in that.
Brother Gordon suggests that the Brothers' common training is one factor that makes C.B.C., in his opinion, much like other Brothers' schools in which he has taught:

Our basic unit is not the local [religious] community, our basic unit is the Province - that is where we are trained. We're shifted around from one house to another, but we're not shifted around from one Province to another. I don't find very much difference from one community or one school to another.

Not all of the Brothers at C.B.C. would agree with Brother Gordon's view. Indeed, most make comparisons between C.B.C. and other Brothers' schools which are better or worse in various respects. The point remains that the concept of "a Brothers' school" is a product of an historically developed image of the Christian Brothers and of traditions that have been reproduced in Brothers' training institutions. Headmasters of Brothers' schools are the chief custodians of that image and of those traditions.

(b) **Brother Carter : Headmaster of C.B.C.**

An evocative sketch of the headmaster is drawn by Smith:

Administratively, he sees himself as a practical man of action. A doer, mover, and stirrer, a person who gets things done. A maker of trouble for those who prefer to sit on their backsides (1982:27).

Conversation with the headmaster and observation of his dealings with members of his staff and with pupils confirm that Brother Carter sees himself as being very much in control of a school which he has been attempting to shape to conform to his own very definite image of what a school should be like. Although he acknowledges little interest in C.B.C.'s previous record, he believes that his headmastership has made C.B.C. a better school than it previously was:
I really don't know the history of this place: I don't specialise in history, I like making it.

Brother Carter reinforces the impression that C.B.C. is going through a significant period of history in the making by referring to an "era of achievement" in the monthly newsletter to parents.

To be sure, the achievements which appear to have stemmed from Brother Carter's short three years as principal are impressive. A budget deficit of $80,000 has been erased, extensive repairs and renovations have been completed, new classroom equipment has been purchased, a new subject, Biology, has been introduced in the senior school, and an alternative course for Year 11 school leavers has been implemented. Most people associated with C.B.C. acknowledge that the headmaster is well into the considerable agenda that he set for himself upon arrival. Clearly, this agenda was determined partly by the situation in which he found the school (there were, literally, buildings with leaking roofs) and partly by his own sense of priorities. In this way Brother Carter has, to some extent at least, had his own unique impact upon C.B.C..

Like all headmasters in Christian Brothers' schools, Brother Carter's appointment as principal is for three years—a period of tenure which expires at the end of the current school year. In most cases the headmaster's appointment is extended for a second term of three years before he is required, according to the Constitution of the Order, to be transferred to another school. For reasons that are unclear to Brother Carter, or to his fellow religious in the C.B.C. community, or to lay teachers at C.B.C., Brother Carter's
position as headmaster has not been renewed for a second three-year term. Because of his vow of obedience, he must accept without question the new posting to which his superiors have allocated him. In this case, the pill is sweetened because Brother Carter has been granted the opportunity of studying for a higher degree in a prestigious Northern American University.

(c) The Headmaster's Agenda

The combination of a relatively short term as headmaster and a determination to "conserve and preserve, but move ahead" means that Brother Carter has operated for the past three years according to a restricted agenda which is largely of his own making. Cameron Pont, ex-Brother and long-serving lay teacher at C.B.C., believes that Brother Carter's emphasis is a case of history repeating itself:

Cameron Pont: The refurbishment of the school is going to go on and his predecessor did that, so it seems that this is one of the things that the Brothers like to do. They like to put up buildings and leave some legacy behind - not for their own personal tower of glory, but that is one of the things that they can grapple with.

Interviewer: Very tangible.

Cameron Pont: Yes, very tangible rather than the personal relationships ... There has been no forum where people can actually air their views about [future plans for C.B.C.], so that it is somewhat of a secretive thing in the mind of one person.

Cameron Pont's opinion that Brothers as headmasters emphasise building and refurbishing in order to create visible and lasting memorials of their reigns is widely shared at C.B.C.. His comments also underline a point made by Smith:
... three years (or even six) is a very brief time for any Headmaster with elaborate ideas and plans to have an impact on a school. Minimal time allotments seem to push action oriented individuals toward less consultation, more directed action, and more sharply drawn priorities (1982:30).

Thus, Brother Carter's emphasis upon maintaining and improving the physical environment of C.B.C. has involved him in little negotiation with the rest of his teaching staff and provides a "very tangible", extremely visible, focus for action. Several teachers express what Smith calls "a professional regret" that this orientation of the headmaster excludes them, they argue, from involvement in decision making. As noted earlier, the headmaster's priorities were influenced by the apparent state of disrepair of some buildings and the inadequacy of some classroom furniture at the time of his appointment. Attention to these areas was made more difficult because of the $80,000 deficit that he inherited from the previous administration. But many teachers have criticised the priority that Brother Carter has given to improving the appearance of C.B.C.'s grounds and buildings. They maintain that such an emphasis betrays a concern with externals instead of with the core of educating children. Scarce resources, they argue, should be directed towards employing more teachers and developing curriculum. For Brother Carter, however, the business of improving the school's appearance coincides with a deeply felt concern for tidiness and orderliness which pervades his conversation and influences his orientation towards the school, its teachers, and education:

When I arrived, the desks were the filthiest I had ever seen ... I think you will find them all neat and tidy and clean now ...
Some teachers - I haven't managed to weed them all out - seem to think that it is only a matter of instruction - not training, not education.

The appearance of C.B.C. is of "absolute importance" to Brother Carter and he sets a personal example in this regard. On his frequent walks around the school grounds he continually picks up paper and discarded scraps of food, and directs pupils to also do so. He frequently waters lawned areas and occasionally polishes windows, particularly in the office section of the school. Concern with the state of the school's grounds has led him into a close working relationship with his hard-working head groundsman, Roy Zanardo. In what was virtually a farewell speech to his staff at the recent Headmaster's dinner, Roy was singled out for special praise by Brother Carter who referred to him as a "true professional".

His personal interest in school maintenance has also led Brother Carter into close involvement with a small group of fathers of C.B.C. students. This group, known as the "Men's Committee", deals with minor repairs around the school on Sunday mornings - usually finishing the morning's work with a few beers. The Men's Committee has become for Brother Carter an important source of feedback from parents. His reports to teachers at staff meetings of messages from parents often refer to information received from this group or from the curiously titled Parents' and Friends' Association - a group of mothers, about a dozen of whom attend the semi-regular meetings and are variously referred to as the "ladies' committee" or "mothers' club". The major efforts of this group are the coordination of the roster of mothers who volunteer to assist in the school.
tuckshop, and the organisation of fund-raising activities such as a recent "Mannequin Parade" which was attended by some 200 mothers.

The headmaster and the parent associations appear to have a mutual regard for each other. Brother Carter finds strong support for his policies from these groups and values their contribution to the community of the school. He rarely misses an opportunity to be present at their meetings, on occasions foregoing other engagements, such as meetings of the Association of Headmasters of Independent Schools, to attend the P.F.A. He sees this duty as an important element in encouraging the involvement of parents in C.B.C.. His communication with the parent groups is so valued by Brother Carter that he maintains that it affords him a direct contact with parents which is "better than having a school council" because he, as headmaster, has the necessary "feed-ins" upon which to base decisions.

Not surprisingly, there is some commonality of membership of the parent groups in that husbands of women who are active in the Parents' and Friends' Association are often members of the Men's Committee. Those parents who are seen to have the headmaster's ear, then, are a small proportion of all parents of C.B.C. pupils, and some teachers feel that their views do not accurately reflect those of the larger parent body. Especially among lay teachers who live in the wider Newburyport community, there is a feeling that the Parents' and Friends' Association is a harmless coterie of generally well-to-do ladies who are unlikely to challenge the headmaster on matters of school policy or school issues. Interestingly enough, at
least one member of the Association shares this view. This woman regularly volunteers her services as a teacher's aide and believes that change is essential at C.B.C. if the school is to offer the type of education that she feels is appropriate for her children. The Men's Committee, likewise, is perceived by many as being ineffectual. An opinion of this group that is shared by several teachers, and by several office-holders of the Old Boys' Association, is that the Men's Committee comprises a group of very conservative Catholics, past students of C.B.C., whose image of what C.B.C. should be like is fashioned by an irrevocable past in which C.B.C. was staffed almost entirely by Brothers, discipline was rigid, and pupils, almost without exception, strived hard for the certification that would assist their social mobility in Australian society. The concern of the teachers who hold such views is that the influential minority of parents, with whom Brother Carter has established an intimate dialogue, merely reinforces his own educational convictions which are also perceived to be conservative.

As indicated earlier, an important hurdle in Brother Carter's scheme to refurbish C.B.C. is the debt which was accumulated by his predecessor. Although neither the religious nor the lay teachers have much idea about how the Provincial and his Council make decisions about which Brothers will be appointed to which schools and in what capacity, there is a strong feeling that Brother Carter was posted to C.B.C. to use his business acumen to clear up the deficit. Certainly, Brother Carter himself is very much at home in the world of banking and finance. Smith (1982) was struck by the easy
relationship that Brother Carter had with officers of the Commonwealth Bank and by their praise for him as a businessman and skilled manager. By means of an economy drive, employing inexperienced teachers, fund-raising, obtaining government grants, and playing the money market, Brother Carter has managed to meet his three-year target of eradicating the C.B.C. deficit, completing a series of renovations, and securing further borrowing to complete a total renovation of one section of the school. He is pleased with the progress he has made. As Smith summarises his impressions of the headmaster in this regard:

"He sees himself as a realist. He's fiscally conservative, believes he's right and is proud of the stance and the benefits it has brought to the school" (1982:25).

Brother Carter, then, is seen to have followed the footsteps of his predecessors in his attention to C.B.C. buildings. His business flair and sense of priorities to be achieved during his three year appointment have pushed him, like former C.B.C. principals, into an individualistic style of administration that has seen little consultation with his staff. While a number of staff members suggest more urgent priorities than those on the headmaster's agenda, Brother Carter seems to have the support of the parent groups in his attention to the physical environment of the school.

(d) Service to Newburyport Catholics

The businessman in Brother Carter extends beyond his consideration of school finances and into his discussion about school organisation and the very purposes of schools. This
occurs especially in two ways - he regards C.B.C. as providing a service for its paying clients, the parents; and he sees C.B.C.'s educational function as being the shaping of a product which is acceptable in the marketplace of employment or further study.

Of course, the service that Brother Carter wishes C.B.C. to provide is heavily influenced by Christian Brothers' traditions, the history of C.B.C., and the expectations of C.B.C. that have been confirmed in the minds of Newburyport Catholics. Again, these are summarised by Smith:

He links [his headmastership] with the Brothers' historical mission of improving, through education, the social and economic position of Catholic boys in Australian society. They need basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They need simple social skills and attitudes in courtesy, politeness, promptness, obedience, and responsibility. They need experience essential to their movement into various levels of the economic system of Newburyport specifically and Australia more generally (1982:25).

An important aspect of service to this mission is that teachers should be productive in ensuring that their pupils score highly in the external Higher School Certificate examination, the ticket for entry to tertiary studies and the most important credential for employment. Brother Carter has little regard for those teachers who do not deliver in this regard:

You can see why I am so interested in this business of hire and fire. Not only do we get pressure from the actual fact that is right down in front of you (i.e., examination statistics), there are parents who would like to see some of those teaching H.S.C. removed.

The overwhelming focus upon Higher School Certificate is a product of the twin concerns of equipping students for future careers and of convincing parents that, at least in regard to
the most public measure of school success, H.S.C. pass rates, C.B.C. is delivering the goods. This makes the position of teachers of Year 12 subjects somewhat vulnerable because of the scrutiny of external examination results. Unfavourable comparisons between pass rates can lead to discontent amongst parents. Brother Carter attempts to anticipate any grievances of parents and to take action to avoid having dissatisfied clients. He does this by seeking out from parents, feedback regarding teachers whom they consider are not providing satisfactory service.

Parents have a right to a good service, and if they think that it is not a good service then something ought to be done. I have spoken to some of these [teachers] in the H.S.C. and said, 'Your performance is just not good enough!'. That is where I get the feed-in and [I] keep very close to these parents and find out their responses - not going around pumping them, but listening carefully to what is on - and then you find that work is not corrected and things of this nature. And if you went into a shop and didn't get service, you wouldn't go there again.

Many teachers at C.B.C., and some parents, connect Brother Carter's concern with the external appearance of the buildings and grounds with an attempt to reassure parents that all is well at the school. As has been noted, some teachers regard this as emphasising an external veneer at the expense of priorities which may be less apparent to parents such as curriculum reform, class size, internal decision-making. The point was put most colourfully by a parent - one who does not rank amongst C.B.C.'s most satisfied clients:

If you start to undo the wrapping-paper, you might find that there are some smelly things underneath - so they prefer to keep it nicely packaged.

Brother Carter's critics see his emphasis on H.S.C. results, like his attention to C.B.C.'s physical appearance, as
an attempt to maintain the "veneer" of apparent success and stability. They argue that the veneer hides matters that require urgent attention. For his part, however, Brother Carter claims that the delivery of sound examination results is an essential part of Christian Brothers' service to clients.

(c) Headmaster and Staff

Brother Carter's perception of himself as a business manager places serious constraints on his relationships with the rest of his staff:

Interviewer: Somehow [teachers] sense that I know more about [the running of] the school than they do, ... I am curious if you agree with that observation.

Br Carter: I would say certainly, it is perfectly true. And I would ask, why would they need to know and why would they want to know? If they were in business would they know the financial aspect of the whole thing?

He believes that teachers, religious and lay, should concern themselves with classroom instruction rather than meddle with administration:

[Staff] have all been told just exactly what we were about, and [financial stability] was one of the things that we were about. We can't have all of the things that [teachers] think up and have that at the same time. It is just not as simple as all that and I fully appreciate all this because it makes me smile - I just wonder, if they were in business, just how much they would make.

Nevertheless, Brother Carter is adamant that all members of staff are provided with every opportunity to discuss matters with him or to bring suggestions to him. He has stated many
times at staff meetings, parent information nights, and on other occasions: "My door is always open". He is both bemused and irritated by the claim that one teacher "is sick of bashing his head against the headmaster's open door":

I am all for allowing them all of the freedom that is absolutely possible — that is my approach. [If] one man has a talent then he ought to be able to pursue that talent — but I don't give too strongly to people who are given the opportunity and don't take it and then say that 'I have been knocking my head on the door'. I don't think you will find any head marks on that door. That to me is ... pure fiction.

The door to Brother Carter's office is always open — but many of the teaching faculty, although by no means all, are reluctant to approach him. For some lay teachers, this reluctance grows partly out of a feeling of being somewhat like a foreigner in a strange, clerical land. The door to the headmaster's office lies behind an outer door which is the entrance into the Brothers' "house". To gain access one must pass through a general office area in which the offices of the deputy headmaster, the bursar, the school secretary and the headmaster's secretary are located. On stepping through the connecting door into the Brothers' residence, one enters a vestibule with a door to the Brothers' dining room in front, a stairway to the Brothers' bedrooms on the right, and the door to the headmaster's office on the left. Several lay members of the faculty express the view that "you feel uneasy" entering beyond the door into the Brothers' residence.

A more serious barrier to communication between the headmaster and his staff is that many teachers, religious and lay, find Brother Carter very difficult to talk to. For instance, Brother Carter feels that his presence in the school
quadrangle each morning before school begins is important in maintaining student control, checking uniforms, and is also an important component of his "open door" policy. Thus, he makes some effort to be available and accessible to people who need to see him at the beginning of each day. But few teachers avail themselves of this opportunity and several, who have approached him in the past, now refuse to talk with him in the quadrangle. These teachers believe that they are placed in a position of inferiority when they attempt to speak to the headmaster in the playground because they must follow him as he patrols the area if they wish to maintain the conversation. "I'm not going to follow him up and down like a little puppy-dog" is the reason given by one of these teachers for avoiding the headmaster. In what could be interpreted as an act of partial resistance, a number of teachers began to emulate the example of the deputy principal and stand still as the headmaster moved up and down. On some occasions this tactic has led to the two of them shouting to each other over some considerable distance.

The hesitancy of many teachers to approach him is noticed by Brother Carter but he is not concerned about their reluctance to make greater use of his "open" communications:

The whole thing, of course, is to keep open as many lines of advice as possible. That is why we have all these feed-ins, and that is why the open door policy ... Now all of that opportunity is right in front of them. Now, if they don't take it, then there is not much that you can do about it. Not that I am perturbed about it because ... to be quite honest ... if [I] want advice on something I think I know where to go.

The fact that few teachers have taken advantage of the open door policy suggests to Brother Carter that they are at fault:
I would think that those people are the problem, that is the way I would look at it.

There is little dialogue between headmaster and staff at C.B.C. Despite the "open door" policy, most staff find Brother Carter rather unapproachable, and, according to the principal, that is their problem.

(f) David Welsh and Brother Carter

As was suggested earlier, a minority of the C.B.C. staff share little of the reluctance of their colleagues in dealing directly with the headmaster. Indeed, the longest serving lay teacher, David Welsh, seventeen years at C.B.C. and prior to that a Christian Brother himself, enjoys the easiest possible access to Brother Carter. The two of them are involved in rotating classes for Religious Knowledge and, for one class, were involved in team teaching. The experience of working with Brother Carter has been most gratifying for David and he publicly expressed his appreciation in a farewell speech at the recent Headmaster's Dinner, and in an article that he prepared for the College Annual:

We thank you, Br Carter, for spending this time with us, and for giving us a share of your warm sense of humour as we laboured together in C.B.C..

As timetable coordinator David Welsh must consult with his headmaster - as he has done with previous headmasters:

[At first] I helped the person who was in charge of the timetable, Brother O'Carey, and when he was transferred the headmaster thought it would be wise, since I had done it with him, if I carried on. And then there is another thought behind it that other headmasters have kept since - that being a lay member of staff, and one who does intend to stay here, there is the continuity that you don't get with the Brothers transferring around.
This example of lay continuity at C.B.C. gives David considerable informal power. His authority as timetabler is intensified by his coalition of interests with Brother Carter. He seems to enjoy the additional authority and influence that the headmaster has conferred upon him by reinforcing his position as timetable coordinator, and using him for interviews with applicants for teaching positions at C.B.C. and for assistance with paperwork. Thus, the headmaster's sponsorship has boosted the informal power that David already possessed as timetabler and long-serving lay teacher. Such sponsorship, however, has a cost:

David Welsh: I'm the longest serving staff member of the school - yet sometimes I think I'm not on the staff at all. ... Lately, I have the feeling that, when I walk into the staffroom, conversation suddenly stops ... I put it down to the fact that I don't drink with them down the pub ... I don't really mind - the joke is that they come and go but I stay on. I'll always be here.

Most lay teachers, however, point to David's apparent co-option by the headmaster, not his absence from drinking sessions, as being the reason behind their excluding him from what are often political staffroom discussions.

The loyal and untiring service that David Welsh gives to C.B.C. consumes many hours beyond a normal teaching allotment. Sometimes, he says, his teaching suffers because of the demands of his administrative and extra-curricular duties. Such dedication to the school, however, has clearly not gained him the universal admiration of his fellow lay teachers and, moreover, his authority is resented by some Brothers who wish to maintain the Brothers' control of C.B.C. One Brother, for
instance, is annoyed by the influence that David has as
timetabler:

This is a Christian Brothers' school and I am a
Christian Brother. I'm not having him tell me what to
do.

As a source of input from the teaching faculty to Brother
Carter, then, David Walsh can do little to mediate between
headmaster and staff. In any case, Brother Carter feels that
consultation can be overdone:

If it was, you know, "what do we all think about it?", no hope, because to me that just cuts out leadership.

Leadership is an especially important quality in Brother
Carter's definition of headmastership. Without it, he claims,
administration becomes nothing more than a mediocre
representation of "the lowest common multiple". He supports a
hierarchical structure in which he, like his staff, must report
to superiors. This message was clear in his instructions to
staff on the opening day of school:

A headmaster must delegate. And if you are delegated
a job it doesn't mean that you can do it the way you
want to - you must constantly be in touch with your
superior, as I am constantly in touch with the
Provincial. That's all part of the chain of command.

David Welsh has proven to be a loyal and appreciative
supporter of Brother Carter. Despite being the longest serving
lay teacher at C.B.C. he can do little to mediate between
principal and staff. His informal power is resented by some
Brothers and lay teachers regard him as an isolate who is being
"used" by Brother Carter. And Brother Carter himself, as
leader in the hierarchy, is also isolated from the remainder of
the staff.
(g) The Influence of the Headmaster: a summary

As headmaster of C.B.C., Brother Carter strives to maintain the tradition of "good strong boss" that has been established by his predecessors in Christian Brothers' schools during the past hundred years. His action-oriented approach to school leadership fits this tradition but limits consultation between headmaster and staff. A short term as headmaster also pushes Brother Carter towards action rather than protracted consultation. Such an approach has achieved considerable results for C.B.C. during his three-year term, but these are restricted to a limited agenda that has been drawn up by Brother Carter and which does not necessarily reflect the priorities of his staff.

Parent groups, in the main, support the orientation that Brother Carter has taken - particularly his emphasis upon preparing pupils for Higher School Certificate examinations, and his aggressive business management. Brother Carter insists that C.B.C. must provide a "service" to parents by ensuring H.S.C. success for their boys. Teachers who are unsatisfactory in this regard can expect no sympathy from him.

Brother Carter attempts to tap "feed-ins" from members of staff as well as from parents and is critical of teachers who complain about his administration yet fail to make use his "open door" policy. For a variety of reasons, however, many teachers are reluctant to approach the headmaster directly. One of the few staff members who does enjoy easy access to him is himself isolated from the rest of the C.B.C. staff which, during the past two decades and particularly in very recent years, has become increasingly heterogeneous. The declining
proportion of Brothers on the staff and the influx of lay professionals, career teachers, has created a fundamental challenge to the traditional control of C.B.C.

3. MINORITY CONTROL OF C.B.C.

(a) A Brothers' School

One point about C.B.C. which requires reemphasis is that only twenty percent of the staff are Christian Brothers. The remaining eighty percent of lay teachers have varying degrees of commitment to Catholicism and the aims of the Christian Brothers. Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, the ownership and administration of C.B.C., as well as the traditions and expectations that have become a part of it, mean that C.B.C. is still very much "a Brothers' school".

On one level, however, things have changed markedly from what Brother Ernest calls "the golden days when all was fine in the Brothers' world". The influx of lay teachers, which reached its peak during the mid-1970's when defections from the Order coincided with the deployment of large-scale federal assistance to private schools, has meant that the administration of schools like C.B.C. has become more problematic than in the past.

Any newcomer to C.B.C. could be excused for believing that the proportion of Brothers on the staff was far greater than just twenty percent - for, as was illustrated in an earlier chapter, their influence upon the school appears to be far greater than that proportion suggests.

The increasing heterogeneity of staff means that the once relatively stable system of the Brothers schools has been
threatened. Moreover, as was discussed in chapter 3, there is evidence of a shift of values on the part of a number of members of the Congregation of Christian Brothers. This shift has important implications for the maintenance of C.B.C. as "a Brothers' school".

Most of the Brothers at C.B.C. recall a time, prior to the exodus of confreres and the appointment of lay teachers, when there was a comforting stability, predictability, and unity of purpose in Brothers' schools which were staffed almost entirely by Brothers. The point is summarised by Brother Sterling:

It is a little bit harder to run a school [now] than if you are a very close community and that community can work on its own say of a night time ... We would discuss a lot of things over tea time and if tea time happened to go to 7.30 we couldn't give a damn ... We would talk it out.

Within a community which lived and worked together in such relative harmony, communication, decision making and coordination were non-problematic and largely informal. Moreover, the community life provided its own built-in processes of counselling and support.

Br Sterling: And another thing, if a person was having difficulty you could go along of a night time and sit on the guy's bed and say, "Well ... how do I go about it?" ... In the old days when you were mainly in the one house you might just go along and [help - just as] a guy helped me in the first couple of years.

The solidarity of those "golden days", however, has been shattered by the growing diversity of recent years which has necessitated decision-making structures and formal processes of coordination. There have, understandably, been difficulties in formalising the administration of C.B.C.
Many Brothers at C.B.C. believe that a large scale transfer of formal authority from Brothers to lay staff is necessary if schools like C.B.C. are to continue for much longer. For some there are very pragmatic reasons for supporting such a major administrative change, since the number of Brothers throughout Australia is in decline and a large proportion of the remaining Brothers is quite elderly.

Some Brothers are concerned that, at C.B.C., virtually all administrative positions in the secondary school are in the hands of the Brothers. These include the area coordinators of the three administrative units, headmaster and deputy headmaster. This state of affairs is perhaps not surprising since the handbook for lay teachers in Christian Brothers' schools points out that:

It must be clearly understood by applicants for positions in the schools administered by the Christian Brothers that the senior administrative positions will always be filled by Brothers, and that major policy will be framed by the congregation. All staff members, however, will have a voice at staff meetings regarding the general organisation and school policy.

Cameron Font has an informed opinion about the Brothers monopoly of authority positions:

I think that traditionally the Christian Brothers have been in Newburyport and other schools and these are the Christian Brothers' schools. By having a senior administrator as a Christian Brother it is seen that the Christian Brothers are still in control of the school and it is still their school, and that they have control over what happens within the school, what subjects are taught and so on.

I think also, the second part of it, that the Christian Brothers - I can speak with some knowledge of that - would say they would maintain a better standard of Catholic education and discipline if one of their men were in charge of the school. I think they are the two parts.
Brother Gil O'Hara, however, stresses that the prescriptions of the Brothers' handbook against lay teachers occupying positions of authority no longer apply universally:

Well, that is out, in effect. There still may be theory [but] the practical thing is that people want to change it. For example, I would have liked to have seen if it was possible to have [a lay teacher as] the new area master for [years] 11 and 12.

Several Brothers express concern at the policy of the headmaster which has actually consolidated the minority control of the Brothers within the school by gradually shifting coordination positions, formerly held by lay staff, back to religious. They particularly regret that the position of area coordinator of Years 11 and 12, previously held by a lay teacher (who is, incidentally, a former Christian Brother) who left C.B.C. to become principal of a regional Catholic High School, did not go to another non-religious. According to one Brother:

It did strike me as if we are trying to tighten up the ship and we are not going to let any lay staff get any position at all and I was disappointed about that.

The position of the headmaster, Brother Carter, on the matter of religious control of C.B.C. is quite clear. His preference for even minor administrative positions being held by the few available Brothers is partly explained by his determination to maintain the traditions that he believes the Christian Brothers have established.

(b) The Brothers' Press for Change

Change within the Order appears to be idiosyncratic and reactive. Those Brothers at C.B.C. who favour more systematic change believe that any efforts on their part will be
frustrated at present because the main source of direction for the Brothers, the governing Provincial Council, holds outdated attitudes and has scant appreciation of the realities of modern schooling. If these Brothers are correct in their assessment that their Order is locked into a do-nothing policy, then the Brothers at C.B.C. will be in some danger of losing their moral authority within the school. Indeed, this tendency has already been noted by the veteran lay-teacher and ex-Brother, Cameron Pont:

Their members [are] numerically dwindling and if they wanted to maintain a Christian Brothers' ethos in the school ... their authority in the school, they ought to have been more forceful about it. I think what is happening is an encroachment of the lay man as opposed to the Christian Brothers and the lay person's influence in the school is becoming greater and greater without the positive control by the [Christian Brothers].

Although Cameron is himself somewhat ambivalent about aspects of the Brothers' "ethos", he regrets the demise of the unity of purpose that he believes once characterised C.B.C. Some confusion of purpose has arisen because of the lack of positive direction from either the Brothers or the incoming lay teachers. Because lay teachers were not given any authority, they had to gradually "encroach" administrative territory usually held by Brothers. This meant that teachers who stayed at C.B.C. long enough, like Cameron Pont and David Welsh, could eventually gain large measures of informal power as the Brothers become increasingly uncertain about their own priorities. Aims remain problematic, control diverse, and the Brothers' educational mission is preserved as much in rhetoric, sagas and myths as in the everyday functioning of C.B.C. This latter point is illustrated by the continual references to the
founder, which are made to legitimate current practice. Another example is the many references of the C.B.C. Brothers to the heroes of the past who played a large part in establishing the Christian Brothers on a firm footing in Australia.

While Cameron Pont and a few other lay teachers have encroached a degree of influence at C.B.C., many have relied upon the Brothers, who have maintained their minority control, for leadership. This can be explained partly by the pervasive nature of the Brothers' "presence", partly by the reputation that the Christian Brothers have gained as practical men of action (a reputation that some teachers new to C.B.C. felt was awesome), and partly by the fact that most of the lay teachers who might be considered for positions of authority within C.B.C. were themselves educated by Christian Brothers - in several cases by Brothers currently on the C.B.C. staff. Certainly, the headmaster of C.B.C. is in no doubt that lay teachers depend heavily upon the Brothers:

Interviewer: One of the things ... that comes in discussions ... is that the lay faculty relies heavily on the Brothers for leadership.

Br Carter: And work. Now this is important, it is a serious thing. Lay teachers come and go but who maintains the place? You see, it is not a walk in - walk out situation - and that is why there was so much hoo ha at these other places when the lay people took over [after the Christian Brothers withdrew]. They didn't see the amount of underpinning that the Brothers do.

Question: Just, like being around 24 hours a day?
Br Carter: I work. I am just not putting tickets on myself but even on Sundays I am working in the interests of the school. Now what lay man or lay principal is going to do that.

It would appear that Brother Carter is expressing his own opinion as well as, he believes, speaking for the parents when he says:

Parents would go up in arms if they lost the Brothers ... Parents don't have very high ideas of lay teachers.

Whether or not the parents or Brother Carter like it, however, the Brothers' presence at C.B.C., having already declined substantially, will continue to decline in future years. What presence will remain is likely to be an increasingly ageing one and this, too, will continue to alter the Brothers' administrative and moral grasp upon C.B.C. Already, long serving or career teachers, lay professionals, are gaining more and more informal authority at the school.

(c) Lay Teachers: "Don't Stick Your Neck Out"

Despite several "encroachments" there is a feeling amongst many lay teachers that they are denied any genuine influence upon C.B.C. Many claim an essential contradiction in the demands of the hierarchy that lay teachers should be committed and dedicated and yet be excluded from decision making. The point is put concisely by Heather Verdun:

It's all very well to ask people to be dedicated and to give you extra duties to do - and then cut you off from any say in the place. If you try and do anything [the C.B.C. administration] just cut you off at the ankles ... And then when someone like Jim Karn stands up at a meeting and trics to say something about some
of the problems in the place, some of them look at him as if it's blasphemy.

Similar views, shared by other lay teachers, make many of them reluctant to innovate or even to depart at all from usual day-to-day classroom practice. There is a strong feeling, particularly amongst less experienced lay teachers, that "you don't stick your neck out" lest the chop comes when anything goes wrong. Such considerations, for instance, put Jim Morris in two minds about whether or not he should press his Area Coordinator about arranging end-of-year activities such as class picnics and sport afternoons for the year 8 pupils whom he teaches. He knows that, if he does so, the organisation of the activities will be left to him and he is worried about the repercussions if things go badly. Although he feels a sense of duty to his pupils to end the year on a cheerful note, he believes that he will get no thanks for organising an activity programme and that it would be much easier for him to say and do nothing about it. The year will then end simply with a full week of examinations for his pupils.

The central position of the headmaster in the administration at C.B.C. is illustrated by the fact that most Brothers and lay teachers hope that Brother Carter's successor will allow more participation of his staff in decisions and the setting of priorities. Certainly, in spite of David Welsh's easy access to Brother Carter, most of the staff believe that his "open door" policy has not led to greater communication between headmaster and staff, and that, in the words of the very experienced Cameron Pont, "although suggestions might be invited, they are not welcomed". Brother Carter, himself,
suggests that he imposes his own very rigid definition of what the teacher and headmaster roles should be:

Br Carter: Now, when we employ a teacher here, we don't employ him to give us advice on the financial running of the place. I think this is the problem of the person who wants to get in the role that is not his.

Interviewer: Some [staff] would define the teacher's role more broadly than the classroom, as having varying amounts of say on various issues about the running of the school.

Br Carter: No, that is stopped and stopped purposely.

Although there are hopes that the incoming headmaster will be more consultative than Brother Carter, these were dampened when the news that he had terminated the employment of a young female teacher, apparently because of her poor classroom control, filtered back to lay staff. Some feel that extenuating circumstances are involved in the case of this first year teacher. The incident highlights the insecurity of tenure at C.B.C. and provoked the following exchange in the lay teachers' workroom:

Heather Verdun: This puts us all in a dangerous position. Someone can come in and give you the sack because he doesn't like the look of your face ... We have no protection at all, no union, no anything ... So how do you change this place?

Bob Murphy: You don't change it - you just get out. Look, [the Brothers] are never going to change. And it's not just the Brothers - they come and go after three or six years. You've got these blokes (pointing to the unoccupied desks of three lay teachers, each of whom has been at C.B.C. for some 12 to 17 years, and two of whom are ex-Brothers) who are so ingrained in this system that they just keep it going. Already
[David Welsh] has ingrained himself so far with Brother Kennedy (incoming headmaster) that he'll be just the same as with Brother Carter. And it's to his self-benefit to do so - he can influence things the way he likes.

The question of changing C.B.C. is an increasingly vexed one - but one which is being widely discussed especially by lay teachers who are seeking a greater share in decision making.

(e) Changing Direction

Although C.B.C., like any organisation, is a product of the relationships between the people who collectively make it up, most discussion about its improvement centres around criticism of the headmaster, or of the Brothers' Order and its Council, or of the expectations and hopes regarding the incoming headmaster. This is due partly to the apparent control that the headmaster and the Order have over the school. Yet virtually all teachers agree that they have almost complete autonomy within their own classrooms. Bob Murphy's reference to a number of lay teachers being "so ingrained in this system that they just keep it going" neatly captures the theme of "inertia" which permeates the accounts of many C.B.C. participants. The transcripts and field notes are punctuated by references to "nothing happening", "momentum", "getting the place moving", "keeping things running", "shakers and movers", "going backwards" and the like.

Inertia is seen by those who wish to change C.B.C. as operating in both of the ways which Newton's second law of motion predicts for physical matter. On the one hand, the school is seen by some as being static, at rest, nothing moves
or happens. On the other hand, C.B.C. is seen to be maintaining the same direction and momentum that was set by the Brothers many years ago and is now preserved by the transient Brothers and the "ingrained" lay teachers at C.B.C. Those lay teachers who are anxious for change, like Heather Verdun, Jim Karn and Bob Murphy, believe that the force needed to change the "direction" of C.B.C. is denied them because of the concentration of formal power in the hands of the Brothers. They are concerned at their perceived lack of influence and relate tales of the "best" teachers either leaving C.B.C. or looking around for alternative positions because of frustration at their inability to initiate changes or share in decision making. A further concern of this group is that the departure of professional teachers to further their careers in other schools not only means a loss of creativity and experience but also, by default, consolidates the status quo because the departing teachers have generally been replaced in recent years by inexperienced teachers whose insecurity prevents them from "rocking the boat".

Again, expectations for the incoming headmaster are muted. To suggestions from a group of lay teachers over lunch that the new regime might lead to greater communication and shared decision making, one senior Brother, who himself argues that C.B.C. must change along these lines, responded, "Tilting at windmills" - referring to Don Quixote's unwinnable battle with a giant windmill. Although the strong implication that the new headmaster either would not, or could not, change the existing situation at C.B.C. was not welcome to the others involved in the conversation, the incident did have its humorous side when
the school's bandmaster declared, "We'll have to give the band a new theme song - perhaps 'The Impossible Dream' or something from 'Man of La Mancha'."

The Brother involved in this conversation stresses that, contrary to the belief of some lay teachers, he and the other Brothers on staff have no greater influence over the headmaster than lay teachers have. This point is also emphasised by the deputy headmaster:

Br O'Hara: I think some [lay] staff might have felt that there was a sort of clique ...
... but I can assure you that in the last three years, to my knowledge, there haven't been any decisions made [as they were] years ago when there was only two or three lay teachers [who, later in the day] would know decisions made at the [Brothers'] breakfast table. Nor has there been even a meeting or a conference among the Brothers where policies or anything like that were made... without any lay people present. I can assure you of that.

Brother Carter confirms that his consistent policy has been to discourage "in house" meetings:

Interviewer: I don't perceive a lot of friction or conflict between the lay teachers and the Brothers generally.

Br Carter: We have tried to keep that down because, you know, it could be that we [Brothers] and they [lay staff] have meetings. And even in the house we... have stopped any meetings about school matters because that to me would break up, you know, this is what we think and this is what they think.

Nevertheless, there is a degree of separation between lay staff and religious. Because C.B.C. is a Catholic school and the Brothers members of a religious Order, they have a measure of moral authority. Brothers wear a form of clerical dress and
live in the Brothers' house on campus, where they spend preparation and correction time. Moreover, the Brothers' minority control of C.B.C. gives them an administrative as well as a moral status advantage over lay teachers:

Jim Morris: Most of the power is held within the Brothers' hands.

Question: Because only they can negotiate with Brother Carter, or perhaps, the Brothers as a community run the school?

Jim Morris: I think it is that negotiation with Brother Carter, yes, and because usually they are the area coordinators.

Question: The Brothers fill most of the senior administrative positions in the school?

Jim Morris: Yes, that would be right. And the mere fact that you don't have [lay teachers as] senior teachers or anything like that here.

The authority of the Brothers is reinforced because some lay teachers were previously Brothers, many were pupils at Christian Brothers' schools, some were taught at C.B.C. or at other schools by Brothers who are currently on the C.B.C. staff. There is within the staff, however, a remarkable heterogeneity of personnel, pedagogies and educational philosophies. In spite of this, many religious and lay staff feel with Cameron Pont that the Christian Brothers Order "has done very little, really, to think positively about an integration with lay and religious staff". In this regard, one Brother felt that the recent replacement of the lay teacher who had been area coordinator of years 11 and 12 with a Brother was "a bit of a shock";

Of course, in theory, while we say everybody has got opportunities to put forward ideas and do things, it would appear just on the structure of the place that you have to be a Brother to try and do something. But, there again, some of the Brothers would say that even that doesn't get you very far.
The final part of this comment is directed at Brother Carter's perceived unilateral decision-making and unchallenged control. Brothers and lay teachers alike believe that they have little impact upon major decisions affecting C.B.C. despite their autonomy at the classroom level. Indeed, Brother Ernest, recently appointed as year 11 and 12 area coordinator sees his appointment to that position as an attempt by Brother Carter to consolidate his own power as well as to reinforce the Brothers' minority control. He says that Brother Carter knows his style and performance from other schools and so "knows which way I will jump". Thus, according to Brother Ernest, by controlling him, Brother Carter gains a greater measure of control over the whole school. This explains, he says, the headmaster's failure to consider for appointment to the area coordinator position the lay teacher favoured by the deputy headmaster, Brother O'Hara, and by Brother Dowsett. In such ways the "direction" of C.B.C., for the present at least, is maintained.

(e) The Brothers' Control: a Summary

Although C.B.C., to outside appearance, conveys the impression that it is still "a Brothers' school", its internal dynamics reveal a complex shifting of traditional values. Within the Christian Brothers' Order the call to appoint lay teachers to positions of responsibility in Brothers' schools is steadily growing and has been heeded in several places. At C.B.C., however, despite a shrinking proportion of Brothers on staff, the trend of shifting administrative power to non-religious has actually been reversed in recent years. To counter their exclusion from formal decision making, therefore,
several lay teachers have managed to accrue substantial informal power. Less secure lay teachers, however, hesitate before taking actions that might be interpreted as challenging the headmaster's definition of a teacher's role at C.B.C..

A strong press for change comes from a substantial proportion of Brothers and lay teachers who talk about changing the "direction" of C.B.C. that is currently sustained by some "ingrained" lay teachers and Brothers who are reluctant to loosen the grip of religious upon "their" schools.

4. COORDINATION AT C.B.C.

(a) Area and Subject Coordination

For purposes of coordination, C.B.C. is divided into several administrative units or areas - primary (Years 3 to 6), junior secondary (Years 7 and 8), middle school (Years 9 and 10), and senior school (Years 11 and 12). An "area coordinator" presides over the day-to-day running and organisation of each unit. Most of the staff teach at one area level only, and attend the area meetings at which recommendations to be put to the headmaster for approval may be formulated.

In addition to area coordination at C.B.C. there is subject coordination. One teacher for each subject area, usually the teacher of that subject at Year 12 level, is appointed as subject coordinator and is responsible for overseeing the teaching and evaluation of the subject concerned.

The system of coordinators has operated for many years at C.B.C. and was reinforced by the previous headmaster who arranged meetings, at least monthly, between himself, the
deputy headmaster and the area coordinators. Although Brother Carter has not continued the meetings of coordinators, he has maintained the coordination system despite some reservations:

What was in existence was allowed to continue rather than barging in and saying, 'Look, this is all wrong'. You wouldn't get very much popularity out of that - not that I go for popularity, that wouldn't concern me at all. I would rather let them see what they have, and what was there for so long just doesn't work quite as efficiently as it should.

But other priorities, as noted earlier, have dominated the headmaster's agenda. Any plans that he might have had for reforming the coordination structure will not be implemented now because of the Provincial's decision to transfer Brother Carter to another school:

I have renewed other circumstances in the first three years ... This area - this is what I mean by moving in - that would be in the second three years. Now, you can't do everything. I wouldn't be able to do everything at once.

(b) Area and Subject Meetings

Brother Carter is not by any means the only member of the C.B.C. staff to believe that the coordination system is not working well. His plan is that maximum autonomy be given to each of the areas and that area and subject meetings should be the forums for discussion of ideas and issues which may then be brought to the headmaster's attention:

11 and 12, 9 and 10, 7 and 8, and primary - you have got those [areas] and you have also got subject coordinators here. If they have any suggestion whatever they can feed it in. But they haven't done that.

Brother Carter feels that staff criticism about lack of involvement in decision-making is unfair since, in his opinion, teachers have failed to take advantage of the "open
opportunity" to deal with issues at area and subject levels. He is therefore impatient with teachers whom he regards as "stirrers" and complainers who have not used appropriate channels:

What they don't know is that if the headmaster had continued he would have got in very closely after he had got the all clear from the Independent Headmasters [Association] to hire and fire without any trouble, and some of these very ones would have been some of the ones that would have been fired.

Many teachers, however, religious as well as lay, feel that the area and subject meetings do not provide an adequate opportunity for involvement in school affairs. This belief springs from the conviction amongst staff that there is little effective communication between the area coordinators, the headmaster and the deputy headmaster. In fact, most believe that relationships between these administrators are downright hostile and they comment upon the open antagonism between some of them that has been apparent on a number of occasions. Thus, the deputy headmaster, Brother O'Hara, often finds that decisions about which he is unaware have filtered from the headmaster's office through to the staff:

It is very difficult sometimes. People have said to me, "Did you know something was going on?" and actually I didn't know it was going on ... Over a time little things can frustrate you and annoy you, and I still think, to a great deal, that it is brought about by not having certain meetings at certain times with heads of department and headmaster ... I think you need that to get clarification all round to know what is happening.

Brother O'Hara believes that such meetings, as were held regularly by the previous headmaster, are essential for effective coordination. Brother Carter, however, prefers area coordinators and other teachers to approach him individually
according to his "open door" policy. But many teachers stress their view that recommendations and suggestions from area meetings, in some cases the product of hours of discussion and negotiation, are not reported to the headmaster for action. This belief leads to a sense of futility on the part of many who feel that their contributions in area meetings are largely pointless. Heather Verdun, a teacher in the Year 11 and 12 area, summarises this general viewpoint:

Heather Verdun: It comes down to direction from the top ... There are some problems that we rely very heavily on direction from the top and we really can't make any decision. I mean, we can make decisions - but whether or not they are implemented or taken notice of is another thing. And unless we have a very strong coordinator, someone who is prepared to go in to bat for us, we can jump up and down and say what we like but we are totally ignored ... A lot of people seem to think that the present headmaster is not really aware of the problems that we have and that it is very hard to get a decision from him.

Interviewer: On educational issues?

Heather Verdun: Yes.

Interviewer: He is obviously aware of the resources position of the school.

Heather Verdun: Yes, he is very good for those things, he is, you know, certainly on top of that, but ... a lot of people see it as being a personality thing. Even Gil O'Hara who is the vice principal, when he comes to our Year 11 and 12 meetings, lots of decisions have been made, according to him, without any reference to himself. So, I mean, if there is no communication between the headmaster and the vice principal, who are both Brothers, you wouldn't expect it anywhere else would you? You know, it is just very hard to get anything done.
The difficulty of arranging dialogue between C.B.C. administrators is illustrated by a mid-schoolyard conference between Brother Carter, Brother Ernest and Brother O'Hara, which Brother O'Hara organised by intercepting the other two on their way to or from classrooms. Brother O'Hara explains the background to this seemingly informal meeting:

**Interviewer:** Is that sort of thing a more or less usual occurrence?

**Br O'Hara:** No, it isn't. Not here [at C.B.C.]. Well, I thought it was a good opportunity since we don't seem to have many opportunities when heads of groups or heads of departments get together. There was something that concerned both of them, ... and since Brother Ernest was concerned with it, Brother Carter was the headmaster, I thought it was better to talk to them there - not so much as to get a final decision on anything, but open up areas and say what I had done.

**Interviewer:** That does bring up a fairly important point about decision making - the degree of communication between those who are in official coordinating roles.

**Br O'Hara:** Well, in some ways I have found that hard here over the last few years. I am not sure whether it has been mainly because of the lack of structures over the last two or three years.

It appears that the formal coordination structures are broken down at C.B.C. Teachers believe that area and subject meetings are futile because decisions reached by staff are not acted upon by the headmaster. The belief is, in fact, that despite Brother Carter's "open door" policy, decisions of area and subject meetings are not conveyed to him by coordinators. The relationship between headmaster and deputy illustrates the general communications problem.
(c) Gaining the Headmaster's Favour

The general view that coordinators are not effective mediators between staff and headmaster heightens the sense of impotence common to many teachers, especially lay teachers, many of whom feel that their professional aspirations are being frustrated because of exclusion from decision making. Heather Verdun pointed out that "a very strong coordinator" is required if staff opinion is to be noted by the headmaster and implemented into school policies. The recent past, she says, provides such a model in the form of the previous English coordinator:

Brother Jones last year was very keen that we have cohesion and continuity, and I think things improved with his direction — but, of course, he was, you know, a real mover and shaker and got a lot done for us. He was really prepared to go to bat for a lot of issues and we need someone like that who is prepared to go to the headmaster and, you know, really state, "Well, this is what we need" … But there is really no-one in the senior area [now] who can do that. I mean, the chap who was last year who was the Year 11 and 12 coordinator, John Carlton, he was aware of the problems and he made representation to the headmaster on a number of occasions but, I don't know, they were ignored, or perhaps the headmaster didn't think they were important enough or whatever. We really don't know what goes on.

Some teachers have found that the best means of gaining favourable results is to utilise their considerable classroom autonomy and, where necessary, bypass the coordination structure by going straight to the top. Such is the case with the recently recruited language teacher who is attempting to set up a new course in Italian.

Question: You have a lot of autonomy?

Marie Campagna: Yes.

Question: What about the extra teaching assistance for next year, who would you talk to about that?
Marie Campagna: Brother Carter.

Question: Brother Carter?

Marie Campagna: Yes, I would.

Question: So, there is no area or level coordinator?

Marie Campagna: Brother Sterling is - but I find that if I want something I would be best to just go straight to Brother Carter because that is who I dealt with in the beginning and I go back to him.

Question: And that is where the decisions are made?

Marie Campagna: That is right - so I just go and see Brother Carter.

Marie Campagna's preference for going directly to the headmaster for assistance or decisions indicates that, for her at least, Brother Carter's door is relatively open. Most staff members, for many of the reasons outlined earlier, and because of what Heather Verdun calls "a personality thing", are much more reserved than Marie Campagna in dealing with him. Marie also suggests that the status of area coordinators and subject coordinators is not high - a view that is widely shared:

Br Dowsett: I believe that we really don't do all that much about coordination, possibly because the people who are asked to do it are often too busy in other things and they are not given time to do it ... We don't have that many people here, for example, that go to inservice days, do we?

Question: What sort of status do you think the coordinators have in the school?

Br Dowsett: In practice, not all that much I don't think.

Interviewer: Area coordination seems to be taken much more seriously [than subject coordination].

Br Dowsett: Yes, a lot. I think so.
Question: Why do you think that is the case?

Br Dowsett: Could be related to ... control being important. Well, it's the area coordinator people who are more or less controlling what goes on rather than the subject coordinators.

Recent events at C.B.C. confirm Br Dowsett's view that coordinators serve a control function. The emphasis upon direct control, which has been an outstanding feature of Brother Carter's headmastership, and the part that area coordinators should play in it, was reinforced by a directive from him to area coordinators which was given at a staff meeting:

I wish to point out that the area coordinators should hold a meeting once a month with students in their area. We'll schedule them at 1.15 on the same day once a month. You should emphasise points like conduct at the bus stop, general politeness - these things need to be drummed in - correctly worn uniform, level of noise in classrooms and elsewhere ... By repeating these things, and repeating them, you gradually build up a pattern of behaviour, a tradition.

The resultant area assemblies, held during lunch break, were resented by students and unpopular amongst teachers. They placed an additional burden upon the area coordinators, and they did little to enhance their professional status.

The coordinator of the Year 7 and 8 area agrees with Brother Dowsett's judgement that coordinators have minimal influence:

Br Sterling: Well, what in fact does one decide in the area? One doesn't decide the curriculum. You do not decide the teaching load. You do not decide who teaches what. You do not decide the class size. You [merely] decide what time you are having your exams.

Formal subject coordination is seen by most staff as being even more cursory than area coordination. During the final
year of Brother Carter's headmastership, for instance, there has not been a single meeting of English teachers to discuss coordination of that subject. As Brother Hourigan explains the situation:

I think that gets back to the personalities. Some subject coordinators never have a meeting of their subject and you would have others who might have a meeting once a month and run a very tight ship.

Although Brother Carter stipulates that subject coordinators must submit to him coordinated syllabi for each level, some fail to do so and others simply copy the programmes that they handed in for previous years. Many teachers have never seen the syllabi and some did not know of their existence. The popular view is that the drawer of the filing cabinet containing syllabus statements is never opened by Brother Carter or by anyone else.

The subject coordinator whom many staff members mentioned as making the greatest effort to coordinate his subject explains some of the difficulties that he has encountered:

There is very little checking done on us and also teachers don't actually really care what the other teachers do, in my opinion. I mean, each person is on his own and you just teach something and no one really cares what you are doing. As science coordinator I attempt to actually see what the others are doing and I continually hand out stuff and that, and I see that it is not being used. My power is very limited in that area. No person in the school other than the headmaster has really got any power to go to teachers and say, "Look, you have to do that!", because I would be virtually told where to go.

Despite the isolated examples of Brother Jones, then, subject coordinators are seen to have scant effect on the school, its programs or its policies. Area coordination is taken somewhat more seriously, but as a means of control rather than as a means of enabling staff participation.
(d) **Teacher Criticisms**

Professional lay people, career teachers, who have been appointed to C.B.C. in recent years, are especially critical of the perceived ineffectiveness of school coordination and decision making. As has been seen, despite Brother Carter's recent admonition of staff, "It should be dawning on some [teachers] by now that more independence is given to areas", the general feeling is that the area meetings do not provide an adequate means of staff participation in the running of C.B.C. The general view of this group of recently appointed teachers is that the meetings are occupied with trivial matters - important decisions being made by the headmaster alone.

Frustration at perceived lack of influence can lead lay staff into criticism of the Brothers' minority control and of the Brothers, themselves, who are sometimes seen as barriers to school reform. A large proportion of the teaching Brothers at C.B.C. are elderly and work in the Year 9 and 10 area. These brothers, particularly, are thought of by young and enthusiastic lay teachers like Bob Murphy as impeding necessary change:

Bob Murphy: Last night's Year 9 and 10 meeting takes the cake. It was just constant bitching and complaining about the kids. There was not one positive comment. They were going on about how the kids are bored and uninterested. Cripes, no wonder they're bloody bored.

Bob Murphy's view of the Year 9 and 10 area, in which a large group of Brothers is clustered, is also represented within the Brothers' community. Brother Sterling, for instance, is disappointed at the apparent lack of initiative
displayed by his confreres, and wishes to disassociate himself from their complacency:

Br Sterling: I was so shocked and staggered at the lack of initiative around Year 10 that I couldn't take it.

Question: Is that the area most dominated by Brothers ... ?

Br Sterling: That is why I jumped out - because I found that I was so frustrated. Perhaps this would be people who did not want to rock the boat - hence you do nothing ... And perhaps you might also find people that have got such a narrow outlook on things and they will not discuss things.

In the event, meetings of teachers in the Year 9 and 10 area have been held only irregularly, sometimes (especially during the past year) as infrequently as once a term. Meetings of the Year 7 and 8 area are even more infrequent and, when held, are usually conducted without notice when the area coordinator assembles as many teachers in the area as are available in the lunch room. Thus, Brother Carter's expectation that his staff "have got open opportunity [for involvement in school issues] in their area discussion" proves to be frustrated. Only meetings of the primary and the Year 11 and 12 areas are held regularly.

As coordinator of the primary area, Cameron Pont is pleased about the benefits which he believes his coordination has brought to his area, but laments the perceived failure of other areas of the school to follow up the work begun at that level:

There is a screaming need for that further support into the jungle of 7, 8, 9 and 10 ... One doesn't have to be really terribly perceptive to see what is happening in that area of the school. I think there are programmes that have been going on there for years and years and years and years - let's say 16 years anyway - and not much innovation has been done and not
much constructive thinking has been done. There has been nobody really there who has addressed himself to what the curriculum is all about ... It's "teacher and book" learning. There is not a great deal of interference or interaction with the teachers and students and discussions ... Just to highlight one point - we have a mathematics programme operating from 3 to 6 which is coordinated ... and everybody knows what has gone on before and will go on next year. But there that coordination stops - there is a full stop on entry to the Year 7 group here ... There is no antagonism between the coordinators of primary and the other secondary areas, there is no antagonism at all - there is just no coordination.

Cameron has described the way in which he gradually "encroached" authority within C.B.C. After 16 years of encroaching he can now refer to the primary area as his "little kingdom" - an expression which indicates the extent to which the primary section, devoid of Brothers, has gradually become decoupled from the rest of the school. Of course, as with David Welsh, Cameron Pont's long years of service, and the continuity and perceived efficiency of the conduct of his portfolio, guarantee the "king of the primaries" the professional respect of his fellow teachers and some immunity from interference from Brother Carter who, though headmaster, has only three years experience of C.B.C. to stack up against Cameron Pont's sixteen.

Thus, while the Year 7 and 8 area and the Year 9 and 10 area are seen by staff as being somewhat ineffective and stagnant, the semi-autonomous primary area is seen to be working well. At the other end of the school, while few formal meetings are held in the junior and middle secondary areas, the Year 11 and 12 teachers meet every fortnight. The senior school has not always met so frequently, however. The practice of fortnightly meetings was introduced by the previous area
coordinator, an ex-Brother who had been a lay teacher at C.B.C. for twelve years. According to Heather Verdun and most other Year 11 and 12 teachers, John Carlton was "aware of the problems" in the area but had little success from his numerous representations to the headmaster. Brother Carter hints very strongly that he was relieved when Carlton accepted a position as principal of another Catholic school. He was replaced as area coordinator by Brother Ernest thus, as discussed earlier, consolidating the Brothers', and Brother Carter's, control over C.B.C. Brother Ernest, new to the school, called few area meetings until pressured by several teachers, principally Jim Karn and Heather Verdun, to continue the practice of fortnightly meetings.

Not all of the Year 11 and 12 teachers are happy about changing back to fortnightly meetings; they are time consuming and perceived as being pointless by some. The widespread view that personality and communication problems amongst the Brothers in administrative positions militates against even the reporting of meeting recommendations to the headmaster has already been noted. A few teachers, generally those with many years of service, argue that the frequent meetings "never get anywhere" and that matters discussed are often of little relevance to their teaching lives. But other teachers, like Jim Karn, Heather Verdun and, to some extent, Brother O'Hara, believe that the frequent area meetings provide an important opportunity for the airing of grievances. They wish to transform the focus of the meetings from an emphasis on "petty control and trivia" to a forum for debate about educational issues and questions of power and authority within C.B.C. Such
efforts constitute an attempt at consciousness raising in line with Jim Karn's conviction that change will not come about "unless we are all prepared to take more initiative".

(e) **Coordination: A Summary**

The coordination structure at C.B.C. is traditional and straightforward with coordination of areas and of subjects, and is preserved in form rather than practice. There is widespread dissatisfaction concerning the perceived ineffectiveness of the principal forums for teacher communication and decision making—area meetings and subject meetings. Many teachers, especially career oriented lay teachers, believe that it is "very hard to get anything done" and feel that their professional aspirations are being frustrated because of their exclusion from decision making. Some of them attempt to bypass the coordination structure, which they see as maintaining a control function rather than facilitating the exchange of ideas which may lead to decisions, by exploiting their classroom independence while complying with the forms of coordination. Others go directly to the headmaster for on-the-spot decisions or assistance.

While many teachers have learned to live with a coordination system that gives them little joy, some are attempting to alter the focus of area meetings so that they become centres of critical discussion about educational issues and questions of power and authority within C.B.C.
5. DECISION MAKING: FORMAL AND INFORMAL POWER

(a) Recent Innovations and Teacher Initiatives

Although many teachers, religious and lay, express disappointment, frustration and sometimes anger at their perceived inability to bring about change at the school, there is no doubt that, despite opinions to the contrary, things happen - changes occur, albeit not at the pace that some members would like. What appears to sustain the impression amongst staff that the school is inert is that formal authority relationships seem, at present, impregnable. But teachers do have a hand in the changes that are implemented - sometimes making use of their classroom autonomy, sometimes using the coordination structure or directly approaching the headmaster, sometimes through bypassing those in authority altogether.

C.B.C. is, of course, a product of its members - and the staff membership has not remained static. This, in itself, has produced changes. Jim Karn's explanation of the evolution of careers teaching and work experience, for example, illustrates a complex point about gradual change over time due to individual appointments:

There was no positive decision made by anybody to say that we will have careers. It was simply that John Carlton, who was head of commerce at that stage, felt that a guy like myself - and then we had another guy, Bevan O'Grady, ... [who] was a class 9 public servant who decided to leave - brought a bit of outside expertise to the school if you like. You have to realise, and I am perhaps going overboard a little bit, the staff at this school was either Brothers, ex-Brothers, or ex-priests when I came ... We exist inside these little walls up here [at C.B.C.]. Les Cunningham wasn't. Les was probably the first of the normals, who was here only one more year than I was. And then I came along and reinforced some of the things Les was saying and perhaps changed a few attitudes of other groups. Bevan O'Grady came along and supported me ... Bruce Smith has come along and is
sort of bringing some of the external influences in, too. It has been a very slow progression.

Once teachers like Jim Karn gain the support of colleagues they are more likely to encroach on institutional authority in the manner of Cameron Pont, who believes that the professional expertise and experience of lay teachers is not fully utilised by the administration. This situation, Cameron argues, derives partly from the short-sightedness of headmasters who are blinkered by the narrow focus of restricted tenure and compliance with superiors:

No-one has said that [a series of headmasters with short tenure] is a major problem and we'll have to do something about it. Of the four headmasters that I've had at C.B.C. not one has come along and said, 'Now, how are things going down here? What can we do to make this situation better? How do you perceive the good things and the bad things going on in the school?' I think things that have been done have been initiated from below rather than from on top, and I think that would be a fair statement. I think I might have mentioned that I encroach a little and I think other people do that ... I think that there are indications when people have instigated transition groups, but that instigation has come from the people and it certainly hasn't come from the hierarchy in the school, and it hasn't come from the headmaster - either this headmaster or any previous headmasters. They have kept to the traditional subjects and any change in traditional subjects has to be first of all vetted by the headmaster and then it has to go to headquarters.

Careers education and work experience have been faculty initiatives which have been fostered by a group of teachers who "came along and supported" each other, bringing ideas from other schools and past experiences to C.B.C. Approval of the headmaster was sought and obtained after a united commerce faculty consulted with other staff, negotiated timetabling, established necessary community contacts and generally set up a smooth introduction of their innovation. An extension of the work experience programme was approved by the headmaster after
Bruce Smith collected parents' replies to a questionnaire which he had attached to an information sheet outlining the claimed benefits of students undertaking work experience. Such an example of staff involvement in curriculum change at C.E.C. illustrates that teachers are not powerless. Even though the formal authority of the headmaster appears absolute, it can be circumvented, simply ignored or, as in this case, appealed to to bestow final approval upon an initiative which had been carefully planned for implementation.

In other cases, teachers use the headmaster's initial approval of a project to fashion it according to their own ends and educational beliefs. These may not necessarily coincide with those of the headmaster. In fact, an innovation may be supported by different people for a variety of different reasons. Such is the case with the Year 11 transition course—mentioned above by Cameron Pont as being "an instigation from the people". However, according to Jim Karn, one of the developers of the course, the first initiative for it came not from below but from the top:

**Question:** When did the transition idea start?

**Jim Karn:** Well, it started in 1981 and I have got the letter that Brother Carter initially gave to me to start it. There was no deliberate curriculum incentive or no deliberate policy to start it, quite frankly. It was simply a letter came [stating] that money was available ... That is what came and that is what he gave me because I am the careers teacher. So, it was simply a 'see what is in it for us' situation.

The task of developing careers education and transition initiatives and selling them to the headmaster and others was made easier because of government rhetorical and financial
encouragement for the adoption of such programmes. Informal reports suggest that, as these programmes have become increasingly in vogue, the headmaster has claimed and received recognition for "introducing" such important curriculum initiatives. Regarding transition education, however, Jim Karn and Les Cunningham, with support from John Carlton and Peter Montini, grasped the opportunity to develop a course which, they believe, is interesting and which, as will be discussed later, enhances the self-esteem of school-leavers as well as confronting some of their taken-for-granted beliefs about their society.

Because the activities of the transition class are somewhat removed from the core activity of preparing students for H.S.C., its teachers believe that they have a large measure of flexibility. As with Cameron Pont's "little kingdom" of the primary area, the transition course is sufficiently decoupled from the rest of C.B.C. to allow its teachers to implement their own schemes without influencing other school members and, therefore, without requiring Brother Carter's sanction. Hence, Les Cunningham and Jim Karn took it upon themselves to send transition pupils into the Newburyport community during school time to research local issues, and to set up a student controlled and operated business, Transition Enterprises. Les explains the rationale:

The three of us who are mainly involved - myself, Jim Karn and Peter Montini - can really make decisions to do what we like. And the decision to do these projects involving Newburyport came about when we felt that the transition kids seemed to be a bit lethargic compared to the group we had last year. They didn't seem as motivated as last year's group and it was decided that we should try and offer them some interesting experiences that would actually get them
out beyond school and into contact with other people. And that was mainly the rationale for the Transition Enterprises scheme also.

Other examples of teacher initiatives at C.B.C. abound, and the classroom autonomy of teachers has been noted. Yet a feeling of powerlessness persists amongst staff and is intensified whenever Brother Carter implements unilaterally made decisions:

Question: How are decisions [about curriculum] made, is there a collective staff input?

Peter Daniels: No. Well, the first we heard about the [introduction of] Italian, for instance, was at the parent-teacher session and we heard from the principal that an Italian teacher had been employed and we hear that you are now going to have Italian.

As noted earlier, many teachers believe that there is no adequate forum for input into decision-making. This belief leads some to a sense of professional regret that they are unable to contribute in a systematic way to the life of the school. Moreover, the combination of teacher encroachments and unilateral executive action denies any overall sense of coherent educational policy.

Interviewer: I don't get the feeling [from what you are saying] that there is a sense of educational philosophy behind the programme.

Robert Darling: Well, I think that is true. I have been looking for it myself and I have not really heard it discussed - it doesn't exist in terms of a stated philosophy ... I think that more could be done - the difficulty is that we are not always privy to the sanctum of educational decision making within the place - so one can only speculate.

Question: Is that retained almost exclusively by the Brothers themselves?
Robert Darling: I think so. For example, there is no standing committee for curriculum development within the school as such. The procedure seems to be response to particular directives or intimations on the part of the headmaster either by interested parties or individuals ... There was never any debate about the curriculum.

Individual teacher initiatives abound at C.B.C. Such innovations add to the heterogeneity of the school and are generally seen to be successful. But despite these initiatives, teachers feel excluded from formal decision-making and perceive present authority relationships to be impregnable.

(b) Teachers, Courses and Individual Initiatives

The unpredictable nature of decision making appears to be reinforced by the transfer into and out of C.B.C. of Brothers and, to a lesser extent, lay teachers who have had successes in previous schools. An opinion that is strongly held by some lay teachers is that Brothers come into the school, often as subject or area coordinators, and push for schemes that existed in their previous schools. In this way, according to the argument, the opinions and recommendations of the longer serving lay teachers are largely overlooked. Hence, instead of gaining consensus, decisions are imposed upon the staff by individual Brothers who come into the school in positions of some authority and are able to persuade the headmaster to adopt their favourite, but not necessarily appropriate, schemes from days gone by. Thus, instead of developing a unity and philosophy of its own, C.B.C. is continually being reshaped in a haphazard fashion according to borrowed schemes from other schools.
There is an abundance of evidence to support the proposition that a number of stop-start projects have been the work of individual Brothers who have been able to force decisions through. An example is the priority that was once given to French instruction:

David Welsh: Two years ago Brother Sullivan was transferred and Brother Sullivan had had that area up there as a French language area. When he was transferred French died a natural death - French seems to go with people who are keen on it and no-one was keen on it after that. So we decided after my recommendations to have the language laboratory become an A.V. room, and we then said, 'Since we have got the place we will buy colour [video equipment].

Brother Sullivan, a champion of the French language, had obtained the previous headmaster's approval for the expenditure of some thousands of dollars to establish a complex electronic facility for language instruction. His departure has meant the demise of French at C.B.C. and also the abandonment of much expensive equipment. The transformation of the language laboratory into an audio-visual complex also hints at a partial sketch of the map of present authority relations under Brother Carter. David Welsh is the audio-visual coordinator and his claim to the ex-language laboratory was contested by others who also had plans for it - the strongest opposition coming from Jim Karn and Les Cunningham who wanted the room for their transition class. To complicate the issue, the librarian was laying claim to the audio-visual materials in an attempt to consolidate information resources in a central area. But David Welsh's recommendation to the headmaster appears to have secured a decision that is favourable to him.
Terry Jones is another Brother who is judged to have had a considerable impact upon C.B.C. during his short stay there. As English coordinator he held meetings of his faculty at least monthly and, according to Brother Hourigan, "ran a very tight ship". Heather Verdun's admiration for him personally and for his readiness to "go to the headmaster and, you know, really state, 'Well, this is what we need!'" have been discussed. Brother Jones managed to obtain a number of changes which he and his faculty believed would enhance the teaching of English. The most notable of these was a timetable reorganisation to allow for an extension of the number of periods devoted to English at all levels of the secondary school. Not all of the C.B.C. personnel, however, share Heather Verdun's enthusiasm for Brother Jones' achievements:

Heather Verdun: Brother Jones ... was a real shaker and mover. We need someone like that to get things done.

Jim Karn: Yes, Heather. The trouble is that he did all the shaking up and then moved on.

Jim Karn's comment supports a view of decision making that is widely held at C.B.C. — that those responsible for idiosynoratic decisions have often failed to fully appraise themselves of the situation and have not necessarily considered all of the consequences of the decision. In this case, according to a group of lay teachers and Brothers, Brother Jones was able to gain concessions because:

He was very active. He made a lot of noise and he became very emotional about the issue — very intense about it.

Some people feel that Brother Carter acceded to Brother Jones' wishes rather than put up with the unpleasantness of
Brother Jones' hostility and because of the force of his personality. Brother O'Hara, mathematics coordinator as well as deputy headmaster, argues strongly that the decision to extend the number of English periods, about which he was not consulted, was a result of such factors but was not properly thought through. The full implications for timetabling and the effect on other subjects, he suggests, were not taken into account when the decision was made.

This incident suggests that the concerns of many staff about the allegedly haphazard nature of decision making are well grounded. In this case, whether or not the decision to extend the number of English periods was a good one, the wishes of one active, forceful, concerned and well-meaning teacher with some status and influence in the school took precedence over wider consultation and interests. The staff as a whole had no say in the decision nor any opportunity to discuss its implications for their own teaching or for their subject areas. Although Brother Jones led his fellow English teachers in gaining favourable concessions from their headmaster, the incident has confirmed the view, widely held amongst lay teachers, that only Brothers have the security and influence to push strongly for changes. It is also an example of the apparent success of imported ideas rather than those initiatives that have developed from the bottom up - another common grievance at C.B.C. Home grown initiatives, it seems, blossom more readily in decoupled environments of the primary area and the transition class, or in the protected atmosphere of autonomous classrooms.
C.B.C.'s Power Coalition

Although individual Brothers, like Brother Jones and Brother Sullivan, are able to influence decision making in a way which many lay teachers feel that they cannot, the teacher who is perceived to have the greatest influence with Brother Carter is not another Brother but C.B.C.'s longest serving lay teacher, David Welsh. As discussed earlier, David enjoys ready access to, and rapport with, Brother Carter. Theirs is a close working relationship embracing team teaching, timetabling, employment of teachers, organisational details for parent-teacher meetings, information nights, and administrative paperwork.

Although David Welsh insists that all decisions taken are not his but the headmaster's, most staff members believe that he has much influence in those decisions. David, himself, implies as much:

Question: The decision is basically the principal's about staffing?

David Welsh: The staffing is the principal's decision. [But] I go along with my recommendations and my proposals ... I prepare a list for the headmaster.

David's monopoly of timetable construction ensures him a high degree of influence in an institution in which timetables are sacrosanct:

The headmaster gets this [draft timetable]. Now, he understands that anything that I have written here in this grouping is purely recommendations - nothing more. I will not take the final responsibility because that could cause a lot of trouble. He has to take that. Now, what [Brother Carter] has done in the past - he has done it for two years - he simply puts my sheet up on the board and he endorses exactly what I have said.

And when the occasion is right, it appears that David can influence policy according to his own preferences:
Last year we tried an experiment - much against my will but the senior coordinator wanted it - and that is that he wanted teachers to be fairly stable in rooms and boys to come to them. Well, it was chaotic, right. So we went back to our old system this year where, as far as possible, teachers go to rooms.

Significantly, the decision to change from a policy of students shifting from room to room for different subjects back to one of teachers moving from class to class, as well as reflecting an executive concern for order, was made without consultation with the teachers who would be affected, or with the deputy headmaster or area coordinators. The timetable simply determined movement of teachers and pupils. Hence the confusion when, at a Year 11 and 12 meeting on the opening day of the school year, a somewhat irate Jim Karn first noticed the policy reversal implicit in the timetable:

Jim Karn: A lot of shelving and class sets were put into room 23 to be used as a commerce room. According to the timetable, Year 12 economics and accounting won't be using that room.

David Welsh: That's right. That's because of Brother Carter's direction that Year 11 and Year 12 are not to use the same rooms. He feels that a lot of interference to desks was caused by different year levels in the same room.

Br O'Hara: [But that] goes against the idea of setting up subject rooms. Did he think about that?

David Welsh: I explained all that to him.

Br O'Hara: Yeah, but did he think about it?

In any case, the change had little effect on Jim Karn - his fellow teachers agreed with his suggestion that he simply swap classrooms with other teachers so as to arrange all of his commerce classes in room 23, which then remained the "commerce room". The policy of mobile teachers and stay-put classes was therefore easily circumvented by teacher negotiation.
As deputy headmaster, Brother O'Hara expresses a deeply felt regret that he does not have the same access to, or influence with, the headmaster as is apparently granted to David Welsh. The change of policy regarding movement of teachers and classes is but one of many decisions that he had no part in making and about which he learnt only indirectly—in this case, because of a chance query to David Welsh about the timetable. Of all the teachers at C.B.C., religious and lay, only David is privy to the headmaster's thinking. This, combined with his overall familiarity with the organisation and day-to-day running of the school gained from his long experience and timetabler's perspective, place him in a favourable position to mediate between the headmaster and his staff. But, as discussed earlier, many teachers believe that David "does not represent our interests". He is regarded as the headmaster's loyal and uncritical servant who, rather than challenge the status quo, simply reinforces Brother Carter's ideas.

(d) **Formal and Informal Decision Making: a Summary**

The continuation of short-term headmaster initiatives and idiosyncratic decision making indicates that the determination of priorities at C.B.C. is somewhat problematic and reactive. Moreover, the authority relations of the school militate against staff members influencing those priorities by promoting issues for systematic appraisal and action. Hence, a sense of powerlessness is felt by teachers and is maintained despite numerous instances of informal influence on decision making. A feeling that fundamental issues are not addressed at C.B.C. persists in the minds of many teachers.
Lay teachers like Heather Verdun, Bruce Smith and Jim Kern, as well as Brothers like Brother Sullivan and Brother Jones, cannot and do not have an impact upon C.B.C. All power does not reside with the headmaster or with the Brothers. But, at present, the complaint of many teachers is that individual initiatives are not coordinated, monitored, or brought into a wider arena for debate and discussion. Thus, ideas remain the property of individual teachers instead of being incorporated into a wider framework. Moreover, the individualistic, sometimes almost conspiratorial, actions of teachers concerning innovation deny for all teachers a sense of sharing in the wider operations of C.B.C. Authority relations, therefore, remain undisturbed despite the ability of individuals to use discretion to follow up their own initiatives, to co-operate with other teachers on curriculum matters, and to secure decisions favourable to them from the headmaster.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The central figure in the administration of C.B.C. is the headmaster. Brother Carter attempts to continue the line of "good strong bosses" that has been established within the traditions and legends of the Christian Brothers' Order. As such, he has confronted, head-on, a daunting three-year agenda which pushes him towards unilateral actions that are determined by his own priorities but which leave little room for bottom-up initiatives. Such an orientation fits neatly into Brother Carter's schema for organisational life which, to him, is a matter of crystal clarity.
The dominant position assumed by Brother Carter in the affairs of C.B.C., and the Brothers' monopoly of authority positions, ensures that the presence of the Christian Brothers is extremely visible. This disguises their minority representation on staff. As well as a monopoly of ownership and administration, C.B.C. largely remains a Christian Brothers' school, too, in terms of its traditions and the expectations that are associated with it. Many, but by no means all, Brothers prefer that members of the Order exclusively hold authority positions. This reinforces their recollections of the hard work and dedication of the Brothers that, in the past, provided a sense of stability, security and a secure unity of purpose. In times of an ever-diminishing proportion of religious on staff, Brother Carter attempts to preserve C.B.C. as "a Brothers' school" by ensuring that incoming lay teachers "realise that they are working within a pattern and that they don't shift the boundaries". Thus, at C.B.C., the general trend found elsewhere of shifting some, at least, administrative power into the hands of lay teachers has actually been reversed.

The influx of lay people into Catholic schools, however, has meant the appointment of a significant number of career teachers. These lay professionals bring with them ideals and values that often differ from those long associated with the Christian Brothers. The heterogeneity is made more complex because of shifting values within the Brothers' Order. These are partly a product of post-Vatican Council thinking and partly the result of a sense of crisis about the future mission of the Brothers that has been exacerbated by declining numbers
and virtually empty Novitiates. All of this contributes at C.B.C. to a complex internal dynamic which is submerged beneath a superficial coordination structure that is preserved more in form than in substance.

Many religious and lay teachers alike are disappointed at a perceived lack of opportunities to contribute to decision making. Belief that their professional aspirations are being frustrated has prompted some teachers, especially in the Year 11 and Year 12 area, to endeavour to transform their area meetings into forums for confronting the question of authority relations at C.B.C. and for addressing educational issues. Some see this as an attempt to raise the consciousness of teachers to the point where they will "take more initiative" in bringing about change in a more systematic fashion than at present, where teacher-initiated change is the idiosyncratic result of complex negotiation, the fortuitous appointment of individuals and their introduction of borrowed schemes, and individual initiatives hatched in loosely coupled classrooms - none of which challenges the current, ingrained authority relations at C.B.C.

The overall product of administrative interaction at C.B.C. is a form of top-down coordination - better defined as a fragile web of control. This web, stretched close to breaking point, maps a system of hierarchical authority relations and presents an appearance of tightly maintained lines of coordination emanating from the headmaster at its centre. Thus, coordination - or rather control - is apparently achieved directly by the headmaster, himself, and by his area and subject coordinators. But only when teachers directly share in
the production of the conditions and relationships within which they conduct their professional lives, can one properly speak of their efforts as coordination.

While the formal and visible coordination structure delineates a hierarchy of control and suggests a stability and predictability about C.B.C., it camouflages the network of sometimes shared and sometimes contested values which make up the heterogeneity that characterises the school. Individual teachers and groups of teachers push their autonomy to a point just short of "sticking your neck out" by not carrying initiatives to the point where they impinge beyond autonomous classrooms. Hence, a sense of teacher isolation and school stagnation persists despite heterogeneous classroom management and diverse pedagogies and philosophies of education. These contribute to a somewhat submerged, but nevertheless essential, variety that belies C.B.C.'s image as a traditional "Brothers' school".
CHAPTER 6:
CONTROL & DISCIPLINE IN A BROTHERS' SCHOOL

1. INTRODUCTION

Discipline was shown in chapter 3 to be regarded as an important tradition of the Christian Brothers. This chapter examines the nature of discipline at C.B.C. in some detail and relates it to an institutionalised concern for order, obedience and control. Expectations regarding student discipline are seen to limit, in many cases, the behaviour of teachers. Such is the diversity of the teaching staff, however, that much innovation does occur despite institutional expectations. In particular, the presence of women teachers is seen to contribute to some modification in the relationships between teachers and pupils.

2. THE INSTITUTION AND CONTROL

(a) Discipline and the Control of Teachers

The Christian Brothers in Australia have a long established reputation for maintaining strict discipline in their schools. Former pupils often recall the frequent use of the leather strap to enforce a rigid code of classroom behaviour and to punish both recalcitrance and poor scholarship (Blair, 1976; Morris, 1945; Oakley, 1967). Such instances can seem amusing in retrospect even if terrifying at the time:

Say Christianity to the Asian and he'll think of Western imperialism; say it to the old [Christian Brothers] boy and he'll recall May altars, three Hail Marys and the baptism of leather. For ten years we lived in constant threat of it ... The meaning of
Extreme Unction, The gerund, the dative case, simultaneous equations. "You don't know, boy? Hold it out then and take it like a man". One day, even God rebelled. When the foolhardy Gunson ventured - "but surely, sir, a mixed marriage isn't always evil?" Brother Conroy blackened, stamped his foot, the floor trembled, and the picture of the handsome Christ above the blackboard fell down on his head (Oakley, 1967:14).

Within the last fifteen years the situation at C.B.C. in Newburyport, at least, has changed markedly according to a teacher who was formerly a pupil there:

In the years I was here as a student, there were a lot more Brothers here and the discipline was a lot harder than it is now. There was corporal punishment...just done very easily and without a second thought. I think a lot of parents knew that and actually expected that to happen if anything went wrong with their son. They expected the Brothers to belt them and put them straight...Now all that has disappeared and you never hear of corporal punishment.

In fact, corporal punishment has not quite disappeared from C.B.C. Several teachers, not all of them Brothers, possess leather straps as part of their teaching equipment. These are used infrequently now, however, although one Brother is known as "Brother Bash" by the pupils because of his readiness to employ physical punishment. He justifies such measures by claiming that he must protect standards of discipline in his area of the school because of the ineffectual presence of some "weak" teachers whose classroom control is poor. The point remains, however, that the nature of discipline and punishment has undergone considerable change at C.B.C. Despite this, a concern with controlling students is still a dominant feature of everyday life at the school. And despite the fact that only twenty percent of the staff at C.B.C. are Brothers now, a senior Brother has definite views about what the place of discipline at C.B.C., ideally, should be:
Br. Gordon: There are certain traditions that we have had. We have traditionally been regarded at our school as being authoritarian. Personally, I wouldn't regard that criticism as much to worry about. I would be a little disappointed if some people did not regard our school system as authoritarian, because in my mind that would mean a lack of discipline.

The headmaster of C.B.C., Brother Carter, has demonstrated bluntly at staff meetings that he is concerned as much about controlling teachers as controlling students - in fact, he sees one as a symptom of the other:

In all my experience I have never seen a class working well that was not disciplined... A teacher is unsuitable if he has not got discipline.

Such pronouncements seem to have had an effect upon the pedagogy of some teachers, especially inexperienced lay teachers who are insecure in their employment. The headmaster's influence is significant because lay teachers have no formal tenure at C.B.C., and are dependent upon his approval to continue their employment from year to year.

In his first year as headmaster, Brother Carter, discussing the prospect of staff retrenchment, assured a staff meeting:

I don't want anyone to feel afraid [of retrenchment]. I'm not talking about fear, I'm talking about people growing into more responsible teachers - that is, those who are not shaping up at present.

A major theme of most of the monthly staff meetings that Brother Carter has conducted during the subsequent three years is his concern with controlling pupils and teachers. His view that classes should always be "working" and "disciplined" betrays a somewhat narrow definition of the classroom situation. This, coupled with a narrow definition of suitable teachers - those who possess the ability to control pupils - is
clearly calculated to pressure insecure teachers into enforcing his own definitions of classroom organisation and of good teaching:

Again I must speak about supervision. I will speak about this as long as I am here - because it is very important. There has been a noticeable improvement but there is still a weakness in some classes. What I am saying applies only where there is a weakness - where there is good teaching this does not apply. If work is well organised boys will join in - they love to work. Good preparation is essential. When there is good matter boys instinctively listen. Matter, method and materials - if you have these going for you, you can hardly go wrong.

Such references to "a weakness in some classes" - meaning, of course, a weakness in some teachers - are general enough to make many teachers feel somewhat pressured.

Many teachers counter the pressure from Brother Carter by directing irreverent humour towards him from the sanctuary of the lay teachers’ work room. Indeed most teachers, religious and lay, seem to indulge from time to time in satirical laughter at Brother Carter’s expense. Often his performances at staff meetings or school assemblies are caricatured, as when his comments at one staff meeting about the need for austerity within the school led to teachers expressing mock concern about the cost of photocopying material for students and to jocularly chastising each other for using too much chalk.

Brother Carter believes that the standard of discipline at C.B.C. has improved during his stewardship:

There were classrooms showing signs of what I would say is a lack of discipline - of weak teachers. You know, there are references - marks on the ceiling and writing on desks - there are instances that I would just heap under the heading of poor discipline.

In his opinion, and in the opinion of many of his co-religious and many parents of C.B.C. pupils, the numerical dominance of
lay teachers has had unfavourable consequences for control in C.B.C. According to Cameron Pont, the maintenance of strict discipline is a proud tradition of the Order and one that many Brothers feel is threatened:

Interviewer: What about the ethos, the school's activities and the way the school is conducted?
Cameron Pont: One would be the discipline. The Brothers belong to that Irish code of discipline which subscribes to be very strict. Some of the lay teachers take a more relaxed view and perhaps a more human view of disciplinary problems and relationships with the students. I would think that the Brothers would see that they maintain that discipline much better [than lay teachers] and stay in control.

The deputy principal is one of many who believe that the strict discipline that is associated with the Brothers has enhanced the reputation of their schools:

Our friends and parents and so on, they tend to expect, at Brothers' schools that I have been at or have known something about, a little better in discipline than the local high schools.

Cameron Pont's long association with the Newburyport community and with parents of C.B.C. pupils leads him to agree with the deputy:

Catholic people would send their boys to C.B.C. because they are hoping for a good Catholic education. That is one thing. Then the second part that attracts people to C.B.C. is, "I will send them to the Brothers and they will straighten them out".

The message is clear that the traditions of "a Brothers' school", including the legend of harsh discipline, still persist at C.B.C. even though there is now a minority presence of Brothers. It is most important to stress, however, that despite institutionalised expectations there is no uniform Brothers' style of teaching, and nor is there a lay teachers'
style. The point is well made by one of C.B.C.'s most highly regarded lay teachers:

I think that I would probably have an easier demeanour in the classroom than, say, some of the Brothers. That has probably got as much to do with age as it does with styles of teaching. Sometimes I find them very harsh on students where I wouldn't be - but again that tends to be with the age grouping, whereas the younger Brothers who I work with tend to have, in many ways, the same style as I do...I wouldn't classify the Brothers versus the lay staff, but I would older teachers versus younger teachers. But the Brothers are perceived differently by the boys and the parents just because of the fact that they are a Brother.

It appears that the expectation upon Brothers to conform to an authoritarian image is stronger than upon any other teachers. The mould has been firmly set by generations of Brothers and is, in general, maintained by the current group at C.B.C. - although in what past pupils claim is a diluted form:

When I was here, I remember being scared stiff - at times petrified. You wouldn't move. But today it is a bit more relaxed - you can talk and questions are no problem. Sometimes you would be too scared to ask questions - for example, you get four maths sums wrong and, bang, you are up for four straps.

Not all of the C.B.C. Brothers, however, are happy about being regarded as conforming with the authoritarian stereotype. One Brother, who claimed to be speaking for the "bottom third in age" of members of his Order, for example, is critical of the attitude of his older co-religious towards discipline. He wishes to gain the trust of his students but claims that the principal tactic of Brothers for gaining discipline has traditionally been one of engendering fear into their pupils. He spoke in an untaped interview about how the legacy of that style of teaching made it "virtually impossible" for Brothers to get close enough to their pupils to develop a "relationship of trust" with them. He argues that too many
older Brothers have "so successfully put forward the brutal image" that his pupils "don't take [him] seriously" when he tries to elicit their trust and cooperation. Brothers are expected to be harsh taskmasters and lay teachers are also expected to follow the pattern.

(b) Maintaining a Contested Tradition

Emphasis on discipline leads inexperienced lay teachers to sometimes attempt to imitate the teaching style that is associated with the Brothers. A senior lay teacher feels that this imitation is rarely successful:

The view of quite a few in the school is that unless the teacher can first of all control the class then he can't teach them. The trouble is that some teachers feel that extraordinary pressure to control their classes, and I think that some teachers may have a form of discipline or control over the students without giving the regimented appearance that is seen as the sign of the teacher that does have control. And so we find that first year young teachers, particularly, are trying to impose a degree of control or this regimentation which is really beyond them. They might be trying to conduct the class the way Brother So and So, who has been a teacher for many years and an old hand and has the children sitting up straight in rows - trying to run the class the way a teacher like that would. It is not their style and personality, and for some teachers this may exacerbate the problem rather than solve it.

In an environment in which it pays not only to be in control but to be seen to be in control, some of the younger lay teachers are nervous because of the pressure that they believe they are under:

Interviewer: The picture I have is that year 7 and 8 is probably under as much pressure as any area of the school as far as the teachers are concerned.

John Morris: The most.

Interviewer: In terms of numbers and resources and so on?
John Morris: Kids make noise at that age.

Interviewer: I am sure.

John Morris: Noise is a hell of an issue here, always was.

Interviewer: You have got a lot of young teachers there, too, and probably inexperienced teachers.

John Morris: Baptism by fire.

Interviewer: What happens to them if they survive, do you get promoted to another part of the school?

John Morris: No, you probably do what I have done—that is, you stay there and you keep them in line.

The pressure that exists upon teachers, however, is in many ways indirect rather than direct. The school appears to be tightly structured and coordinated but, in fact, as was apparent in chapter 5, teachers have a large amount of autonomy when it comes to classroom organisation and curriculum. There is no doubt, however, that Brother Carter's expectation that classes be quiet and orderly deters many teachers from allowing more liberal teacher-pupil relations. He sets the tone of discipline and watchful control each school morning as he polices the school grounds before classes begin. Lou Smith, when "shadowing" Brother Carter as he performed his duties, found this aspect of the headmaster's daily regime somewhat uncomfortable. He records:

We walked to the playground and Brother Carter's general feeling is of the necessity of his "presence" on the playground. I felt a little bit like a junior officer with Captain Queeg as we walked back and forth right in the centre of the playground in the quadrangle. The presence in the playground...I am sure, has helped in some kind of broader reaches of law and order and control.
In the evenings, Brother Carter is almost always again on duty at the school gate, checking uniforms and seeing that pupils leave the school grounds in an orderly manner. At various times during the day, especially at the end of recess and lunch breaks, he is also on the playground overseeing the movement of pupils (and teachers) to their classrooms. He prides himself on his "active" supervision and is less than impressed by teachers whose supervision is "poor". For instance, when a group of senior footballers and their supporters had too much to drink after a match at another school and caused some problems on the late night bus trip back to Newburyport, Brother Carter maintained that, while he did not "condone" the students' behaviour, he held the teachers who organised the match responsible for "bad planning" and "poor supervision".

The constant vigilance of Brother Carter is given by one teacher as evidence to support her rather harsh judgement of an institutionalised attitude toward pupils which smacks of McGregor's (1960) theory "X":

The school is based more on - if you do the right thing you are okay, do the wrong thing and you get a punishment...The basis of this school is on the negative rather than the positive.

A large measure of teacher autonomy was seen in chapter 5 to operate beneath the veneer or web of a tightly structured and disciplined organisation. Although this ensures that relationships between teachers and pupils are not always "negative", pupil privileges are kept to a minimum even at the year 12 level. Any freedom from teacher supervision can be arbitrarily taken away.
A couple of years ago we had only five periods of Geography in year 12 and we asked for an additional period and so we got six periods, but everybody else decided that they would like six. I think it is much better because all the kids had had free periods and in my observation of free periods some of them would use it but a majority would spend their time wasting it.

An experienced teacher who is new to C.B.C. is struck by the conservatism of the school which, she suggests, manifests itself in an exaggerated concern for control, tidiness and predictability. Her comments echo those of some teachers of longer standing who argue that established attitudes towards discipline should change:

Interviewer: How does conservatism show itself in the school?

Bernadette Healy: Well, I guess it does in the type of education, in the structure of lessons and things here...For me it is like going back to teaching when I first started twelve years ago.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Bernadette Healy: Just the structure - even simple things like the desks [in year 7 classroom] are too big and heavy to move so they have to be in straight rows and there is a lack of movement. I know the policy of the school is that they like order and tidiness and Brothers ask for people to line up [but] I prefer to let kids go into class. You know, they should at that age be able to go in and get on with what they are doing without having to wait and line up. I tend to think that kind of strict discipline has an over-reaction in children where then, when given freedom, they don't know how to handle it and then they over-react and become stupid - whereas if they are given freedom most of the time [it is] the same as they have in their own homes or anywhere else in society. It is a bit unreal coming into this situation for them because it doesn't exist anywhere else.

Interviewer: Does the physical nature carry over into intellectual and educational....?
Bernadette Healy: I think it definitely does. I find it very inhibiting and very frustrating. Even to do drama I feel that it is — I mean, it is encouraged but you mustn't do it with any noise. There are so many limitations.

The limitations upon innovation and a more open pedagogy and curriculum are felt especially poignantly by a former C.B.C. pupil who is one of several to return to the school as a teacher:

Coming back to this place again, you have got this idealistic type of attitude where you think, "I was there, I knew what it was like, I felt it and I would like to try and get it like this and this". But really, there is the Brothers, [and] I see it as an us and them situation here...One of the things that really bugs me is this thing on noise, it just limits you in so many different areas. And class size — you can't have group work [because] if you do have group work then you have 38 in the class so you have got maybe 6 to 8 groups and they are going to be noisy.

This teacher's attempts to manage his classes without the open display of authority that is associated with Brothers have not been as successful as he had hoped. He reinforces a point made by other teachers — a belief that pupils have been "conditioned" to expect rather inflexible teacher behaviour and so do not reciprocate when teachers attempt to negotiate the classroom situation with them:

I think it must be terribly hard for a kid to try and survive in year 8 and more so in year 9 when he is confronted by someone that is fairly old and set in his ways and runs his class straight down the line — and then you get someone like me or one of the other younger ones who, especially if you knew what it was like to be [a student] here, would think, "I am going to give you guys a fair go". But they don't see it as giving them a fair go...they see it as a weakness.

The tradition of rigid discipline, then, while contested by both some Brothers and some lay teachers, is strongly
entrenched at C.B.C. This leads to control not only of pupils, but also of the teachers themselves. Moreover, an emphasis on discipline restricts any open approach to innovation.

(c) **Institutionalised Control: A Summary**

A long established tradition of control pervades C.B.C. and is most powerfully reflected in the taken for granted expectation of pupils that their teachers will conform with an institutionalised image that gives high priority to teacher authoritarianism. While this image derives from the traditions of "a Brothers' school", it is strongly reinforced by the headmaster, Brother Carter. His manifest concern for order and well-disciplined classes is such that many teachers, especially relatively inexperienced lay teachers, attempt to conform with the definition of good teaching that Brother Carter so clearly propounds to his staff, 80% of whom are lay teachers. Although no single "Brothers' way" of classroom organisation is found at C.B.C., the data indicate that parents, pupils, and teachers associate "high standards" of discipline with "a Brothers' school". Such expectations foster conservatism rather than innovation.

3. **CONTROL OF PUPILS**

(a) **The Brothers, Lay Teachers and Classroom Control**

The Brothers' traditional school organisation was calculated to ensure a maximum degree of control over pupils. Each Brother taught almost all subjects to the one class during the school day:
Traditionally, the Brothers would be confined to one or two classes. For example, the H.S.C. would have the same man probably teaching them religious knowledge, two maths, two sciences and then you'd have another man who'd be doing English, History and Humanities. You'd only have the two of them teaching the whole of the H.S.C.

Such an arrangement, according to the Brothers at C.B.C., assisted classroom control because "it's easier to get one class used to you". It also tested the Brothers' vows of obedience, and made for routine control of the Brothers themselves:

You were expected to be very versatile. That is, if you didn't know anything about a subject and you were told to teach it, well, that would be too bad - you'd just have to learn it ...

Lay teachers, however, are trained as subject specialists, and their increasing numbers at C.B.C. has led to a change of teacher allotments. Many Brothers believe that the change has had a deleterious effect upon school discipline:

The spread of teachers that come into this room each day, you see...where you have got six or seven teachers coming in, you have got these sly and shrewd fellows and they play one against the other. They can pick which teacher they have got to do something for and they can pick the one that they can get away with it.

One Brother summarises the feeling that is strong amongst his co-religious:

One of the biggest things to knock the discipline has been the very, very strong period system. Even down in year 7 or 8 you would find that the class teacher might be only there for 3 periods a day or less. Now, if he was there for six periods a day...I think you could get rid of a lot of discipline problems.

Some Brothers feel that the influx of lay teachers has weakened discipline in ways other than merely the allocation of teachers to subjects rather than to classes:
Br. Hourigan: It is not so much [religion] that concerns me about lay teachers but it comes back to that tradition, discipline.

Question: Could you explain that a little bit?

Br. Hourigan: On the discipline? Well, I think that in most cases the kids probably are more respectful to a Brother than to a lay teacher...I would think that kids see the Brothers kind of as a certain group whereas they see the [lay] teachers kind of as an individual.

The Brothers, then, are able to maintain a united front in the face of student recalcitrance. Brother Hourigan suggests that there exists amongst the Brothers a kind of group culture or solidarity which is more powerful than any Brother's individual personality. That this can work against Brothers who do want to be regarded as individuals is indicated by the plight of Brother Ernest which was discussed earlier. Perhaps such a recognisable culture is developed through the Brother's code of obedience and by the reproduction of Brother's traditions by means of their uniform training:

Interviewer: All the Brothers, I guess, had a fair amount of common ideas about how schools should be run.

Br. McKie: Well, that's part of our training. In our training colleges you would get uniform methods of doing things right down through our schools...They are all going through the same training.

Lay teachers, many Brothers believe, lacking the solidarity and respect that goes along with membership of a religious Order, too often fail to maintain the standard of discipline for which the Brothers have been noted. This, according to older Brothers especially, is associated with a decline in school spirit which, combined with the problems of managing "modern
kids", has worn some of them down. Brother Burke, for instance, tells about one of his old friends in the Order:

Br. Burke: He said to himself, "I know when I am licked", and he reckoned the last few years in the school was not what he was used to - you know, the way kids behaved. This is the modern kid and didn't measure up to what he thought.

Question: Do a lot of Brothers feel that way? Do you feel that way?

Br. Burke: I don't. I don't at the moment. But I can easily see that there are quite a few who are younger than I am and they have retired from teaching. And there is no other reason than the poor behaviour of some of the kids and that is a fact. I know that. They just cannot take the sloppy behaviour and coarse language and general roughness that I feel has got right through society. I don't think there is anything like the spirit in the schools like there used to be.

(b) Pressure from Pupils

Many teachers believe that parents, too, have difficulties controlling modern youth. This, some suggest, partly accounts for C.B.C.'s popularity amongst Catholic parents as they entrust their boys to the discipline of the Brothers' school - in some cases, according to several teachers, "abdicating their responsibility" in this regard. Some believe, however, that the nature of student discipline at C.B.C. must change to cater for the changing needs of students. According to a woman teacher:

I think in a lot of cases [parents] abdicate their responsibilities. You know, they think, "Well, we can't handle him but the Brothers will". And they expect the Brothers and the teachers to do something that they can't do...Traditions are there on one hand, and the expectation of discipline but, on the other hand, a lot of teachers realise that those demands aren't realistic - that today, especially, you have to
be able to communicate with the kids. And I think children's expectations are different - they expect their teachers to be human and they want to be able to talk to them.

Some teachers, however, especially but not exclusively young women in what was for many years an almost all-male preserve, have found that the gentle touch has not always worked for them. Several are disappointed that attempts to initiate more open relationships with pupils have been unsuccessful - and they attribute their lack of success largely to the prior conditioning of the boys. One young woman is convinced that:

It should be a more open relationship so that ... the teacher should be more the leader of the group rather than the teacher of the group but...you can't do that with the boys here because they are conditioned that the teacher is up there and he or she is the authority - and if you go against that, well, they can't handle it.

She feels that the pressure on her from students to comply with the C.B.C. teacher stereotype is just as great as the institutional expectations that are voiced by Brother Carter. This pressure is making her into the sort of teacher that she does not wish to be:

**Question:** You find yourself being pushed towards a much more authoritarian...?

**Marie Campagna:** Yes, I do, and I don't really like it - because I can't see the learning going on as well as it would be in another situation. I mean, most of the time I am lecturing or, I mean, I can hardly smile in the classroom because if I do - that is the note that oh fine, you know, we can have fun.

One of her colleagues has also had similar problems in establishing the basis of classroom control from which more innovative classroom management might develop. She, like several others, has had to fall back on the traditional authority of the Brothers:
People step out of line and you give them a detention or whatever. There is another thing I find that works, but I don't like it. If they are really misbehaving, or if I find one person is really rude or something like that, I take him to Brother Sterling - that puts the fear of god into them - or I bring them up to Brother Carter. That gets them going, it really does, it makes them better, but it is not really my authority. It is not me that is doing it.

Brother Carter and Brother Sterling are certainly seen as enforcers of discipline. The position of Brother Sterling in this regard is particularly interesting and, in a sense, typifies what some lay teachers at C.B.C. see as a somewhat contradictory set of attitudes amongst the Brothers. Having totally devoted their lives to the care and education of children, they are nevertheless associated with rather harsh treatment of them. Brother Sterling, known as "Brother Bash" by many of the pupils and some teachers, sees himself as an "authority figure". Yet, as was discussed in an earlier chapter, he devotes much of his out of school time to coaching boys in gymnastics and swimming. One observer, Lou Smith, saw both sides of Brother Sterling in one morning. After seeing him with children in the gymnasium, Smith commented:

There is a quality of both warmth there and, not quite adulation, but the kids were very responsive to him. [Then] the Italian teacher had all kinds of minor discipline problems and...was crying to Brother Sterling and giving names of three or four kids so that he would do something...She was putting him into that [disciplinarian] role...and he didn't shy away from it at all. And it fits another piece - in that gym, at least the way he talks, anybody who messes about - they are out, he used the word "finito".

Brother Sterling deliberately uses physical education periods as a means to balance his authoritarian image:

I know I am criticised for teaching P.E. [but] that is the only way that I can meet every kid every week in that area...That is the thing. Even if I forget their names I can talk to them, like in the gym or in the
swimming pool. Because other times I have got to go in as the strong authority figure...[and] those kids would probably be seeing me sometimes in a better light in the swimming pool.

Other Brothers also emphasise the value of sports coaching in enabling them to "get to know" pupils in settings outside the classroom. In Brother Sterling's case, however, it appears that rather than his involvement in sports coaching softening his image as a disciplinarian, the reverse may have happened. Other teachers who are involved in the physical education program complain that Brother Sterling's presence causes a tenseness amongst the students which dampens their enjoyment of sports activities.

Brother Sterling, then, embodies yet another tradition of his Order. Brothers were and are expected to be tough taskmasters in both the classroom and the sportsground, swimming pool or gymnasium. The harshness of classroom discipline could be somewhat mediated by the more cooperative and enjoyable nature of sporting pursuits. Thus, the "classroom tyrant" may become more warmly regarded by his pupils outside of school. The method of class allocation that was traditionally favoured by the Brothers also indicates a dual, and somewhat contradictory, relationship with pupils. The idea of a "class teacher" who spent the best part of the school day teaching a variety of subjects to the one class was lauded by virtually all Brothers as an effective means of gaining control over pupils. Of secondary, but nevertheless significant, importance is the idea that such an arrangement can facilitate teachers "getting to know" their pupils better. The group mystique of the Brothers, however, ensured that distance was maintained.
(c) Pupils and Control

Pupils in all year levels at C.B.C. generally approve of the high priority given to pupil control and feel that such an emphasis helps to make C.B.C. a "better" school than most others in Newburyport.

If you compared this school with, say, Central Tech., like, they have got all sorts of vandals and that there. Perhaps not all vandals, but they're pretty tough... You hardly get any of that here - you'd be suspended or expelled if you did that. We are much more controlled and there's better discipline.

Many pupils associate the "better" discipline of C.B.C. as much with the supposed cultural deficits of pupils at other schools as with the firmness of C.B.C. teachers or the tone of the school:

Kids at some of these schools have to be a lot tougher. They might be from poorer families and tough families and they don't get the sort of support [at home] that kids at this school get. Kids here are from a different kind of family.

There is general support for this thesis amongst a number of class groups and the fact that parents of C.B.C. pupils have to pay fees for their children's education is cited as evidence in its favour. There are dissenting voices, however, especially from those students who live in the areas that are suggested as centres of cultural deprivation and violence:

I am from Gardenvale and the kids there are pretty much the same as here (in Highborough).

I live just near Central Tech and you don't get beaten up or anything.

The point remains, nevertheless, that as far as pupils are concerned, C.B.C. is definitely not a "slack" school. The point is reinforced, in fact, by those who argue that C.B.C. students are not unlike their contemporaries in other schools
which are seen as being "tougher" than C.B.C. The only difference, these students argue, is that C.B.C. pupils are restrained while at school:

We might be better behaved and quieter and that while we're at school, but plenty of kids here do vandalism and that. They don't do it at school but they're just the same as Central Tech. kids outside of school.

Homework adds to C.B.C.'s standing of not being a "slack" school. Students feel that they do much more homework than acquaintances who attend other schools and that, as a result, they are more advanced in many subjects, especially mathematics. All of this, they claim, adds to C.B.C.'s "good name" in Newburyport - especially to its reputation for "good discipline" compared to some state schools where "the kids just run wild". Strict discipline, homework and task directed teaching, then, "is for our benefit - in the long run it will be good", because C.B.C. graduates, pupils predict, will be favoured when competing for jobs in the Newburyport area.

Ironically, despite the pupils' belief in the long-term benefits of compliance and industriousness, their comments indicate that more immediate "fun" is preferred to any delayed gratification whenever the opportunity is afforded for a "stir" or to "muck around". Some teachers, therefore, especially new teachers or those seen by pupils as "weak teachers", have immense control problems.

This is not to say that even the most authoritarian type of teacher - "he has to be a Brother, he has to have a strap, be vicious, and go on about religion all the time" - necessarily has absolute control. Brother Bourke, for example, is considered by his year 9 pupils to be the strictest teacher
that they have ever encountered — but he still does not get his own way entirely:

**Question:** What do you do in lessons with Brother Bourke?

**Tony:** Nothing, we just sit there.

**Brian:** When he turns 'round to the board we, like, pass notes to each other or throw paper 'planes or kids take bites from their lunch — and when he turns around again we all sit up straight and he doesn't even know what's been going on.

**Question:** You do that for your own amusement?

**Tony:** Yeah, it's a bit of fun.

One of the more daring acts of pupil resistance to Brother Bourke's rigidly imposed definition of the classroom situation occurred when some of his pupils broke into his classroom during the recess break when pupils are supposed to be locked out of all the rooms. On this occasion a window was left unlocked and a few boys climbed in and "turned the classroom around" — they rearranged all the desks including the teacher's desk so that the pupils would all face away from the blackboard towards the back of the room. When Brother Bourke unlocked the door the entire class marched into the room and sat down facing the back wall "as if nothing had happened".

In ways such as this, students are able to exert some control over the school situation. In extreme cases they virtually take over the classroom. One group of year 8 pupils went so far as to claim that they "shame the teacher". Members of this group stated quite frankly that they had been giving one of their female teachers, a first year teacher, a "really hard time" and that they were able to "make her cry" when they so wished. The brutality of this attitude was in no way
moderated by their expressing the judgement that "she'll probably be alright next year". They felt, in other words, that the teacher will by then have learnt from her experience with their group about ways to control a class.

(d) Student Expectations of Teachers

There is wide agreement amongst teachers that the levels that are most difficult to control are year 8 and year 9. According to year 9 pupils the instinct to "muck around" is virtually a timeless natural law:

Justin: Put it this way, what did you do when you were at school? I bet every chance you got you'd muck around. We muck around. A new teacher is a chance to muck around.

Danny: Whenever we have a teacher for the first time we give him a test.

Question: Is it all planned?

Danny: Not exactly planned, but it's deliberate.

Damian: The instinct of the jungle.

Question: Can it be any one of you who starts things off, or is it usually the same ones?

Justin: It could be just about anyone. Only maybe a couple of really quiet kids wouldn't start anything - but they'd probably all join in. We kind of do it naturally. We're used to it.

Question: But why? Don't you force teachers to be strict with you?

Tony: It's a good stir, good fun.

A "good" as opposed to a "slack" teacher is expected to have firm control and firm discipline. This is not to say that simple authoritarianism is desired - a teacher who "makes you
want to work" is greatly preferred to one who simply "makes you work". Pupils distinguish between teaching styles and express a preference for those teachers who have a "two-way communication" with the class over those who just "tell you things". For one class, the benchmark for teacher comparisons is Brother Callaghan – the most traditional of all the Brothers at C.B.C. but one whose formerly absolute classroom control is slipping according to his pupils:

With some teachers, like with Don Reynolds and Mr. Smith, there is no need to muck around because we enjoy those lessons and so are able to have some fun during them. But with Brother Callaghan and some other teachers, the fun is in the mucking around. We don't muck around with Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Smith because we don't have to.

Those pupils demand some participation in lessons and esteem teachers who make allowance for it – although they expect that the limits will be clear. With the best teachers, "you know how far you can go...It's in the attitude – you just know you won't get away with it. You can tell". On the other hand:

If the teacher is a bit slack, you do what you like. Like, our art teacher is a bit slack with us. She's got a soft voice and she can't really tell us off. Brother Carter came in and said to send anyone who mucks around to him. But she doesn't send anyone over because then they'd think she was a weak teacher.

The final comment above suggests some coincidence on the views of good teaching that are held by both Brother Carter and C.B.C. pupils. Their views of a "good school" overlap, too. When, as part of a unit on media bias, a year 8 social studies class was asked to prepare scripts for documentaries that would show the good and bad sides of C.B.C., most pupils managed to get hold of cameras and to illustrate their scripts with a series of photographs – some staged but mostly candid.
Significantly, the theme that was most apparent in virtually all of the scripts - whether C.B.C. was portrayed in a good or a bad light - was that of student discipline. Those favourable to C.B.C. depicted classes of attentive children working quietly and being supervised by calm and competent teachers who were clearly in control. Those unfavourable to the school, either developed a protracted concentration camp image - with stern teachers supervising lines of children at assembly, Brother Carter shouting through his megaphone as he guarded the school gate - or depicted wayward pupils whom teachers were at a loss to control.

The fact that every student in the class dealt with student discipline indicates that it is an aspect of everyday school life that is very important to them. These pupils explain that their rather merciless treatment of "weak' teachers is at least partly caused by their being "corked up" by rigid, authoritarian teachers for much of the day. When the cork is released, they explain, "we just explode". Besides, according to the students, "If we come into your classroom and muck around that is your fault because you can't control us". This attitude was expressed by students at several year levels including the most senior. According to Jim Karn it is to be found amongst the school's most highly regarded pupils and was evident after the C.B.C. senior football team was defeated in a big game. After players and supporters misbehaved on the late night bus trip back to Newburyport. Jim, who is coach of the team, spoke with the school captain:

They were baring their bums out the window a couple of times, they got stuck into the grog, they abuse a few people and they wanted to fight the bus driver. I wasn't on the bus but there were a couple of teachers
who perhaps didn't command the respect of those children. I spoke to the school captain and said, you know, "Why was there a problem? Why was there that behaviour?" "Well, you know", he said, "those teachers were there to stop us".

The pupil expectation that the role of teachers is to control them as well as to teach them, then, is widely held by pupils.

(e) The Control of Pupils: A Summary

The influx of lay teachers into C.B.C. has meant a new method of teacher allotments to cater for subject specialists. This, many Brothers believe, has had unfortunate implications for pupil discipline. Lacking the Brother's group culture, they believe, lay teachers do not command the same respect as Brothers, and pupils are inclined to be more familiar with them. In a number of cases, however, such familiarity is encouraged by some lay teachers in an attempt to meet the "human" expectations of pupils - at least to the point where pupils, according to several teachers, are unable to "handle" the more open relationships. Pupil expectations, then, reinforce the institutional expectations that are pushing several teachers reluctantly into becoming authoritarian.

Pupils approve of school discipline because they believe that C.B.C. has a local reputation for "better" discipline than many other schools in Newburyport that are thought to be "slack". This reputation is enhanced, it is thought, by teacher insistence upon pupils completing homework and by the belief that the fee-paying parents of C.B.C. pupils are supportive of their children's education. In all of this, pupil views coincide neatly with those of the headmaster.
For all of their support for teacher control, pupils emphasise that they do not miss an opportunity for a "stir" whenever one is provided. "Weak" teachers are considered fair game - they have no business being teachers, according to many C.B.C. pupils, if they are unable to control their classes. Good teachers can control pupils, and the best teachers motivate them to want to work rather than merely contain them. With such teachers students know "how far they can go" without destroying the classroom consensus that has been constructed.

4. DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION

(a) Classroom Innovation

The strong identification by the headmaster, teachers and also pupils of student discipline as a major issue at C.B.C. leads to an expectation of uniform and repressive classroom management. The impression of order and uniformity is reinforced by the severe architecture and the school's functional tidiness which allows little decoration. The data indicate that both teachers and pupils believe that discipline has been institutionalised as a major priority and that, therefore, the measure of good teaching in the context of C.B.C. is the extent to which the teacher is able to maintain a quiet and orderly classroom. Although some teachers complain of pressure to conform to the institutionalised image, the impression of sameness is strong.

The single stereotype is punctured, however, even by the heterogeneous backgrounds of C.B.C. teachers. Only 20% of the faculty are Brothers. Some of the remainder are former Brothers, many were formerly pupils of C.B.C. or of other
Brothers' schools. A few of these were taught by Brothers who are currently on the C.B.C. staff. Most staff members are Catholics. While these factors suggest an element of unity and continuity, it should also be noted that a growing proportion of teachers are women and that some teachers were born and educated outside of Australia. Moreover, although several old boys returned directly to C.B.C. upon completing their teacher training, other former pupils of Brothers' schools tried a variety of other careers and experiences before gaining employment at C.B.C. The mix of homogeneity and heterogeneity is reflected in the variety of day to day classroom events and in classroom organisation and pedagogy. Faculty diversity has meant the breakdown of the reality, if not the myth, of commonly held perspectives of what a "Brothers' school" should be like.

The emphasis upon student discipline at C.B.C. hints at a ubiquitousness of control, tidiness and predictability, which are to be found not only in overt authority relations, but also in the message systems of the school. The strict discipline that is talked about at C.B.C. as if it is an integral part of institutionalised control has its counterpart in narrow and visible pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation. Teachers who have been at the school for many years seem to accept this as a natural part of school life. Cameron Pont, for instance, has been for 33 years either a Christian Brother or a lay teacher at C.B.C. Now coordinator of the C.B.C. primary school, he is concerned that the definition of curriculum is just as narrow as it ever was. As he points out, and as was discussed in the previous chapter, the narrow approach is illustrated especially
by an emphasis on examination results, particularly H.S.C. results, which permeates all of the secondary school and even the primary section.

The analysis has indicated that rather than being subject to tight supervision and co-ordination, teachers have a good deal of autonomy within their classrooms. This enables some of them to close the classroom door on institutional expectations and to develop more personal, individual styles of interacting with pupils. Others, especially teachers who are relatively new to C.B.C., have tried to initiate innovative curricula and pedagogy but have failed - largely, they argue, because pupils have a prior expectation that teachers should conform with the institutional image, or, more simply, because they have "control problems". Successful innovators - usually but not always experienced lay teachers, and ones who have come to C.B.C. from other schools - are to be found, however, and certainly an immense variety of pedagogical styles belies the impression of orderly uniformity that initially bears down upon visitors to C.B.C.

Classroom observation confirms that textbooks, with their built-in control of pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation, are the most prevalent teaching device. But by no means all teachers use textbooks exclusively and some do not use them at all. Project work, laboratory work, individual and group assignments are not uncommon. The library is well used and, in some cases, pupils are expected to employ a variety of resources that may take them beyond the confines of the school in a search for data and ideas. Such variety leads to different kinds of teacher-pupil relationships which, some
teachers believe, may be more relevant to pupils than traditional authoritarianism. In the opinion of Heather Verdun:

Perhaps a lot of the lay teachers want more of a human face in education. They see the old business of sitting up in class and doing as you are told and not talking as being totally remote from the real world. I think kids have changed so much, too. Things that were possible, say, twenty years ago are just not possible today.

Heather has introduced to her year 11 English class a successful experiment which gives pupils some control of and responsibility for the work. Each student is required to keep a personal journal in which he may write anything that he likes in the knowledge that it will be seen only by Heather, who makes no judgement about the quality or content of the material unless requested by the pupil. Students are asked to use the journal to express their thoughts about themselves, their lives and their interests. In addition to the personal journals the class also maintains a class journal in which pupils write in turn. Entries in the class journal may be anonymous but they are shared with all class members and form the basis of class discussions which are often the starting points for further work. This innovative approach seems to "work" for Heather and has made English enjoyable for her as a teacher. She has found that the journals have opened up a new form of communication between herself and her pupils, many of whom were enjoying writing for the first time. Her increased interaction with pupils has led to what she calls a more "adult" relationship with them. It has also allowed her to explore with her pupils issues, ideas and concerns that are raised by the pupils themselves.
(b) The Year 11 Transition Course

Perhaps the most obvious example of innovation, because of its uneasy official sanction, is the year 11 transition course in which the authority relationships that are traditionally associated with C.B.C. are stood upon their heads. The course co-ordinator, Jim Karn, explains the teacher-pupil relationship that the course aims to develop:

Whatever I think doesn't matter. I am really after what they think and they are gradually getting used to the idea that they make all the decisions.

Such an approach, Jim claims, is directly opposite to the prevailing one:

The basic teaching philosophy here, if you like, is that you close your door and you keep your class quiet. There is a thing with our present headmaster about noise, and the sad part is...his ritual about presentation - if you have got good presentation and good preparation the kids have to be quiet because they are working. Now we in the transition course don't work on that assumption. We believe that the kids have been fed on that for a long while. We felt that if they put money into transition education it was simply to get them [pupils] out and for them to make decisions.

Because it is a one-year terminal course, transition students may not proceed to year 12. Therefore, it attracts the least able of the pupils who complete year 10. Yet Jim Karn believes that the transition teachers have struck gold amongst the students whom the rest of the school had written off:

They were considered to be the dead heads, they really were, the larrikins of the school - and they carried on like larrikins because they were conditioned to it. It is amazing to talk to those kids this year...They will say to you that they behaved like idiots simply because they were encouraged to. They never were given the opportunity to talk and never given the opportunity to express...They are really, quite frankly, a fantastic bloody group of kids. People have problems because they can't communicate and kids are then categorised and react to that role. But last year the so-called larrikins welded together.
Jim believes that the transition teachers, themselves, have a "larrakin" element and are prepared to use their autonomy to bend or break the school's written and unwritten rules in the interests of their pupils:

Les Cunningham sent the kids out with tape recorders and it was just amazing how in the case of two pupils their confidence grew - just by talking to the owner of the Imperial Pub, where an overpass is going, just to ask him how his business would be affected. They spoke to workers on the bridge, they went to the Newburyport Planning Commission and spoke to people about the plan. Now these kids - their communication with a lot of staff is pathetic.

The contradiction in pupils being able to communicate effectively with a variety of people like hotel proprietors, bridge labourers and Commission engineers but not with their teachers reinforces Jim Karm's belief that there is something wrong with traditional authority relations at C.B.C. The transition course has given him an opportunity to try out a new pedagogy:

The transition course has perhaps been the saving feature of what I am about. I really believe that you don't have to be terribly bright to teach kids - you know, get them into class, keep them quiet, "all right, open your book". I really don't believe in that sort of teaching...That is childminding. But the transition has come along and we choose to be in transition.

One point about the three transition teachers perhaps needs to be emphasised. These "larrakin teachers" are all senior teachers with several years' experience at C.B.C. Jim Karm is co-ordinator of commerce subjects, Peter Montini is science co-ordinator, Les Cunningham has been English co-ordinator and co-ordinator of social studies. They are the light-heavyweights of the school. One can only assume that the satisfaction that these teachers, especially Jim Karm and Les
Cunningham, are gaining from their work with the transition group will increase their readiness to employ more innovative pedagogy and authority relationships with their other classes. In fact, both Jim and Les regard the transition course as a "subversive activity" in which they are fighting a "rear guard action" to liberate teaching at C.B.C. Their hope is that the apparent success of the transition experiment will force or at least encourage other teachers to reconsider established ideas about student discipline and teacher-pupil relationships.

The transition course, then, illustrates the extent to which once commonly shared expectations of C.B.C. are now in a state of flux. An impression of uniformity, of discipline, tidiness and the continuity of tradition is strongly associated with C.B.C., and has been seen to influence the pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation that teachers employ. Although formal co-ordination and staff supervision is minimal, the institutionalised image of authority relations at C.B.C., which is strongly supported by Brother Carter, is powerful enough to deter inexperienced or insecure teachers from experimenting with innovations. The presence of a large group of former Brothers and former pupils of Brothers' schools amongst the faculty also, to some extent at least, encourages the preservation of Brothers' traditions. However, it should also be noted that some ex-Brothers and former pupils hope to improve the education that was offered by Brothers' schools in former years. The three teachers who conduct the transition course, for instance, all attended Brothers' secondary schools.

Authority relationships within the transition course reverse the C.B.C. tradition of teacher authoritarianism by
handing over to pupils much of the responsibility for curriculum decisions and for class organisation. But this is only the most apparent instance of teacher negotiation rather than imposition of classroom definitions. The veil of uniformly disciplined classrooms is lifted by classroom observation to reveal pedagogical diversity. Young lay teachers in particular, especially women, favour more "human" authority relationships. Women teachers, indeed, resent the use of physical punishment which, although not as prevalent as it was some years ago, is still encountered at C.B.C.

(c) Gender and Control

For much of its history C.B.C. was a virtually all-male institution - the Brothers taught the boys. Amongst the first lay teachers to be employed were female primary teachers. Then, about sixteen years ago, a woman teacher was engaged in the year 7 and 8 area. During recent years, an increasing proportion of women have joined the C.B.C. staff - although mainly as teachers at the year 7 and 8 level with only a sprinkling of women in the senior sections. Heather Verdun, the first woman to teach an H.S.C. subject at C.B.C., has found that the boys took some time to get used to her style:

Last year myself and Belinda were the first lady teachers that they had had in the senior school - so that was a bit of a cultural shock for them...and I think they have come to accept me. Last year's year 11 and 12 were pretty bad and I find this year's year 11 really nice boys and I am really enjoying it.

Other women teachers, perhaps partly because of the greater difficulties that are associated with teaching younger teenagers, have not shared Heather's apparent success. One young woman expresses a view that is echoed by others:
Most of the teachers have been males...but just now there is this influx of females and the boys seem to be revolting against it.

The responses of male teachers to the tension that has become apparent between some of their female colleagues and the boys is variable. While some have attempted to assist by sharing ideas and strategies, others are only remotely sympathetic:

Now there are a lot more women, particularly young ones, which I don't think is good because...they get really attacked - not physically, but mentally attacked by the boys and put under pressure.

Some see the treatment of women at C.B.C. as fitting into a broader social context. One, for instance, explains the tension as follows:

Women in C.B.C. suffer somewhat from an unfortunate attitude which I believe exists in the minds of many of the boys and puts them at a disadvantage because they are women. This in turn suggests something in the...formation of those attitudes, or the reinforcement of those attitudes by staff and perhaps by the Brothers themselves, or maybe by parental attitudes.

This teacher could cite evidence from his own classroom experience which indicates that such attitudes are deeply held:

Recently, I gave the class the task of arguing why the male should be the head of the family...A lot of them took the line that women are not suited to the task because the notion of being head was one of issuing instructions or directions and...women are insufficiently capable of exerting their authority or do not have the requisite intelligence. Therefore the tasks they perform at home are the ones they are best suited to.

A few male teachers are critical of the increased presence of women because, they claim, classes too often have to be "settled down" after lessons with women teachers who, they claim, are not able to control pupils properly.
The "masculine" undercurrent of pupil control at C.B.C. is a feature that concerns a number of women teachers. Heather Verdun, for instance, explains why she has had to devise methods for maintaining order that differ from the C.B.C. norm:

I suppose they find my style a lot different from the men - I don't try and intimidate them physically or anything whereas some of the men might have. They might not say it but I guess that it is always there - the blokes are bigger than they are and they could thump them. But, you know, I had to sort of rely on other things to get them to do what I wanted.

Heather recognises the underlying hint of physically violent repercussions for miscreants that remains at C.B.C. despite the relatively infrequent use, now, of corporal punishment compared with the "old days" when the Brothers' reputation for "brutal discipline" and the tradition of authoritarianism were established.

But displays of physical violence do sometimes occur and are sufficient to keep alive the possibility that is "always there" that pupils might get thumped. And when such displays are performed in public with the rituals of theatre, the impact upon all pupils is maximised. At an assembly of year 7 and 8 pupils in the gymnasium, for instance, a number of boys who had apparently committed a variety of offences in the recent past were lined up and strapped in front of their classmates by Brother Sterling. Some teachers were rather uneasy about the nature of the punishments - but by no means all were.

According to one:

It was great. The kids were all shitfing themselves. Sterling was saying, "So and so, you did such and such three months ago. Come out here". Bang, bang. All of them were wondering if they were going to be next for something they did wrong.
Most disapproval of the ritual strapping came from the group of women who teach in the year 7 and 8 area. Their disapproval, however, was not so much of the blatant use of physical punishment, but of being asked to leave the scene of public humiliation before the strapping could proceed. All of them were furious at being singled out in a way which emphasised the stereotyped sexual division of male toughness and physicality and female delicateness and sensibility. In other words, although adding to Brother Sterling's theatre, the exclusion of female teachers reinforced the notion that women are weak. One woman complained:

I've seen pigs slaughtered so I'm hardly going to get upset seeing a few boys get the strap.

At least one of the women later complained to Brother Sterling about the discriminatory treatment.

Although the obvious competence, strength and "street sense" of women like Heather Vordun and Bernadette Healy makes a mockery of stereotyped images of ineffectual femininity, women teachers at C.B.C. remain on the fringe of a predominantly male culture. This culture is characterised by an emphasis on sport as well as physical discipline. A standing joke amongst some parents is that C.B.C. "catered for only one religion - football". The joke works just as well for those who support the sports emphasis as for those who mock it. Where teacher-pupil relationships are concerned, several women believe that the latent violence that remains a characteristic of male discipline "undermines our authority and our discipline". The use of corporal punishment, although infrequent, is the steel that reinforces the cement of male
culture - that sort of discipline is seen as valid and
effective yet is denied to women:

Marie Campagna: I wouldn't be able to discipline in
that way because they wouldn't take me
realistically that way anyway. Supposedly, the authority is meant to
be there but, you know, I sort of don't
have it in the way that a male teacher
would have it.

Question: Do you think that is a male-female
difference?

Marie Campagna: Yes I do...

Question: How does that kind of authoritarianism
show in the school, then?

Marie Campagna: Well, when one of the Brothers walks
into the room you can tell that the
boys have an enormous amount of respect
for them. The boys are used to some
kind of authority...

Question: Because they are Brothers, they are
male, they are old, or what?

Marie Campagna: Yes, I think it is a mixture of a lot
of those things.

The status hierarchy of teachers is summed up dispassion-
ately by an experienced male teacher:

I think that when a Brother goes into the classroom on
day one, they would have an added advantage over a
male who goes into the classroom on day one, who would
have an advantage over a female who goes in on day one
in an all boys' setting. That is just what I have
found here.

This established hierarchy of an essentially male institution
means that life in C.B.C. can be hard for females - a point
made by a former pupil who wonders about the effect that the
masculinist culture may have had on him:

As far as the women go it is hard to be objective
because I think I have been conditioned through my
previous experiences here at C.B.C. ... The Brothers
here were always fairly strict and you couldn't get
away with much - but with the women you seem to be
able to get away with a hell of a lot more. I think
it is good that we do have more women here because I think it helps with the maturing process of the kids. Being around just boys and not having female teachers - as we did then - may have given us a warped type of view towards women and how you should treat them and all the rest of it. I think it is good that there are women on the staff now but, gee, it is a rough road to have to come in on.

But despite the difficulties encountered by women teachers in the male world of the C.B.C. secondary school, their increasing presence is leading to a powerful challenge to established attitudes towards gender and pupil discipline.

(d) Diversity and Innovation: A Summary

Despite a pervasive impression of sameness and uniformity, much diversity was detected amongst the C.B.C. staff. This belies its image of predictability as a stereotyped "Brothers' school". Innovation is illustrated by the examples of Heather Verdun's English class and the year 11 transition course, in both of which traditional authority relations between teachers and pupils have been successfully modified. The challenge to established, authoritarian methods of rigid control of pupils comes especially from the increasing proportion of women on the C.B.C. staff. Although still very much in the minority, several women have uncompromisingly demonstrated their strength, resilience and competence in the face of stereotyped images. Although some male teachers are concerned about the effect of female teachers upon school discipline, both Bernadette Healy and Heather Verdun, for instance, have devised methods of classroom management that are free of "the threat of physical coercion". While women teachers are not entirely alone in their efforts to build a pedagogy upon principles of
respect for persons and humanity - as the discussion of the transition course indicated - the masculine undercurrent of physical intimidation, which becomes explicit rarely, but often enough to keep the possibility of corporal punishment always open, reinforces male culture and undermines both female authority and the establishment of caring relationships.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The data indicate that a tradition of authoritarian discipline is associated with C.B.C. On the one hand, the tradition still lives and is embodied by the headmaster, Brother Carter, and by several older Brothers. On the other hand, some relatively younger Brothers are concerned that established traditions and expectations of harsh discipline prevent them from establishing more egalitarian and human relationships with pupils. A similar tension is apparent in the attitudes of lay teachers. Some, especially some of the longer serving lay teachers, have adopted the tradition of harsh, physical discipline. Others argue that there is at C.B.C., too much emphasis upon the negative aspect of punishment and that the basis of teacher-pupil relationships should change to one which encourages the positive. While there is evidence to suggest that this latter view has strengthened in recent years, many teachers, especially young lay teachers, are still wary of implementing innovations as they feel constrained by institutional expectations. Some of these teachers attempt to imitate aspects of the Brothers' stereotype in deference to Brother Carter's emphasis upon order in classrooms. In this regard, Brother Carter, himself, sets the tone by means of his
regular presence in the playground, his "active" supervision and his manifest concern for control, tidiness and predictability.

Although C.B.C.'s image as a Brothers' school that is steeped in Brothers' traditions largely continues, changes do occur beneath the surface uniformity. One very apparent change during the past fifteen years is that the composition of the teaching staff has altered from being almost all Brothers to only twenty percent Brothers. Eighty percent of teachers at C.B.C. are lay. The influx of lay teachers, who are trained as subject specialists, has forced a departure from the Brothers' traditional arrangement of allocating one teacher as the "class" teacher of each class of boys in the secondary school. Once, each Brother would teach a variety of subjects to the one group during the school day; now, teachers go from class to class teaching within their subject areas and each group of pupils encounters a variety of teachers.

A number of Brothers believe that both the influx of lay teachers and the changed class allocation have led to a decline in discipline at C.B.C. They believe that teachers would be able to control classes better if they spent more time with them. And lay teachers, they argue, lacking the group solidarity of Brothers, do not command the same respect and obedience.

Pupils, too, expect teachers to be in control of classes. They believe that C.B.C.'s renowned discipline contributes to its reputation in the Newburyport district and enhances their employment prospects. They believe that the fee-paying parents of fellow pupils support their children's education and that
the job of teachers is to control them and teach them well so that they may achieve satisfactory results. But despite the coincidence of the views of pupils and of Brother Carter concerning the type of school that C.B.C. should be, pupils consider that fun can be had in the short term at the expense of teachers, especially "weak" teachers. Good teachers can control a class, but the best teachers, according to pupils, depart from the authoritarian image sufficiently to allow pupil participation in lessons that can be fun - a consensus is negotiated within limits that determine for pupils "how far they can go".

The maintenance of traditions of discipline and examination success in Brothers' schools has depended heavily upon the continuing presence of the Brothers themselves. Nothing better illustrates the mix of continuity and change than the variety of backgrounds of C.B.C.'s lay teachers. Many have had associations with Brothers' schools in the past - as ex-pupils or even as ex-Brothers. Most have been associated with Catholicism. Other teachers have no such links with the Brothers or Catholicism and many have diverse backgrounds. There is quite a mix, therefore, of individual hopes and aspirations for C.B.C., and these often are at odds with institutionalised expectations. Thus, the veneer of conformity and uniform discipline masks a diversity of pedagogy and classroom management.

The recently instituted transition course offers the most apparent example of such diversity. The fact that this course is conducted by three of the more senior C.B.C. teachers is indicative of changing attitudes and must encourage these
teachers who wish to establish more "human" classroom relations. Women teachers, whose numbers have recently increased in the secondary school, are especially supportive of a pedagogy that is based upon human understanding and respect rather than upon the possibility of physical intimidation. And although the established male culture of C.B.C. impedes the efforts of these women, several of them have more than dented prevailing stereotyped images of female ineffectualness simply by demonstrating their strength and competence. The presence and influence of such women indicates that the heterogeneity of C.B.C. will continue to flourish and that changes will continue to occur.
CHAPTER 7:
CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND PUPIL CAREERS

1. INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters major traditions of Christian Brothers College and emerging challenges to those traditions have been examined. These include the mission of the Christian Brothers in Australia (chapter 3), religious education (chapter 4), the Brothers' administrative control (chapter 5), and the control and discipline of pupils (chapter 6). In each case it was found that, despite contestation, the Brothers' traditions persist largely because of institutionalised expectations that are widely accepted by pupils, parents and lay teachers as well as by Brothers. In this chapter the tradition of C.B.C as an "academic school" is examined by investigating curriculum and assessment at the school, and the nature of pupil careers through the years of schooling.

2. THE CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATIONS

(a) The Headmaster and the Curriculum

A sense of order and regularity is strongly associated with C.B.C., and images of tidiness were most apparent in Smith's early observations:

The impression of the school as a whole is rectangular. Everything is square. The quadrangle, the buildings, the classrooms themselves. Everything inside the classrooms, inside the library and resource room, is neatly set out and labelled on tables and set out on shelves. All the bags of the boys are neatly lined up outside the classroom so they don't provide any kind of chaos. I don't know how far that extends into the educational programme of the school.
There is this overwhelming sense of tidiness, not in terms of keeping the place clean, but in terms of its physical organisation.

According to some teachers, the sense of orderliness does indeed extend into the school's educational programme, which is neatly lined up much as the boys' schoolbags are. These teachers perceive, for example, a reluctance to tamper with curricular arrangements in the interest of maintaining the surface order rather than confronting deep-seated issues.

Question: If you were asked by someone who is a stranger, "What kind of a school is C.B.C.?", you have got a lot of experience with which to answer that question. How would you describe it?

Peter Daniels: Conservative. I don't like to use the word "backward", but it is very staid. Just looking around at other schools I think it is. There seems to be a lot of, well, hesitancy to delve into some of the deeper problems of the school. I think the curriculum thing is a big area and I would say, you know, it is a pity in a way that those areas aren't really developed. For that I would say very, very conservative.

Because, as was discussed earlier, area and subject meetings are seen to be ineffective, and general staff meetings are comprised simply of administrative announcements and reports, teachers feel that no adequate forum exists to enable serious consideration of fundamental issues like curriculum. These matters are dealt with essentially at the classroom level where teachers exercise considerable autonomy. Therefore, teachers like Peter Daniels are waiting out the headmastership of Brother Carter in the hope that the next head will tackle issues like the C.B.C. curriculum.

As was discussed in chapter 5, many teachers at C.B.C. believe that Brother Carter's priorities have been made clear
and that, provided they are taken into account, teachers are free to pursue their own interests within their classrooms. This view, summarised by an experienced senior teacher, is particularly strongly held by teachers of years 11 and 12:

When Brother Carter was first appointed there was a theory that was popular for a while. They saw Brother Carter being appointed more or less to clean up the place, to straighten it out, you know - he was a tough man and things would be sorted out very smartly. And I suppose in a way he has done that, but not in the way that people were expecting. I mean, he has improved the veneer - and this idea of being concerned with the external manifestations of the place carries right through into his dealings with staff generally. Brother Carter wouldn't have a clue what goes on in classrooms as far as curriculum goes. As long as there is an appearance of quiet, orderly classes he is happy - more than happy. He very much likes good end of year results in the Higher School Certificate, but how those results are achieved is not of much concern to him, I wouldn't think.

Since the news of Brother Carter’s imminent transfer from C.H.C. has been widely known, much staffroom and lunch room conversation of a large group of teachers has centred around their hopes that the next headmaster will be a "curriculum man" - someone who will facilitate a thorough reappraisal of curriculum and give a high priority to curriculum development.

Brother Carter, however, rejects any implication that he has not given adequate attention to curriculum matters. He points to the constraints within which he must operate:

Don't forget that I work in a framework and that I just can't run an odd bod school. Now I have very little sympathy [for those] who are, or who go under the label of, great curriculum people. Where does the curriculum go to? These are the points that I am looking at. Plus, I also have to look at the requirements of my own Provincial Council.

Brother Carter believes that "curriculum people" overlook the importance of courses leading to recognised credentials - namely, to Higher School Certificate. What is more, he argues,
such people fail to appreciate the practicalities of school management or to give credit for recent innovations:

The head makes his own decision in the way that he will clean up what he considers to be the mess ... You consolidate your position and then, having done all that, you are in a position to introduce more thoughts. Now, if you don't do that, you get into the mess that they got into on the previous occasion and end up with $80,000 in debt ... Now, that is the rationale behind the whole thing. Curriculum! What curriculum? You know, curriculum orientation has brought in an extra subject, we have introduced transition - we have given the all clear ... Biology has come in ... And this is over a period of three years.

As far as Brother Carter is concerned, the essential reality of schooling is the Higher School Certificate examination. Any consideration of curriculum must take place within this context. To be acceptable, any innovation must fit in with the overall scheme of directing boys to Year 12 credentials:

I am all for progress, but I am very much against a person getting an idea and racing off in isolation - and this is a tendency of some people who have never been in a position of responsibility. The point that I am making here is that there are other constraining factors that have to be taken into consideration - that we, by and large, are directing boys essentially to H.S.C. Now you just can't bring in what you want, when you want it, and how you want it. You are still, well, determined by the type of examination that you are putting the boys through and, whether you like it or not, this is one of the simple facts of life ... [Some schools] are offering group two [internally rather than externally examined] subjects where you can go off at a tangent and do what you like - but then, the whole point is, who is going to accept the group two subjects?

Brother Carter's opinions about curriculum innovation reflect his overall management orientation and his understanding of the purposes of schooling. This perspective connects with his sense of service to the Catholic clients of C.B.C. and the mission of the school in facilitating the social
mobility of Newburyport Catholic youths. These issues were discussed previously. Higher School Certificate credentials are seen as important prerequisites for jobs or for entry into tertiary institutions. On the point of curriculum, therefore, the headmaster is very firmly of the view that C.B.C. should not depart from the tried and tested tradition of Christian Brothers' schools, which saw an emphasis upon examination results as an essential part of the Brothers' historical mission of elevating Catholic boys through the Anglo-Protestant dominated Australian social and economic hierarchy.

(b) A Serviceable Curriculum

One disadvantage of an orientation towards the Higher School Certificate is that some pupils, whose interests lie outside of preparation for university entrance, are not well provided for at C.B.C. This point is noticed by the careers teacher:

Bruce Smith: The interesting thing is that a lot of the year 10 kids would be interested in going to other schools to pick up a trade subject for example.

Question: What, to tech. schools?

Bruce Smith: Yes, there are quite a few [who] would prefer to be at a tech. if they had their say in it.

Question: Do these tech. schools seem more relevant?

Bruce Smith: More relevant, a better range of subjects for those sort of kids. Because the range here is basically academic, isn't it? When you look at it there is bugger all else.

The teachers and parents agree that the range of curricular offerings at C.B.C. is meagre. The curriculum is spartan in comparison with that offered at many Newburyport secondary
schools and at non-Catholic independent schools. There are heavy doses of English, maths and science throughout the school with no choice or electives for pupils until year 11 when pupils may opt for either a maths/science or a commerce/humanities course. But the narrowness of the curriculum is not merely a result of a limited range of subjects. More importantly, this narrowness is associated with a way of thinking about curriculum which, according to Cameron Pont, has become entrenched at C.B.C. during his long association with the school. He is concerned that the definition of curriculum is just as narrow now as it ever was:

There hasn’t been sufficient discussion on curriculum ... involving other people in the process. For 33 years we (at C.B.C.) have spoken about curriculum when we really mean syllabus - syllabus and book learning. That is the way it started in Ireland... It was important that tables be taught and maths be taught and English be taught and certain narrow confines of knowledge be taught. But discipline was maintained. People did "the right thing" - they sat in rows and that kind of thing. Surprisingly enough that still permeates a lot of the school. We haven't really got away from that.

A school in which relationships are based upon obedience, order and discipline is likely to be one in which many other issues, such as curriculum, are not only very narrowly defined but are also regarded as matters, not for controversy, excitement and spirited scrutiny, but for uncritical implementation:

Question: It sounds as though none of the people in the last dozen years or so have really been heavily focused on curriculum?

Cameron Pont: Right. I'd have no doubt about that at all. They just haven't addressed themselves to the curriculum as such and to innovate a curriculum and to see what has really happened [in other schools].
Question: Is that a Provincial problem or is that ...?

Cameron Pont: Yes, I think that it is a Provincial problem. I think that from my experience anyway, and that's spanning 33 years, the Brothers haven't been innovators - they've been belonging to the traditional type school.

Question: Would that be linked to the vows of obedience and of poverty and that sort of thing?

Cameron Pont: Yes ... If they are told to plant a cabbage upside down they'll do that. That might be a bit harsh, but I think they prefer to obey.

The more or less uncritical reproduction of a traditional curriculum at C.B.C. leads to some impatience on the part of teachers who would prefer more innovation. One senior teacher, for instance, complains about ...

too many teachers with no ideas at all - no imagination or attempt to interest kids. They're just static. They just do the same stuff, the same worksheets.

He has in mind a number of Brothers and also several "ingrained" lay teachers who have been at C.B.C. for quite a few years. On the other hand, this teacher sees at least a glimmer of hope for a more innovative curriculum in the future because there is now a minority of teachers who "at least try to relate to kids and get them to think about things". Even these budding innovators, however, feel in many cases that there are enormous restraints on departure from a traditional curriculum. One is the sheer size of classes which makes for traditional pedagogical and curricular arrangements:

Question: How could the situation be modified in year 7 and 8 to make it more satisfactory from the teachers' and pupils' point of view?

Jim Morris: Well, from the teachers' point of view, obviously, numbers.
Question: Reduction in class size?

Jim Morris: Oh, for sure. Because you are working [in year 8] with [one class of] 38 or 37, one of 37 and one of 38. Obviously that is the main one.

Another constraint on teacher innovation is the belief of virtually all teachers that "noise is a hell of an issue here". This issue was discussed in the previous chapter. Although some teachers distinguish between work noise and non-work noise — "you can sense when it might be work noise and when they are fooling around" — the unwritten law that a quiet classroom means good teaching, at least as far as Brother Carter and some of his colleagues are concerned, is sufficient to deter some potentially innovative teachers from departing from traditional arrangements. One teacher of English and Social Studies, for instance, says that he has a number of ideas for courses but that "I don't follow them through because you might get burnt". Another teacher of years 7 and 8, although aware of the autonomy that is available to her, feels similarly constrained:

Bernadette Healy: I like to do sort of inter-related work and, you know, you just about can't here... The transition from primary to secondary here is great... It is just so structured and disciplined by comparison that [pupils] find it very difficult to cope with.

Question: Is the big change in curriculum organisation, or more in the way in which teaching is organised?

Bernadette Healy: I think it is a bit of both. Actually, with the teaching, you really have a fair bit of freedom to do what you like — and you do in curriculum... There is a year coordinator but it is not coordinated.
The point that the coordination and structure is more apparent than real has been made several times. Nevertheless, the impression of teachers that they are constrained is strong despite their opportunities to exercise classroom autonomy. Apart from constraints of class size and the notion that classes should be quiet, perhaps the greatest barrier to innovation at C.B.C. is the institutionalised expectation that the school will offer an "academic", or rather, examination oriented curriculum.

(c) C.B.C.: "An Academic School"

The largest intake into C.B.C. is of boys entering year 7. But more boys apply for entry than can be admitted - both at year 7 and at other levels. Some of the relevant statistics are discussed by the primary school coordinator:

Cameron Pont: In year 6 there are 16, including 2 non-Catholics for 4 vacancies. Last year at this time we had 25 wanting to get into year 6 for no vacancies - zero vacancies. I think one of the fears that one can foresee at this time is that there is a problem, as you can see, of getting into year 7.

Interviewer: Because [according to the statistics] there are 72 applications for 38 vacancies. And none of that 72 are boys who are already in the school. These are all outsiders who are trying to come into the school.

The surplus of applicants over available positions means that a selection of children for entry to C.B.C. must be made. Parents are informed that such selection is made on the basis of two criteria - "a sustained interest in Catholic education, evidenced by attendance at a Catholic primary school", and "academic ability to cope with the courses being offered".
which is measured by a Test of Learning Aptitude that is administered to all applicants. Discussion of these criteria in an earlier chapter showed that the "academic ability" criterion is much more rigidly monitored and enforced than the religious criterion.

The test result places the applicant in one of five ability groups: "superior, high average, average, low average, or low". Only students who score in the top three levels are usually admitted, although special consideration is given when the applicant has a family connection with the school.

When there is a family where a boy is currently a student at C.B.C. and ... another boy applies, even though he is not academically suited to the task, he would in all probability be accepted. But prior to accepting him, the parents would be asked to come up and discuss the results of the testing and see if they wanted their child to come here. Perhaps representations would be made that they would perhaps consider sending him to St Patrick's - a technical oriented high school.

Although there is some criticism of C.B.C. for excluding "below average" students, Cameron Pont believes that the policy is reasonable:

Interviewer: Do you get any criticism that you are creaming off the better students? Even if you take the average, high average and superior, you are still leaving the two lower groups [to the other schools].

Cameron Pont: I think there is some truth in that. I think that is a general observation by all. I think that they are aware, as I said in the first instance, that it is an academic school. And there are honest teachers and they would say it would be better [for less able pupils] not to go to C.B.C. but to ... go to a technical school. That's a reasonable thing to do.

Despite the alleged reasonableness of the policy, the initial testing procedure appears to be a somewhat sensitive issue.
For instance, there is a matter of semantics as to the actual nature of the test:

Cameron Pont: The headmaster is keen to distinguish that it is a qualifying test and not an entrance exam.

Question: What is the distinction on that?

Cameron Pont: I think the distinction is that he is not going to bar people from the school, eliminate people from the school, who do not measure up to our expectations. So he is not looking for the cream of the academic stream in Newburyport, he is merely looking for people who are qualified, suitable academically, to enter the grade for which they have applied.

That some parents have reservations about the entrance policy is surprising to people other than Cameron Pont. A member of the Brothers' Provincial Council also feels that the policy is reasonable and, indeed, in the best interests of parents and their sons:

Some parents don't like the entrance exam for year 7 - although I would have thought that parents who wanted their boys to come here would accept that it is an academic school and would not want to burden a child with that sort of education if he was not suited to it.

The headmaster, Brother Carter, insists upon the value of the qualifying test. It was he who formalised the testing procedure by making use of the A.C.E.R. produced "Test of Learning Aptitude" (TOLA) in an attempt to gain a more reliable and objective measure of ability. He is also concerned, however, that some who manage to clear the TOLA hurdle may still need to be removed from C.B.C. if their performance is inadequate. Such pupils, as has been pointed out elsewhere, are usually directed to St Patrick's Technical school despite the recalcitrance of some of the parents. Such is often the
fate, it appears, of those pupils who are admitted to C.B.C. on
the basis of "family considerations" rather than adequate TOLA
scores:

Interviewer: I can see that kind of flow. You mean
the kids leave C.B.C. and go to St
Patrick's?

Br. Carter: My word. Now don't ask me the numbers,
it is not an enormous number. But with
our qualifying test, I maintain that it
is most important that we find out
whether or not the boy can cope. No
test will tell you whether his
motivation is going to give way or
not. But at least we want to know
whether or not he can cope with the
work or class he is trying to get
into. Some of these - not many, but
some - find that they are at C.B.C.
because their parents want them to be.
Their brother went to C.B.C. and the
parents think it is much better to be
at C.B.C. than anywhere else. The
central thing is not the child and his
capabilities but what those parents
want and ... it is hard to shake them
on this.

For this reason, there is no unconditional entry of such pupils
to C.B.C., as Cameron Pont explains:

Cameron Pont: There is always the provision that we
say he may not be suitable for this
school. And if it is a mistake for the
parents to place the child here, if he
is academically unsuited for the
school, I think it is cruel really.

Interviewer: In some of the areas I have talked to
in year 11 and year 12, they are geared
right into getting that H.S.C. and if
you don't have the ability I presume it
could be a pretty painful experience.

Cameron Pont: Sure it could.

But despite occasional difficulties with parents whose boys
are being diverted away from C.B.C., the bulk of parents are
thought to support C.B.C., the Brothers, and the narrow
examination oriented curriculum that is provided.
(d) Parents and the Curriculum

Many Brothers talk about the historical success of the Brothers' schools in the task of raising the socio-economic status of Australian Catholics by means of examination results. They argue that the confidence that Catholic people generally had in Christian Brothers' schools still results in old boys of such schools, particularly, now trusting in schools like C.B.C. so greatly that they send their sons along to them without questioning the sort of education that they receive there. As a member of the Provincial Council puts it:

It's sometimes embarrassing to us, really, but the parents really do trust a Brothers' education.

Given this background, it is not surprising that parents in general neither seek nor are given much say in the construction of the C.B.C. curriculum. Apart from minor involvement with hobby club activities (of 80 minutes per week in most cases), the only discernible parent influence on the curriculum in recent years is the introduction of biology in years 11 and 12. From Brother Carter's comments, however, it appears that parent needs come after those of industry and commerce:

Interviewer: I was trying to sketch out roughly broad categories of things that help determine what happens here.

Br. Carter: Yes, I would think economic trends have an influence and employment and possibly employment requirements.

Interviewer: How about just community factors?

Br. Carter: This is the way biology started ... It wasn't viable. Now more parents have asked for it. And if you see a need, well then, you fill that need.

The only example from the data of parents being consulted directly about a curriculum matter was when the religious
education coordinator sent a circular to parents notifying them of details of a sex education component that was to be introduced to religion courses. The coordinator reports that parent reaction to the circular was minimal. This is explained, he argues, by the parents' confidence in the soundness of the C.B.C. curriculum:

**Interviewer:** You said that parents thought sex education would be handled in a way that they approve of. Would this extend to other areas of the curriculum?

**Br. Gordon:** I think it would. I would say that the atmosphere, if you like to put it that way, of the religious knowledge teaching in this school... would be reasonably conservative if you want to put labels on it. I don't think many "way out" ideas would be promulgated here.

**Interviewer:** You say that with a smile on your face.

**Br. Gordon:** Well, I know of some places where parents are very much concerned about ideas which they regard as being way out that the children are coming home with. But I don't think that would apply here. And I think parents would prefer a school to be conservative rather than way out because the parents by and large are conservative.

In most cases it appears that parent influence upon the curriculum is confined to keeping their children up to the mark in the execution of their homework duties. Teachers rely on parental support as a control mechanism in this regard:

**Question:** What contact do you actually have with parents, do you have any?

**Marie Campagna:** Well, I tend to have quite a bit because of the way they are. I mean, I am constantly ringing parents and writing notes. And what we have is a [homework] diary system and I check it every Friday. They write their homework in [their diaries] and I take it up every Friday and sign it and see if they have been writing in all their homework.
Even this amount of parental involvement can cause difficulties for teachers who are bound in a curious kind of contractual relationship with fee-paying clients of C.B.C. The solution for some teachers seems to be to get the parents on side in an attempt to extract as much work as possible from the children. According to one teacher:

I have come across some [parents] that just can't understand why their kids don't do better... I have had many arguments about that type of thing and I get really cheesed off sometimes because of the run-ins that I have had with other people. As a reaction to that, what I do now with my English [is to] put out a complete course outline before the term starts and give it to the parents and say, "Well, don't only put it on me. That is what they have to do. You chase them up as well".

Therefore, even when parent-teacher relationships are antagonistic, parent and teacher interests may still be compatible.

(e) An H.S.C. Focus

The narrow approach to curriculum at C.B.C. is demonstrated above all by the way in which an emphasis on H.S.C. results permeates all of the secondary school and even the primary section. The H.S.C. focus is in turn demonstrated by incidents such as the secondary school English coordinator, a teacher of H.S.C. English, being requested to speak to primary teachers about changes to the state-wide H.S.C. syllabus and ways in which teachers of grades 3 to 6 could better prepare pupils for eventual H.S.C. success. The science coordinator certainly believes that H.S.C. results dominate C.B.C. life.

The school is about putting students through H.S.C. ... Basically, that is what the school is based on - for everything seems to aim for H.S.C.. And at the start of the year, depending upon what the H.S.C. pass rate was [for the previous year], all the staff will
get a pat on the back, and even year 7 people will be 
told it was a good job. And if they don't [get good 
results] then there is something wrong with the whole 
school - they have not been taught properly and it 
must have started way down there [at year 7 level] 
because they haven't passed well.

Amongst the teachers of H.S.C. students, the teacher of 
physics exemplifies the control of knowledge that leads to 
maximal point scoring in examinations but not necessarily to 
much basic understanding:

When the course was originally set up in its present 
form... one of the aims was experimentation - that 
Physics should be seen as coming from 
experimentation... [But] they really don't assess 
that - so you really could get yourself into time 
consuming experimentation which doesn't lead to any 
better understanding or better point scoring. I only 
do experimentation that is directly related to the 
learning ... I do the ones that get good results, I 
don't like messing about... Rather than trying to 
discover the law, give them the law, give them lots of 
problems on it, then as a finish off - well, here's an 
experiment that shows this.

In physics classes, then, both curriculum and pedagogy are 
fashioned to suit narrow methods of H.S.C. evaluation. But 
while the examination focus is perhaps most readily discerned 
in subjects like physics, it can be detected also in 
potentially more open subjects like English. One teacher of 
senior English, for instance, dealt with the hypocrisy of the 
pious society in which Huck Finn felt constrained by examining 
the views of several of Mark Twain's literary critics. While 
discussion ensued about false morality and the nature of 
citizenship, this was confined to comments upon the literary 
analysis of the nineteenth century novel and did not touch upon 
its relevance for contemporary society or life in G.B.C. or 
Newburyport.

According to the teachers of both physics and English, the 
inevitable drive towards H.S.C. success is fuelled by students
as well as by other institutionalised pressures. For instance, the English teacher, Robert Darling, was faced with class disturbances when he insisted upon teaching the poetry of Milton to his H.S.C. class as an illustration of logical argument and clear thinking. Milton was not on the syllabus. The physics teacher, Lachlan West, summarises the view of pupil interests that is shared by many teachers.

The students are well aware of the nature of the exams and so they are continually judging your teaching strategy. They are not overly keen on you trying to get them interested in side issues. Even these fairly self-motivated and intrinsically interested [students] - they are not particularly concerned if it's not on the syllabus.

Such a fascination with the syllabus, however, is partly created by H.S.C. teachers themselves. Copies of the official syllabus for the various subjects are, as a matter of course, distributed to year 12 students. The syllabus for H.S.C. physics is particularly explicit about what is required for the final external examination. Students are told, for instance, that in the section of the exam on mechanics there will be 32 questions for 40 percent of the total marks, on light waves and electro magnetic waves there will be 16 questions for 20 percent, on electricity and magnetism there will be 26 questions for 32 1/2 percent, and on atomic particle physics there will be 6 questions for 7 1/2 percent. Details of the knowledge that will be required to answer all these questions are spelled out. As Smith observed, "Everything but the test is on it".

The syllabus is referred to often in classes in year 12 physics and other subjects. It powerfully demonstrates the
reality of the H.S.C. examination and its importance in the life of C.B.C.

(f) Curriculum and Examinations: A Summary

While a number of teachers at C.B.C. would like to confront curriculum issues, the headmaster expresses his suspicion and lack of regard for "curriculum people". In Brother Carter's mind, curriculum matters are simply accommodated in his view that a C.B.C. education should prepare students for H.S.C. examinations. He believes that such an approach both assists pupils in their preparation for employment or further study and also conforms with the expectations of the bulk of parents. He maintains this latter view despite any evidence to indicate that parents, in the main, either seek or are given any say in curriculum. Parents are expected merely to assist in keeping their sons up to the mark by supervising homework.

C.B.C.'s curriculum, then, remains narrowly geared to the Higher School Certificate examinations. Apart from isolated initiatives, which will be discussed in the following section, the syllabus remains unchallenged and unexamined. Those who wish to promote curriculum discussion await the appointment of the new principal who is to replace Brother Carter in the hope that he will be "a curriculum man".

3. PUPIL CAREERS

(a) Science, Careers, and an Academic Curriculum

It is significant that the most explicit examination orientation is discernible in H.S.C. physics. That subject can
be seen as the flagship of the maths and sciences which currently attract the ablest C.B.C. pupils. According to a teacher of English:

I think that naturally they are looking for something that is going to give them the best opportunity to get a job or of getting into university. And I think at the moment it is through the science subjects... I don't think the science people - not overtly anyway - are doing any more politicking, but it just seems that the better students just gravitate towards the science subjects.

A science teacher, however, suggests that the drift towards science is caused by more than just a kind of magnetic pull towards those subjects. In his opinion, pupils are definitely pushed in that direction:

I suspect kids come into year 11 and have been told fairly strongly in year 10 that they ought to do maths and science where possible - so in the kids' minds I think that is probably given some sort of status... I think the idea is put across to them pretty much that maths and science are given more opportunities ... and in that sense perhaps it is given a slightly favoured position - because a lot of the better students tend to do it.

In either case, it seems clear that part of both the attraction of maths and sciences for pupils, and the push from teachers to encourage them to attempt those subjects, is bound up with occupational opportunities and access to high status courses at universities. Such an orientation forces a reappraisal of the notion, that was discussed earlier, of C.B.C. as an academic school. The point is well made by Robert Darling:

Interviewer: I find C.B.C. very interesting... I see it as being set up in a sense to produce an academic education... and I am wondering just what does drive the school.

Robert Darling: That word, academic, is one that I prefer to leave out of the conversation... I believe that what drives the school is that it has a sufficient number of pupils who believe
that they will gain employment from the results of their efforts or who will go on to further education. It seemed to me that there was a very strong commitment to promotion of the science stream and the commerce stream. This was promoted to my knowledge by the previous year 12 coordinator who worked in the commerce stream. So the school over the last decade has put more and more emphasis into doing well in either one of these areas.

Interviewer: Commerce and science?

Robert Darling: Yes, and I believe that, once students begin to realise that there is an end to secondary education, that these are the choices to make - either because their parents wish them to pursue a course which is going to lead to a form of employment that they understand, or to higher education which they may or may not understand, but believe is desirable. So this has found acceptance with the students. And I don't know to what extent others on the staff have been involved with this rationale, but my experience is that there doesn't seem to be a very strong commitment to promoting the humanities.

Another teacher concisely explains the demise of languages in the C.B.C. curriculum in a similar vein:

"It would seem that the languages in the junior school - that is, languages other than English - are being strangled. But it is not just from lack of support. It seems that the boys themselves are doing it because it seems somewhere along the line they have been persuaded or they have convinced themselves that a language such as French has no educational value for them. I don't mean educational value, I mean cash value as they see it.

"Academic" success in French leads to fewer job opportunities and tertiary courses than does success in mathematics and science.

An issue of concern to humanities teachers, and one which many of them believe highlights the undervaluing of their subjects, is that English literature is not currently a part of the year 12 curriculum. According to one of these teachers:
I see it as an anomaly that... a school of this type doesn't seem to be too concerned to the community that they do not offer English literature. There is no apology for it.

The point seems to be that the absence of English literature belies the rhetoric that describes C.B.C. as an academic school. Smith, indeed, was "amazed" to find that there was no H.S.C. work in this area. Yet there is widespread staff support for the view that the subject should be offered. A strong ally of the humanities teachers in this regard is Laichlan West, the school's outstanding physics teacher and the teacher who is most strongly identified with the mathematics and science domination of the curriculum. He feels that "... if you don't have an English literature H.S.C. course you don't really have a school". Along with several other teachers, he claims that English literature is a premier subject which, like pure and applied mathematics, should be offered "even if you had only one kid" who wished to take it. A number of other teachers agree that for such prestige subjects the usual resource considerations regarding viable class size should be waived because "... it is inconceivable that an academic school like this should not have an English literature class... Even the science people recognise that a school which is perceived as academic must have English literature". The message from these teachers is clearly that C.B.C.'s reputation is diminished because of the absence of English literature from the curriculum.

(b) The Road to H.S.C.

Entrance of pupils into any subjects at year 12 level is dependent of course upon satisfactory performance at earlier
levels. This applies, incidentally, just as much to some teachers who, as well as students, must "work their way up" to year 12:

I started off in year 7 ... Then last year I had year 7 social studies and religion and all the year 10 consumer education. And then eventually this year I have sort of worked my way up to get year 11 and 12 accounting and year 11 legal studies.

The students must face formal, written examinations at the end of each year of schooling at C.B.C. Satisfactory performance in these examinations, usually moderated by performance in subject tests and assignments during the year, is required for promotion to the next level. Once students reach the year 11 and 12 levels, however, even students who pass their examinations find that some subjects are more difficult to get into than others:

Question: When you say, "If they pass into year 11", does that mean that there is a gating mechanism there?

Robert Darling: Well, the requirement is that they pass two thirds of the subjects they have in year 10... and my experience is that in the last couple of years more students are being asked to repeat. So they are not being promoted virtually automatically.

Interviewer: That would be year 10 - the examination is an internal school examination?

Robert Darling: That is right. The same procedure occurs in year 11. The procedure of passing is an accumulative business... Teachers would then make an assessment of the potential of the subjects nominated by the student for year 12... It seems that if a student nominates to do mathematics and science and the teachers maintain that he doesn't have the ability or will not succeed, then efforts are made to redirect the student to other courses. But that is a rather interesting situation because that option is not open to teachers of other subjects.
There is a double gate, therefore, into maths and science at these senior levels. Not only does this double gate reinforce the status of mathematics and science subjects, it also ensures that those students who barely clear the first hurdle are concentrated in the humanities and some commerce subjects. The feelings on this matter of teachers of history, politics and legal studies, as well as geography, are expressed by the geography teacher:

The results have never been very high in geography because you can't really stream them out like physics or pure and applied. If they don't want them they say they don't want them. It seems whatever type of principal we have got, whether he is a physics man or a commerce man, they seem to back the science people up. Anybody can do geography.

Because a number of year 12 pupils in recent years have been unsuccessful at the H.S.C. examinations in humanities subjects, there has been some pressure from several teachers to raise the initial entrance hurdle into year 12, as was noted by Robert Darling. These teachers claim that, in the long run, such a policy is in the best interests of all pupils and of academic standards. According to a teacher of a year 12 humanities subject:

[Easy access to humanities subjects] is not only unfair to the kids who can't cope, but it is also being unfair to the kids who are actually in year 12 if there are so many others there who can't keep up. The whole thing is just dragged down. So you are sort of caught on the horns of a dilemma. You want to do the best by all the kids, but then ... I think of being cruel to be kind with all these kids that are just not H.S.C. material.

While a minority of teachers favour more open access to at least some H.S.C. subjects, the headmaster is in favour of restricting H.S.C. entrance:
Our numbers purposely drop down in H.S.C. ... and we are not going to let them go up just to have numbers. We have curtailed the passage of boys through year 11. If you are not good enough you remain there. Students have been notified of the stricter policy regarding year 12 entrance. It has been made clear, as a senior teacher explains, that there are now new rules:

One thing we have done ... because of this problem of kids getting into H.S.C. who can't perform and who won't perform ... is that students wishing to go into H.S.C. should have achieved 60% [in their year 11 examinations] to be allowed into any subject that they wish to do.

By such means, Brother Carter and some teachers hope to reduce the number of "failures" at year 12 level.

(c) Assessment and Promotion

The confrontation with examinations at year 11 is not a new experience for C.B.C. students. By that stage of their school careers they are seasoned examinees. As has been mentioned, pupils sit for examinations at the end of each school year. They are subject to formal assessment of their academic progress at the end of each school term. One teacher, who came to C.B.C. recently, has found that there is much more emphasis upon assessment at C.B.C. than at his previous school:

I found the school to be far more concerned with assessing students academically - much more emphasis given to that in all levels of the school. Although routine assessment appears to be such a dominant feature of the school, and one which features strongly in the conversation and everyday life of C.B.C. participants, the fine details of assessment practice are left to each teacher. The science coordinator explains, however, that despite individual approaches, some institutionalised expectations prevail:
Question: What about the techniques of evaluation that are used in the school?

Peter Montini: Each man for himself is all I could really say on that.

Question: There are no systematic requirements?

Peter Montini: I think I would be pretty fair in saying that. Each teacher has his own method of assessing. You know, we have tests and so on. But the actual way in which marks are handled - each teacher does his own and there is no standardisation or anything like that attempted, at least as far as I know.

Question: What would the custom be among teachers, though? Would they have daily tests, weekly tests, monthly tests? Is it based on homework?

Peter Montini: I think it is usually based on tests that are continuous assessment. Say, every two or three weeks there will be a test on a unit and at the end of the year there will be a big test.

Question: Is there a general school policy of continuous assessment?

Peter Montini: Not really. I don't think there is. It is up to each teacher to actually work out his own method. The teacher might say, "Look, I will have a test at the end of each term". But I think it is expected, somehow, the headmaster expects teachers to be actually giving tests - but it has never been said specifically that you have to give a number of tests in the term or anything like that. The headmaster virtually assumes that people are going to do the right thing.

It seems that most teachers do "do the right thing" and comply with the expected assessment norms. This enables staff members to talk about common features of the assessment programme.

Question: How important is assessment in the everyday life of the school?
Robert Darling: Well, it is [important]. Therefore assessment is required by the administration, and in most cases numerical assessment.

Question: So it is a competitive form of assessment, essentially, as a routine procedure?

Robert Darling: It is a ranking form of procedure... The competitive nature of it is I suppose at the individual level where the individual may wish to achieve a better level than his peers.

Question: How do you manage that kind of assessment, for instance in your subjects?

Robert Darling: Well, it takes various forms. I would assess the general skills that are displayed everyday. And I find that it is also a convenient method of discipline..., the most effective means in the school.

Question: When you say there is daily assessment, is that in terms of individual feedback to children or is it a more formalised kind of assessment with cumulative marks and so on?

Robert Darling: The latter.

Question: So in fact it is fairly formalised? Is that common throughout the school?

Robert Darling: Yes, I would say that it is a most common feature.

An inevitable consequence of emphasis upon marks and examination results is that some unacceptable pupils must be culled out of C.B.C. to maintain "appropriate" standards. The crunch for many seems to come in year 9:

Interviewer: Is there a general fear of failure? How important is that for kids?

Jim Morris: I think it has to be fairly important because they hear us [teachers] day after day say things about, you know, "If you don't get this in then your marks are going to be brought down". It's a control mechanism, it's as simple as that.
Interviewer: Is that what you mean by "the pupils' survival"?

Jim Morris: Yes, I see it as real survival thing. If they can't get through it and they cause too many problems, they are out after year 9. That's the weeding out process. Kids seem to be able to just muddle their way through year 7... but by year 9, that is it...

Interviewer: How much weeding out process?

Jim Morris: On report day, pupils are discussed, and, virtually, if they haven't come up to standard, say failed five out of seven subjects and they have been a real pest in class -- that is it.

Interviewer: This is year 9?

Jim Morris: Yes, go elsewhere.

The information from Jim Morris reinforces pupil stories about the exclusion of trouble-makers and "weak students", especially at year 9 level. Members of several year 10 and year 11 classes were able to name between a dozen and twenty-five pupils, who were in their year seven intakes of about one hundred and twenty, but who had left C.B.C. by year 10 level. While several of these apparently left willingly, some were allegedly forced out by their examination results and others, according to the pupils, "were told to go before they were kicked out". A similar process regulates entry into the year 11 and 12 levels - the business end of the C.B.C. curriculum:

At the end of year 10 a realistic appraisal is required of the students, of the parents and of the staff. Some people then are still accustomed themselves to the more extensive demands on their time, and tension and so forth. These people are usually the ones who move into the lower third of the achievement scale. Some of them don't return. Some of them might be asked not to return.
Along the road to H.S.C., therefore, there are a number of hurdles to cross. The initial TOLA barrier is the most obvious of these but, as has been seen, even some who manage to clear it are subsequently redirected. The deputy headmaster explains:

There have been a couple of cases where I have met the parents and, in one way or another, we have managed to get them into St. Patrick’s Tech., because they weren’t coping here... The number is small... But some of the ones in [years] 7 and 8 are struggling very much. I wouldn’t expect them to go to year 12.

Evidence of coping or struggling is provided by the pupil’s marks, which must be sufficient to allow access to each year level. The pupils’ fetish for marks, which is so apparent by the time they reach the H.S.C. year, has been inculcated throughout their secondary school careers at C.B.C. As early as year 7, marks are used by teachers to achieve both task orientation and classroom control. According to one teacher of years 7 and 8, Marie Campagna:

In English I have got a sheet of things I want completed – like compositions and book reviews and projects. They know that they are due in and that I assess on work done during the term - and it they don’t do them, well then, I can’t give them the mark.

Yet Marie, like Robert Darling and Peter Montini, confirms that the emphasis on marks, although it has the appearance of an institutional obligation, is more the result of a general expectation than of any administrative compulsion:

I make up my own mind about tests and I have no pressure from anybody about what I should be doing. I think that is general throughout the whole place – nobody sort of pushes you in any way about what you should be doing and what you shouldn’t.

Marks at C.B.C. are the precious gold to be accumulated to gain promotion, the approval of parents and teachers, and access to high-status knowledge at senior levels. Pupil
competition for marks provides for teachers a means of controlling classes - deadlines keep pupils busy.

(d) Pupil Careers: A Summary

It is clear from the ethnography that assignments, examinations, marks and standards are regarded seriously at C.B.C. and determine the academic careers of pupils through the school. Both teachers and pupils give especially high status to mathematics and science and progress in these subjects is carefully monitored. The emphasis, however, is not so much "academic" as upon the mechanical mastery of subject knowledge that is seen to afford employment opportunities for pupils. There is competition amongst pupils at senior levels to remain in these subjects, the status of which means that other subjects are less highly regarded and cater for less talented pupils.

As a matter of routine, pupils face regular assessments and examinations from their first contact with C.B.C. The emphasis upon results and standards means that, at various stages, unsatisfactory pupils must be excluded. The concern with marks is so ingrained at C.B.C. that virtually all teaching and learning is based upon this currency. The drive for H.S.C. success is both an individual motivation for pupils and a collective thrust of the institution as a whole. Good H.S.C. results reflect favourably upon teachers while bad results can lead to soul searching and finger pointing as the blame is spread thickly over the entire teaching contingent. The emphasis upon examination results is a long standing tradition of Brothers' schools - so much so that wholesale testing is
rarely coordinated and scrutinized, but is automatic and regarded as non-problematic. Such attitudes to evaluation make for a functional view of curriculum and pedagogy which, as has been noted, militates against innovation.

4. CURRICULUM INNOVATION

(a) Autonomy, Cooperation and Innovation

It is not true to say that there is no innovation at C.B.C. But the emphasis upon marks encourages teachers and students to concentrate their efforts upon activities and skills which lend themselves to numerical grading and pre-specified formats. This is facilitated by ensuring that the curriculum is broken into tidy, manageable units which can be handled discretely. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that text books govern learning in many C.B.C. classrooms. The trend is especially marked in the junior section of the school.

Question: Do you have a set syllabus that you have to follow?

Margaret Connors: Well, the syllabus, I suppose they sort of are the texts, basically... We sort of have one text for maths right through primary school, one series for reading, and the same with spelling. Science is still pretty hoth potch, and we have a common text for English as well. In social studies we had two years ago a fellow from the state system come in and sort of restructure our social studies.

Although text books, with their built-in control of pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation, are widely used at C.B.C., some teachers prefer more innovative teaching methods. Examples of individual teachers using their classroom autonomy to introduce variations upon traditional curricula can be
cited, such as the ongoing attempt by Bernadette Healy and Christine Hawke to introduce and consolidate some form of drama and arts programme in the curriculum despite the lack of suitable space or facilities and the proscriptions about undue noise.

Innovation at C.B.C., as has been pointed out, is generally the result of teachers exercising the classroom autonomy that is afforded by the lack of substantial curriculum coordination. Classroom independence is assured because of the strength of the general expectation that teachers will not divert from the task of always guiding students towards H.S.C. It is simply understood that such a convention is to be followed - but the convention is not regulated or checked:

Peter Daniels: The accounting is pretty much straightforward in Year 11.

Question: You follow what kind of syllabus, is it a prescribed syllabus?

Peter Daniels: Well, actually, I set it myself. [The Examinations Board] set prerequisites for Year 12 and you follow that and, in fact, the textbook has been written in terms of entry into Year 12 so I stick fairly much to that book and make up my own notes as we go along.

Question: Within those boundaries of having to prepare for Year 12's course you get a fair amount of discretion, do you?

Peter Daniels: I would say I have got complete discretion. Well nobody in particular has asked me what I am doing in Year 11 Accounting.

Peter suggests that at C.B.C. the cost of classroom independence is teacher isolation, a point taken up by Peter Montini:
Everyone can see everyone else but, nevertheless, everyone goes on independently without much interest in anyone else, really - I mean, [except] if there is a disturbance on. Other than that, I think each room is its own little world.

Teacher isolation can be overcome to some extent by teachers of parallel classes sharing ideas and lesson preparation. Such cooperation proves to be a rich source of curriculum ideas:

Peter Daniels: There is actually a tremendous feeling of friendliness in the staffroom but when you actually get down to the curriculum you are on your own. I had Year 7 religion [last year] and ... it was the first time at the school that I had encountered working together with somebody else. The two of us worked together just in religion and I think that was great, I really enjoyed that. I am sure some of our lessons would be pretty ad hoc - the final decisions might have been worked out 10 minutes before we went into the room - but at least there was a bit of support there.

The need for "a bit of support" is felt particularly strongly by teachers who are new to C.B.C. Such support can result in an integration of curriculum across subject areas as when the experienced Bernadette Healy, recently recruited to C.B.C., found support and greater enjoyment in her teaching by working with Christine Hawke, an equally enthusiastic first year teacher:

Bernadette Healy: I have found that I have got on very well with the art teacher and we do a lot of work together because she has art below the drama [room] and we are starting now to coordinate and do things together... which is good. That is part of the thing that I work well under and she does, too, and we really enjoy that.

Question: So it is a matter of individual negotiation?
Bernadette Healy: It is really.

Question: Rather than having a school policy?

Bernadette Healy: I find no-one is terribly interested, really. You are just sort of left to your own.

Christine Hawke has found mutual support in other quarters, also. For her and Marie Campagna, also a first year teacher, co-operation is an important aid to coping with what has been for them a difficult initiation into the teaching profession. Quite apart from that, classroom autonomy can be rewarding for people with curriculum ideas to implement:

Christine Hawke: Brother Sterling is the area coordinator and he is the person I go to for basic problems, but I don't think I am really responsible to anybody except myself for the curriculum I teach because there was never anything given to me ... so I have to sort of work that out for myself as to what I teach and how I teach it. With religion, I suppose Brother Gordon is responsible for us. We just sort of keep going.

Question: That's a very loose relationship, too?

Christine Hawke: Yes, yes very. Well, I work together with Marie Campagna ... Basically, we have got the areas ourselves together, and we just sort of worked out at the start of term which areas we were going to touch and how we were going to do it and worked through it like that, really. But I am a law unto myself. It is good.

Of course, teacher discretion has its limits. The reluctance of teachers to "stick your neck out" was noted earlier. The chop might come if teacher initiatives have implications that are wider than autonomous classrooms. Bernadette Healy, for instance, is hesitant about revising the social studies curriculum and text in a way that might lead to controversy:
The social studies course that interests me is more sociology and, you know, getting into family unit things and working patterns and structures and a little bit of anthropology ... So I tackled that - but to do all this, you see, I am feeling now that I have come to a bit of a stop. And I am going to have to do something because [the text I want to use] discusses, in the family unit we are doing, a nuclear family and extended families and it also gets into one-parent families ... and also homosexuality and people living together ... We get into all sorts of mild controversial issues which I feel I would go ahead with if I wasn't in a Catholic school. But now I have come up against this I have to get approval to carry on.

Because of the "mild controversy" inherent in some of the issues that Bernadette wishes to include in her revised course, she feels that it would be safer if it were sanctioned by her area coordinator, Brother Sterling, whose imprimatur would indicate the approval of the Brothers.

If Bernadette Healy manages to introduce a revised social studies course, her success will be yet another example of the idiosyncratic nature of curriculum change which comes about because of the fortuitous appointment of individuals to C.B.C. Bruce Smith's extension of work experience is another case in point:

Question: Did you come here specifically as a careers teacher?

Bruce Smith: No, the ad. in the paper was basically for a form 5/form 6 economics/legal studies/con.ed. teacher, and when I got here - the references I had - Brother Carter sort of took a look at them and saw that I had been full time careers ... But he emphasised that the economics side of it comes first - the teaching side is definitely first and the careers side is sort of minor in comparison ... It is purely the way this school operates - if, say, Jim Karn left, there would be no transition. And so, if I left next year, there would be no work experience. It is just the way things
are particularly, you know, if you come in [to C.B.C.] with initiative you do it. If you leave then the whole thing goes.

Rather than being cooperative instances of school wide planning and input, curriculum initiatives are fragmented and haphazard.

(b) The Transition Initiative

Some teachers are concerned that the recently introduced year 11 transition course, a course designed by a small group of lay teachers for year 11 students who do not intend proceeding to year 12, will go the way that Bruce Smith has indicated. The course coordinator, Jim Karn, is disappointed at the lack of support which the course has received from some quarters:

I think the parents were a little bit - one, afraid of a terminal course; and two, perhaps apprehensive that there were no Brothers involved in it... It was disappointing... One specific Brother rejects it and he is a year 10 teacher and he advises parents not to send the kids there.

Conversations with C.B.C. teachers suggest that the transition course has more supporters than detractors on the staff - especially amongst the eighty percent of lay teachers. But the idea of a terminal transition course is in opposition to what many parents and some teachers expect of the school:

Heather Verdun: The transition course seems to have worked very well for the boys doing it, and I think, perhaps, the biggest problem is having it accepted not by the kids but by the parents. A number of parents that I spoke to at our last parent-teacher interviews... were misguided because a couple of teachers in year 10 abused the transition course... They took this as gospel and of course they put their kids into the academic, if you like to call it that, year 11 stream and subsequently those
kids are failing. And... in the transition course [the teachers] are really doing wonders.

Interviewer: But the school is still largely driven by H.S.C.

Heather Verdun: Of course, yes, that has to be I suppose. Whether it is or not, it is perceived as being an academic school.

When developing the transition course, Jim Karn and Les Cunningham with support from John Carlton and Peter Montini were guided by considerations of "relevance" rather than "academic curriculum". The explicit purpose of the transition curriculum is to enhance the self-esteem of school-leavers as well as confronting some of their taken-for-granted beliefs about their society. Jim Karn and Les Cunningham delight in the opportunity that the transition course provides them to negotiate a broadened curriculum with their pupils and to avoid the constraints of preparing pupils for a narrow H.S.C. curriculum. Jim describes this situation as being "what education should really be all about" but recognises that other teachers have different motives for supporting or at least tolerating the alternative course:

We have never ever looked after kids. We are always considered to be [a preparation for] tertiary ... In H.S.C. we are actually getting kids that really shouldn't have been there, but that was the situation. This [alternative course] came along and I believe that in our first year it was seen by many teachers as simply a repository for problem kids. They found that X was a bit of a hassle and so therefore he was recommended to do the transition course.

Instead of being seen as an important curriculum initiative, then, the transition course is regarded by some teachers as merely the latest addition to the set of gates and hurdles that regulate pupil careers at C.S.C. Pupils who
barely pass year 10, but who are not seen as H.S.C. material, even humanities material, can be drafted into the Year 11 terminal alternative.

The transition course is therefore supported by some teachers because it helps to preserve "academic" priorities by allowing the removal from the C.B.C. mainstream of pupils who are discipline problems or who are academically weak. Such students are attracted to the transition course with its relaxed authority relationships between teachers and pupils and its broadened curriculum which is perceived to be more relevant and less demanding than the traditional preparation for H.S.C.. The migration of these pupils into the transition class, Brother Carter believes, protects H.S.C. examination results. Reviewing H.S.C. scores just prior to the first year of operation of the transition course, he predicted:

We won't have these failures next year. They'll be doing the transition course.

Those who teach the transition alternative, of course, believe that the curriculum which they are offering is relevant and important for their students. There is also a hint of an element of contestation of prevailing social and political attitudes which underly the seemingly conformist notion of a course which aims to better prepare students for jobs. This hint may be noted in Jim Karr's encouragement of pupils to "use the system to beat the system". They can only do this by breaking out, he says, of a merely compliant acceptance of the work situation. His view is that:

It is not the compliant who do well anyway in the system. The system just tramples those. But if the kids can be more individual and have their own character and their own initiative, then they can use the system to their own benefit.
Therefore, children will not be greatly assisted to get jobs by concentrating on improving their "basic skills or numeracy or whatever" but rather by learning to be "survivors in an outgoing way".

Les Cunningham also believes that the transition curriculum should challenge accepted views:

My approach is mainly, I am not sure that I can articulate it very well, but I attempt to establish a fairly cooperative atmosphere to attempt to generate some sort of spirited inquiry rather than just acceptance of material presented. In some ways it ought to at least question what they hear and see around them, the influence of the media for instance, and perhaps to try and challenge them in some way in their political attitudes. Not in a terribly radical way but just to get them to question what is accepted. I am simply asking the kids to question a bit and that is about as far as I can go or as far as I have been able to go. I suppose if I could do all that I would be doing quite a bit.

Despite the belief that "if Jim Kain left there would be no transition", the alternative course has generated much interest amongst many C.B.C. teachers. Some of its supporters see it as a ground-breaking start to a review and overhaul of the school's curriculum. Others, depending upon their attitude towards the transition course, see it either at best or at worst as merely a minor diversion from the traditional C.B.C. orientation towards the Higher School Certificate.

(c) Curriculum Innovation: A Summary

Although text books are widely used at C.B.C. in a way that mechanically controls pedagogy and evaluation as well as curriculum, a number of instances of innovation were detected. Limited curriculum innovation is possible because of classroom autonomy of individual teachers. Yet these teachers seem to
have a sense of how far they can go in developing alternative programs and are reluctant to "stick their necks out". Controversy is to be avoided.

Instances of cooperation between teachers in developing curriculum initiatives have generated enthusiasm and imaginative programs. Such initiatives, however, are not widely shared or discussed amongst the staff. The history has been that interesting and worthwhile programs collapse when the individual initiators leave the school. There is a belief by some teachers that the year 11 transition course, however, having been openly developed and conducted with the formal approval of Brother Carter, is offered only to students who are excluded from the mainstream curriculum because they are not considered to be H.S.C. material.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An overriding concern with examination results has had its cost at C.B.C. It ensures that an extremely narrow, academic curriculum is followed. Distinction in examinations becomes the "sole criterion for success" for schools like C.B.C. (Fogarty, 1959:371). Brother Dowsett is in agreement with a substantial proportion of the eighty percent of lay teachers when he argues that curriculum change is necessary - indeed, long overdue - if C.B.C. is to address the wider needs and concerns of the current generation of Newburyport youth:

Question: [You said that] the curriculum is pretty solid - the solid traditional subjects, still with the emphasis on results. Do you think that needs change?
Br. Dowsett: Yes, I think it has got to change, really. Just take for the moment the unemployment situation, ... increased leisure time that people have got. I think that our traditional subjects are going to be questioned more and more in times to come and, if we are involved in educating students, it is a whole area that [the Brothers] are just beginning to face up to... I think it is an area that headmasters and headmistresses of [some other] Catholic schools have been looking at for the last couple of years pretty strongly,... I would think probably we [at C.B.C.] haven't faced up to it too much.

Good examination results rank with firm discipline as a major tradition of Brothers' schools. At C.B.C. the emphasis upon H.S.C. results is still pronounced and this, combined with the concern for control of pupils, leads in general to narrowly defined curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Evidence suggests that a drive for marks is inculcated in pupils from early years. By year 12, those pupils who have accumulated sufficient marks during their school careers, and so avoided the culling out process, expect their teachers to be task oriented and to teach for H.S.C. results. The push for H.S.C. success, therefore, reflects both the individual motivation of pupils and a cumulative institutional expectation of C.B.C. The latter is illustrated by the annual ritual of allocating praise or blame for overall H.S.C. results, and of making comparisons between C.B.C. results and those of other schools.

Such emphasis upon examination results per se suggests a mechanistic view of knowledge and of teaching. Thus, although the C.B.C. curriculum is rarely coordinated or supervised, a functional view of pedagogy and curriculum prevails and
militates against innovation. Classrooms are expected to be quiet, busy and orderly.

All of this suggests that the orientation of C.B.C. cannot be described as academic in any classical sense. Love of learning, a quest for discovery, deeper understanding and academic excellence, while not necessarily totally lacking at C.B.C., are at least subsidiary to notions of examination scores, university entrance, employability and career mobility. In this sense the curriculum is extremely mechanistic and is functionally related to the Brothers' historical mission of educating for social and economic mobility. The emphasis upon and interest in science and mathematics subjects, then, derives from the conviction that students can maximise their future prospects by performing well in them. Emphasis upon these subjects, however, means that others must be relatively devalued.

Curriculum initiatives are confined to individuals, teachers working together in pairs or, in the case of the transition course, to a small group of teachers. As Cameron Font noted, discussion of "curriculum" in the wider C.B.C. context is usually confined to talking about the syllabus. Curriculum issues are reduced to questions merely of content. This is particularly noticeable in the language of the headmaster who talks about the introduction of a new subject, biology, as a substantial curriculum change. But curriculum development in the light of a changing Australian and Newburyport society are minimal at present and do not feature on the headmaster's agenda. Nevertheless, some ground has been broken by a small group of lay teachers who recently began
conducting a course for year 11 students who do not intend proceeding to year 12. Considerations of "relevant curriculum" largely influenced the transition course which is taken by a small number of pupils. A growing groundswell of opinion, particularly amongst lay teachers, is that curriculum review should be an important priority of the incoming headmaster who is to succeed Brother Carter in the near future.
CHAPTER 8:
C.B.C., CLASS AND NEWBURYPORT CATHOLICS

1. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of ethnography examines the relationship between Christian Brothers College and the Newburyport community, especially the workplace. It is found that the relationship depends upon many of the traditions that have been examined in previous chapters - especially C.B.C.'s emphasis upon upward social mobility, obedience, and examination results.

2. C.B.C., EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

(a) C.B.C., Highborough, Newburyport

C.B.C. is situated in Highborough, Newburyport's most established, prestigious and affluent suburb. From the balcony of the Brothers' residence atop Highborough hill, one looks out across the school's green playing fields, over the entire city and out to the countryside beyond. Although many of C.B.C.'s pupils come from the Highborough area, most live elsewhere. On any school morning, boys wearing distinctive C.B.C. blazers of deep navy with gold braid can be seen pedalling bicycles from various parts of Newburyport towards Highborough hill - the ride home after school is always easier. Buses deliver students from the distant suburbs and from outlying towns as far as fifty kilometres away. At the front and rear gates, the buses jostle with family sedans and station wagons as parents drop their boys off for school. Amid the daily chaos a number
of Volvos and Mercedes Benz are noticeable amongst the more usual Commodores and Toyotas.

As the pupils enter C.B.C. they are stepping into a tradition – the Christian Brothers, more than any other religious order, have dominated the secondary education of Catholic boys in Australia during the past century. At the local level, as was discussed in chapter 3, the Brothers have had a long association with Newburyport. In that earlier discussion the Brothers' historical mission of educating Catholic boys for social mobility was addressed.

The pattern of producing a Catholic middle class is illustrated by the example of C.B.C. One explicit purpose of its establishment was to assist Catholics to gain access to positions from which they had been largely debarred in the early decades of the century due to their working class location and the almost exclusively Protestant nature of secondary education.

(b) C.B.C. and Newburyport Catholics

When C.B.C. was founded in 1935 it provided a complete secondary education for the Catholic boys of Newburyport. Like Brothers' schools everywhere at that time, C.B.C. quickly established a reputation for firm discipline and sound results in public examinations.

Cameron Pont, through his long association with the school, is pleased about aspects of the reputation C.B.C. has gained:

Question: [Catholic traditions at C.B.C.] go back a long way do they?
Cameron Pond: Yes, I think they would go back a very long way. I think that C.B.C. was established in 1935 and [its] academic tradition had begun to be established even in those first years and people were proud of the fact ... The Newburyport [Catholic] community was keen to have Catholic people in situations in the town - in influential situations in the town.

Brother Jim Bourke is one of the few who remembers the opening of C.B.C. He was then on the staff of St. John's Orphanage which occupied the choice site that was to become C.B.C. According to Brother Bourke, Newburyport Catholics have been extremely loyal to the school:

The Brothers have been in Newburyport for a long time and there are a tremendous number of old families, old Catholic families ... And they went to the Brothers' school and that was the only school they ever thought of.

Thus, the image of C.B.C. that parents are perceived to support was established during a time of Catholic press for social advancement. Brother Bourke suggests that the Christian Brothers and their new school were accepted uncritically by parents who strongly supported Catholic education. Christian Brothers' traditions, then, were perpetuated amongst Newburyport Catholics and very definite expectations of C.B.C. developed. In the present circumstances many teachers believe that these expectations are somewhat inflated. This point is strongly stated by a lay teacher:

Look, don't underestimate this simplistic view of parents that, if they send their kids here, "the Brothers" will just automatically get him through H.S.C.

Brother Bourke has no doubt that, from the start, the students of the newly established C.B.C. did not mix with the inmates of St. John's Orphanage, even though they shared the Highborough site for more than three years:
So you were here actually when C.B.C. and St. John's were sharing?

Yes, C.B.C. started in '35. There was one of my great friends, Brother Smith, who died a couple of years ago ... Four of them lived down at St. Patrick's School and came up each day - Brother Barlow was the first headmaster, Brother Andrews, Brother Moten and Brother Smith - and they had that part over there near the chapel. That was their schoolroom section.

So there was not much mixing of the two groups of children?

Not at all. Well they might have, but officially - no. And then at the end of '38, we [St. John's Orphanage] moved out. We spent all the Christmas holidays carting beds and all that kind of stuff out there [to the new site].

Now formally and physically separated from the orphanage, C.B.C.'s independent identity was further reinforced soon afterwards when St. Patrick's School, in response to the rapid growth of giant industries in Newburyport, became St. Patrick's Technical School. While St. Patrick's catered for Catholic tradesmen at the local level, C.B.C., high upon Highborough hill, became known as the place which prepared Newburyport Catholic youth for public examinations and for entry to white-collar employment. The success of C.B.C. and other Brothers' schools in this regard has become part of the folklore that has been handed down to younger members of the Order:

I think of Brothers perhaps 30 or 40 years ago establishing a Catholic community that could stand on its own feet socially and in all sorts of areas of society - professions and that sort of thing - in days when Catholics were more conspicuous by their absence in those fields.
Brother Dowsett's recollections of a competitive academic emphasis when he was a pupil at a Brothers' school some fifteen years ago are shared by many teachers at G.B.C., a number of whom are graduates of the school:

Br Dowsett: When I was at [school] there was a lot of emphasis on studying hard because you had to get along in life. You had to study to do well in exams, scholarships and those sorts of things.

Cameron Pont suggests that "the whole school has been geared towards academic achievement". The determinedly academic orientation was the logical result of the ambitious aim of shifting the class location of Catholics. This involved not so much the rarified pursuit of intellectual excellence, as a more pragmatic scramble for the credentials that were needed for entry into the public service and tertiary education.

(c) Resistance and Reproduction

It is important that the radical element of G.B.C.'s mission is not overlooked. The attempt to transform the Newburyport social structure by creating within it a Catholic middle class involved elements of resistance to Protestant discrimination and to the once Protestant domination of secondary education and white collar employment. On the other hand, however, the combined efforts of the Brothers and the Newburyport Catholic community to "have Catholic people in influential situations in the town" contested merely the arrangement of relative positions within a social hierarchy that was not itself challenged. The social ladder was there to be climbed by those of sufficient talent who were prepared to
make the necessary effort — the Brothers providing whatever extra push they could:

Br McKie: Some of these poorer boys found it hard to get jobs and the Public Service was a bit of a boon to them in those days.

Question: And they took some type of Civil Service Exam?

Br McKie: Some kind of an exam. The brothers would dedicate some extra time to try and coach them up for them.

Question: So, in effect, they could get a slightly better job?

Br McKie: Yes, they'd get steady jobs. They'd move up a bit along the line.

Question: Would that be another part of the traditions in the Brothers' schools?

Br McKie: It would be, yes, going right back, to try and help the poorer boys to improve.

The oppositional nature of C.B.C. education is still regarded by some Brothers as something more than just an historical tradition. Brother Ernest, for instance, who was recently transferred to C.B.C. from a Brothers' school in a relatively affluent metropolitan area, believes that the "belligerence" of Catholics, which was a reaction to religious prejudice and their working class location, is "still there in their concern for their socio-economic status". He regards teaching at C.B.C. as a "challenge" and explains that:

An important function of C.B.C. and part of the tradition which is the mission of the Brothers is to assist the boys at C.B.C. to obtain employment and socio-economic advantage in this unfavourable economic climate.

Brother Ernest detects a "Newburyport stamp" upon many of his charges at C.B.C. He believes that the industrial nature of Newburyport leads to a certain anti-intellectualism and that
this in turn leads to a negative classroom atmosphere. A lack of refinement, which he feels is illustrated by a low level of civic pride and poor standards of maintenance of houses and gardens, is noticeable, too, he says, in C.B.C. classrooms. A group of year 12 students, for instance, had been engaged in a competition during his lessons with them to see who of them could pass wind most loudly and long. With regard to such boys he claims:

We have to serve these kids against the inclinations of their own nature.

Brother Ernest believes that the marked difference that he has noted between the boys of C.B.C. and those of his previous school has "resulted from their past experience". The difference is one of "dispositions, of maturity of ideas and readiness to express those ideas". The challenge of teaching at C.B.C. is, for Brother Ernest, to penetrate and overwhelm the "class culture of Newburyport" by giving pupils the "academic advantage" and cultural resources that will "foist" them into the middle class. The task of getting students into influential positions, however, has become increasingly difficult.

(d) C.B.C. and the Job Market

The harsh reality of life in an industrial city in a period of economic recession is that employment of any sort, much less white-collar or professional employment, is difficult to come by. Nevertheless, according to the careers teacher, the school still holds a mystique for many parents:
Bruce Smith: A lot of [parents] are under the impression that because their son goes here [to C.B.C.] he automatically becomes a professional. It is automatic - this is why you pay fees to send the kid here. When I was a student here myself [twelve years ago] it was a real overriding principle with the parents and some of the kids.

Question: With increasing unemployment in Newburyport do they realise that it just doesn't happen - or that they are lucky to get a job at all?

Bruce Smith: ... They might have to go down a few rungs to get it but they will get jobs sooner or later.

The feeling amongst many teachers, especially those who teach senior classes, is that C.B.C.'s mystique is such that parents' expectations are often unrealistic:

Peter Montini: The parents would like their boys to pursue an academic type career or something to do with the pure sciences and medicine, law and economics. The parents have often got that sort of ambition but it is an unrealistic ambition ... Well, they think, "It will be all fixed up there [at C.B.C.]. He is pretty weak but they will fix him up. They will sort of put him through and he will end up a doctor or whatever." That is an expectation that parents have often ... I think that parents send their sons here because they would like them to end up in university and not because they would like them to end up as a carpenter or a plumber.

The feeling is shared from the headmaster down that the school's teachers do a good job with pupils considering the material that they have to work with. Brother Carter draws a stark comparison between C.B.C. and Newburyport's premier independent school:

Br Carter: [We are] basically trying to give to Catholic boys what these boys are getting at Newburyport Grammar and
these other "public" schools - but not using the same material. You see, some of the boys we have are just slightly removed from what you might call crude levels of existence at home and they have parents who have had very little education.

Question: So in effect you are drawing kids of working class parents who are aspiring, and middle class parents who want their children to move another notch up in the ...?

Br Carter: Right. And some of them of course are not aspiring at all. There's nothing at home that's helping them really aspire. There is no: "You must be a doctor as your grandfather is a doctor, you must be this or that." They have a very low level of aspiration.

Brother Carter believes that, compared to Newburyport Grammar School:

We are in a different class altogether. These would be from the very rich ... By and large [the parents] would be people who have been to Newburyport Grammar and who know the value of being able to say "I went to Grammar" and could have some of the lodge effect in business. You would have people from very cultured families, and by that I mean a couple of generations of cultured families ... By and large I think it is a fair thing to say that the Catholics in Australia are not the cultured class by any means.

Most of those associated with C.B.C. believe with Brother Carter that Catholics are not, indeed, the cultured class around Newburyport. Brother Carter, however, might be stretching a point when he suggests that some C.B.C. pupils are only "slightly removed" from "crude levels of existence at home". Teachers generally believe that their students come from extremely diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and that the parents of these pupils regard a C.B.C. education as an important asset in the job market.

Question: What kind of people send their children here?
Heather Verdun: A very broad spectrum, I suppose. Some of the people are quite affluent, real middle class, in business and so on ... A lot of others would be very basic working class people ... I still think that, from outside, C.B.C. is seen as the Catholic boys' school to send your boy to, and sometimes I think they think that by sending him to C.B.C. it is almost like a passport to success. ... Even in the business community there must be something about C.B.C. or students of C.B.C. who are seen to be perhaps better material than kids coming from high schools.

Unemployment for C.B.C. students seems less of a problem than for many other youths in Newburyport. C.B.C.'s image or "mystique" works in favour of its pupils, it seems, when it comes to getting jobs in the town. In a follow-up of last year's exit group, Jim Karn, the co-ordinator of the school's Transition from School to Work program, found that only two or three failed to gain employment. Yet youth unemployment in Newburyport is currently running at 25%. As Jim Karn sees it:

Our kids are protected [from unemployment] by virtue of the fact that some of their parents are in industry and the perception of the Newburyport community of C.B.C. as a fairly good place to send your kids. Our kids don't really experience the problems of a lot of [Newburyport] kids ... There is this "old boy" set up so that ... in terms of the Catholic situation, we have a monopoly on it. In the capital city we have a whole range of Catholic schools ... but out in Newburyport we are it.

Of course, since C.B.C. has been operating since 1935 with an explicit purpose of enabling Catholics to penetrate white-collar employment, one would expect that success in this mission would result in a significant Catholic presence in the professions and executive management in Newburyport. Such appears to be the case. For instance, Brother Carter was observed to make extensive use of an elaborate Catholic network
when dealing with banks, insurance companies and building contractors in order to negotiate arrangements regarding the refurbishing of part of the school. The existence of such a network provides C.B.C.'s own "lodge effect" - not as widely spread as that associated with Newburyport Grammar School, but nevertheless powerful within the local Newburyport area. The careers teacher, Bruce Smith, himself born in Newburyport and a former pupil of C.B.C., has discovered that many current school leavers get jobs because of old boys:

"... Many] are 38 or 40, just rising to the top in their jobs as executives; others are in their 50's now so ... they just look after the old school tie."

Such a social and cultural network is seen to reach strongly into Newburyport's banking and retail industries, and also more generally through the parents and their friends. According to Jim Karn:

"Other parents have good contacts ... very good contacts some of them, and ... they use their contacts to a certain degree."

Students, too, are aware of the importance of social ties in competing for jobs. Indeed Bruce Smith has discovered that some pupils are relying heavily on the C.B.C. network:

"A lot of kids ... think just because they go to C.B.C. and they have got a good name in the town that they ought to get a position. They have never really thought that they would have to go out and work or battle for it ... A lot of the kids tend to think they'll rely on the old boy networks around Newburyport to get a job."

Heather Verdun also finds that some pupils are rather complacent about their job prospects. She explains that "What a lot of boys have here ... is connections ... something that a lot of kids outside just wouldn't have". She suggests that
some students, in appraising their prospects, have come to regard contacts as even more important than academic credentials. She cites a student who typifies such thinking:

"Dad knows someone along the line". He seems to think that he has got his ... future sewn up and hasn't considered the fact that he might possibly fail this year. So the parents are giving them this idea, "We know someone", and therefore they don't have to worry about it.

There is an expectation, then, that a C.B.C. education will assist pupils in their academic aspirations (or those of their parents) and that such an education, coupled with the C.B.C. network, will facilitate employment in Newburyport.

(a) Discipline, Compliance and Employment

The success of C.B.C. pupils in the job market cannot be explained simply by the patronage of old boys who look after their own. Brother Carter and others suggest that training in simple social skills and attitudes in courtesy, politeness, promptness, obedience and responsibility is not left to the hidden curriculum but is an essential part of education at C.B.C. This, too, pays off in jobs for C.B.C. boys - as Jim Karn has learnt from visiting personnel officers to arrange work experience:

They are prepared to take our kids because they believe our kids are conditioned to a little bit of discipline; they are used to a uniform, they are used to getting their hair cut - all these fairly bloody superficial reasons if you like, if you really want to look at them. But our kids are getting jobs like that in preference to perhaps kids at the tech. So the skills that the kids from the techs. have got from form one don't seem relevant any more to the big industries.

C.B.C.'s reputation for discipline and compliance, it seems, wins jobs for its pupils.
Work experience, the placement of pupils in employment positions for up to two weeks as part of their formal education, is a recent development at C.B.C. Initially, only 25 students, mainly from the newly established year 11 transition course, went out of the school on work experience. By the following year, however, this had expanded to all 115 year 11 boys. The change was largely due to the arrival at the school of Bruce Smith, a former C.B.C. pupil who had conducted a similar work experience program at a state high school in another industrial provincial city. He had found that the program was seen by employers as an important means of screening prospective job applicants:

Certain employers would try three or four kids during the year and at the end of the year they would make a decision on who they would employ. It also ... saved them time and money in interviewing people.

Unlike careers teachers at most schools, Bruce Smith had little difficulty arranging placements for the C.B.C. pupils. And upon completion of the work experience period, employers indicated in their reports that they were not disappointed that they had accepted boys from the school when approached by Bruce. Their expectations of C.B.C. products had been confirmed:

The employers were well pleased with this school. It is fairly strict and there is a lot of emphasis on behaviour, manners and dress and so on which is good ... Employers tend to comment on it, and they tend to write about it. Also, when I rang them up, when I saw a lot of places, I mentioned C.B.C. They said, "Oh, C.B.C.!" ... and they said, "Oh yes, we will give them a go then".

The work experience program, it seems, has, as Watkins (1984) points out, allowed students to increase their cultural resources by enlarging the social network available to them.
through which they might get jobs. By allowing local employers to compare the disposition of C.B.C. students against those that are desired in the workplace, it has also enhanced the reputation of the school as a producer of desirable employees.

Although C.B.C.'s status in Newburyport is formidable, it does not come close to that which is afforded Newburyport's Protestant colleges. Their prestige and national reputation is sufficient that parents, including Catholic parents in increasing numbers, are prepared to pay the fees of well over $3,000 a year (compared to C.B.C.'s relatively modest $450) as an investment in their children's education.

It is small wonder, then, that some of the more upwardly mobile and affluent Catholic parents of Newburyport, themselves educated for social mobility by the Brothers, now choose to send their sons to Newburyport College or Newburyport Grammar instead of to C.B.C. Indications are that almost fifteen percent of boys attending these Protestant colleges are Catholics. Many old boys of C.B.C. and the Brothers themselves feel that the failure of these Catholics to support C.B.C. is a sign of gross disloyalty. Councillor Polson, Mayor of Newburyport and a prominent old boy of C.B.C., expresses the loyalty to the Brothers that is common in Newburyport:

One thing I have always been proud of, and always will be proud of, is that I received a Christian Brothers' education - and there's no better education available.

Councillor Polson is thankful to the Brothers for "making me what I am today" and is critical of his former classmates, "so many of whom, now that they are successful, send their boys to other schools". The clear inference is that these ex-pupils owe their "success" to C.B.C. and should continue to support
it. But on the status hierarchy, C.B.C. is some rungs below the Protestant colleges. C.B.C., therefore, loses some clients to the more exclusive schools, but only to gain others from some rungs further down the ladder. According to Brother Jones:

You see, historically, we are in a different phase. You can see it very much here [at C.B.C.]. . . . I am teaching the sons of the people who went to school down there [at St. Patrick's Technical School] and now they have got two bob to rattle so they think they will send their kids to C.B.C.

Thus, the class mission continues.

(f) Education and Social Mobility: A Summary

C.B.C.'s long association with Newburyport illustrates the historical attempt to establish, through education, a Catholic middle class. Since its establishment, local Catholics strongly supported the attempt and the school established an early reputation for gaining success for its pupils in public examinations. Although there was a strong element of resistance in the early struggle to oppose the Anglo-Protestant domination of society, C.B.C. has become a respected local institution.

The school caters for a diverse clientele which certainly does not cater for the "cultured class" of Newburyport. Boys from this group are likely to be found at the much more expensive Protestant colleges. The aim at C.B.C. has been to give its diverse clientele the "academic advantage" that would enable school leavers to gain access to the job market or to tertiary institutions. Although Newburyport is undergoing an economic slump, boys from C.B.C. are getting jobs despite high youth unemployment. To do so, however, some "have to go down a few rungs" from the expectations of ambitious parents.
Such success in gaining employment is related to an extensive Catholic network in Newburyport and the influence of old boys who, according to many, owe their success at least in part to the Brothers' education that they received. Students realise the importance of social ties and make use of them. C.B.C. is also seen by many employers as a source of disciplined and compliant labour. This reputation enabled an expansion of the school's work experience program, which in turn allows pupils to extend their networks.

The work experience program and the emphasis upon discipline and compliance at C.B.C. embrace an uncritical view of social and economic structures. The school can no longer be regarded as a place of resistance but merely as a producer of suitable employees for capital. The more affluent Catholics, having learnt the ground rules for upward social mobility, are in increasing numbers sending their sons not to C.B.C. but to more exclusive Protestant colleges which bestow even more status on pupils than C.B.C. does, and which afford entry to more extensive and more prestigious social networks.

3. SERVING NEWBURYPORT CATHOLICS

(a) The Passing of the "First Wave"

Informal surveys conducted in a third of C.B.C. secondary classrooms indicate that the fathers of most pupils attended C.B.C. schools. Interestingly, many of them attended St. Patrick's Technical School, as Brother Jones indicated, from where they gained apprenticeships and became tradesmen. The result of these parents enrolling boys at C.B.C., when coupled with the flight of a large portion of upper, professional
groups to the prestigious Protestant schools, is spelled out by Cameron Pont, whose continuous association with C.B.C. and the Brothers is longer than that of any other staff member:

Ten or twelve years ago the people who came to this school were ... fairly comfortable financially. There were solicitors and doctors. Now that population has changed [and] we are having the plumber and the plasterer, the carpenter and the craftsman ... who form the bulk of the population of the school.

Cameron talks about those Catholics who attended C.B.C. some years ago and who have achieved financial and social success – people like Councillor Polson – as the "first wave" of Catholics:

The school has made strong moves to make sure that these people, make sure that the first wave of Catholics were well looked after and they were well supported and they were pushed into influential positions.

The sons of those early pupils attended C.B.C. in its heyday when the school was supported by a Catholic nouveau riche that had been, to a large extent according to Councillor Polson, Cameron Pont and the C.B.C. Brothers, created by C.B.C. itself. The gradual loss of support of that group made way for the "second wave" of Catholics:

Cameron Pont: C.B.C. is not supplying the social needs of that community, it seems to me ... Such numbers are moving away from C.B.C. to Newburyport Grammar and Newburyport College, and people clearly say that they want their boys to go into that social climate and social environment. And they can afford that.

Some boys are transferred from C.B.C. to the Protestant colleges at the end of year 6. Like Councillor Polson, Cameron Pont is displeased that so many leave the school:

Cameron Pont: Those people ... are talking about $1,000 [per term] - they are generally professional people who are able to
afford that. I think that we have felt it as something of a slight on our education here that the professional people have chosen to go off.

Question: If you looked at their initial entrance exam scores, would they be in your high group?

Cameron Pont: In most cases they have been in the above average group.

Question: So you are losing some of your academically better students?

Cameron Pont: Oh, yes.

Cameron also points out that, just as some Catholic parents send their boys to Newburyport Grammar School for reasons of prestige, so do many of the second wave of Catholics send boys to C.B.C. in order to acquire whatever prestige, more limited but also more accessible than that of the Protestant colleges, that C.B.C. can confer:

People do send their children down there [to Newburyport Grammar] for social reasons. They also send them up here [to C.B.C.] for social reasons because other schools have said that we are elitist at C.B.C. - the twelve parochial feeder schools into our senior school have said that we are elitist up here.

There is currently some feeling between the local Parish primary schools and C.B.C. These parochial schools lose some 35 boys in years 3 and 4, and 70 boys in years 5 and 6 to the primary section of C.B.C. As co-ordinator of the primary section, Cameron Pont has a number of arguments which he uses to rebut the suggestions that the C.B.C. junior school should be closed. One of his strongest arguments is his counter to the charge that C.B.C. is elitist. He claims that a touch of elitism about C.B.C. is necessary to restrict the drift of pupils to the even more elite Protestant colleges - all of which have primary sections. He suggests that recent history
in Newburyport illustrates that any move to close the C.B.C. Junior School would result in significant numbers of children "being lost to Catholic education":

Cameron Pont: Loretto College Junior School phased out about eight years ago hop[ing] that the girls would be retained in their parish schools [but] when they looked at figures over the years there was no significant increase in parish primary schools in the figures for girls following the phasing out of Loretto Hall.

Question: Where did the kids go?

Cameron Pont: I think that they chose to go to Queen's [Presbyterian] College and Anglican Ladies' School.

Question: So, ... there are some parents of those young girls who want some kind of specialised independent education rather than parish education or state school education?

Cameron Pont: I think that is true.

Question: Would that be true of the boys also?

Cameron Pont: That is one of the fears that people have at C.B.C. - that would happen if C.B.C. Junior School were to be phased out.

Question: Some of them might end up in Newburyport Grammar primary school and stay right on in Newburyport Grammar all the way through?

Cameron Pont: Yes, that is a problem that we see ... We are concerned [about it] here at C.B.C. but other people in Newburyport may not feel that way.

The loss of these little boys to the Protestant Colleges means also the loss of influential parents. Moreover, the loss of the most promising academic prospects is a blow to future examination statistics. More and more, it appears, C.B.C. is being left with a fairly stable group of lower middle class families.
(b) Elitism and Exclusion

Suggestions of elite education at C.B.C. are not usually welcomed by staff members, although Peter Montini, who returned to the school as a teacher upon completion of his university degree, believes that C.B.C.'s status has declined since his days as a student there:

I think a few parents [are attracted to C.B.C.] for status in one way - sort of, "So and so's son is there so my son is going to go there also" - but I don't think it has that awe that it used to have when a boy said, "I am going to that school", and it was a big thing.

Vestiges of elitism remain at C.B.C. however, despite some claims to the contrary and despite the loss of some parents from high status professions. The very location of the school upon what is arguably Newburyport's choicest piece of real estate sits uneasily with the professed aim of helping poor boys. The meticulous reinforcement of rules governing the correct wearing of the school uniform suggests an attempt to ensure that C.B.C. boys are marked off from the common herd. Brother Carter is especially diligent in this regard. He makes a point of being in the school quadrangle at 8.30 each morning and checks the dress of pupils as they arrive. Teachers are instructed to inspect the dress of the boys before dismissing them at the end of the school day. Pupils must again meet Brother Carter's fastidious scrutiny as they pass by him at the school gate. Attention to the details of their accoutrement has earned Brother Carter the nickname of "mother".

Apart from these trappings of elitism, C.B.C. practices exclusion in at least three ways.
Firstly, although the fees are modest, they are sufficient to exclude some of Newburyport's least affluent Catholics. And although fees may be waived in cases of hardship, few parents seem prepared to request such special consideration.

Secondly, pupils must qualify for entrance to the school by passing a "Test of Learning Aptitude" - an intelligence measuring instrument produced by A.C.E.R. Thus, students who are measured as academically less able - usually those from low socio-economic backgrounds, given the cultural bias of intelligence tests (Karier, 1972) - are screened out. This, too, seems rather at odds with the Brothers' somewhat romantic mission of "service to the needy".

The third method of exclusion is more subtle and many teachers at C.B.C. are not even aware of it - the teacher of Italian, for instance, certainly is not:

Interviewer: Is there any way that you can use parents with Italian?

Marie Campagna: Well, there aren't many [Italian parents], I was thinking of that, I was hoping that there would be, but I would say there are only about two boys in each class of Italian parents.

Interviewer: [But] there is quite a substantial Italian community [in Newburyport].

Marie Campagna: That is what I thought. I was very shocked when I got here. I imagine in the higher levels of the school that there are more Italians - [but in] the lower forms not many at all.

Interviewer: Newburyport had a pretty big wave of immigration in the 50's and 60's ... so I would have thought that there would have been quite a few children.

Marie Campagna: Well, that is what I thought, too. At Loretto Hall [Catholic girls' school] there is a fairly large population of Italians and other ethnic cultures.
Interviewer: What do you think happens to the boys?

Marie Campagna: I thought most of them would be here but they are not.

The simple answer to the mystery of what happens to Italian boys is that they are restricted from entry to C.B.C. by means of a zoning requirement. The majority of Italian and other immigrants live in the less affluent northern suburbs of Newburyport and their Catholic children are zoned to a Catholic secondary school, Vianney College, in that area. Many also attend St. Patrick's Technical School or state secondary schools. The somewhat denser sprinkling of Italian and Eastern European names on the rolls of the senior classes is accounted for by the fact that Vianney's curriculum terminates at year 10. Many of the more promising students then transfer across to C.B.C. to attempt years 11 and 12. C.B.C.'s academic standards, therefore, are doubly protected.

(c) A Modest Job on Modest People

Teachers who come to work at C.B.C. are sometimes surprised that, given the school's reputation and academic orientation, there is little evidence of affluence:

Bernadette Healy: I was really surprised ... I would have thought they would have been more affluent. I learnt since that [affluent Catholics] send their children to Newburyport Grammar - the very affluent in Newburyport would prefer to send them there. I think there is one solicitor and one teacher and a mother that works at Newburyport C.A.E. Oh, there is a social worker, too, but they are mainly, you know, truck drivers and shop keepers and clerks and ...
Question: Small tradesmen?

Bernadette Healy: Yes, that type of thing.

The breakdown of occupations of parents – in most cases the fathers, since few of the mothers are employed outside the home – of pupils in Bernadette's class is typical of C.B.C. as a whole and matches the more extensive survey that was conducted by Bruce Smith, the careers teacher:

I sent home a newsletter to all the parents [and asked them] to put down their occupations; and the average occupation that came back was in the trades business, trade working class area. The amount of doctors, teachers, lawyers [in the ] response was very low in comparison to the worker. I looked at that and I thought, "What are those kids really doing here? Do they understand that they are all not going to be academics?"

The difficulty of getting students to "move up a little bit along the line" has increased in recent years of economic contraction. Thus, the "second wave" of Catholics at C.B.C. can expect a less accelerated rise through the socio-economic hierarchy than the first. Nevertheless, it is clear that almost all of these boys do get jobs – most at least maintain, and some even improve, their position by means of C.B.C.'s academic reputation, its old boy network, and local regard for the manners and discipline that C.B.C. is thought to bestow. C.B.C. students are apparently aware of the obstacles to social advancement in difficult economic times and have set their sights accordingly:

Bruce Smith: When the kids sat down and filled out their preferences [for work experience placements], of the 115 that went out there were 61 of them with trade oriented ambitions ... They were carpentry, fitting and turning was popular, chef was very popular, electricians, plumbers, boiler makers,
panel beaters — those sorts of trades ...
... The amount of kids putting down
straight law, or medical careers, and
teaching was very few.

Some parents, who have high expectations of C.B.C., are
dissatisfied with the work experience choice of their sons:

Bruce Smith: I rang up one mother and said, "I have
got your son a job as an electrician."
"He is not taking that, my son. I am
not sending him to C.B.C. to be an
electrician." So you have you that
comeback from the parents, too.

Perhaps that particular mother was one that Brother Jones had
in mind when he said of the Catholic parents:

There is still too much of this, "If I send the boy to
C.B.C. 'the Brothers' — and that means everybody out
there [at C.B.C.] — if they wave a wand then John will
get his H.S.C. and he will be a marvellous kid as a
result".

The belief of staff members that many parents have unrealistic
expectations of C.B.C. has already been noted. So has the
general feeling amongst teachers that the pupils receive good
service. A teacher of senior physics classes relates this
latter point to the socio-economic background of students:

Lachlan West: I see it very much ... as certainly the
middle class spectrum, very clearly and
sharply, now. We certainly don't have
people from very low economic or social
background and we generally don't have
the upper ones either.

Question: Does the college technically meet the
needs of that groups of kids?

Lachlan West: I think it does. I think on a dollar
basis, too, we do a very good modest
job on modest people — and I am not
putting people down — and we do that
excellently I think. We don't have any
of the frills of a lot of other
establishments — for instance, we
really don't have any art to talk
about, and there is no music education
... and there is lots of others things
we don't even have.
With the lower levels excluded by zoning regulations and the barrier of the Test of Learning Aptitude, and the upper levels seeking the nationally negotiable cultural benefits of the Protestant colleges, C.B.C. is left with the middle stratum of Newburyport's Catholic society. Given this, and the no-frills curriculum, Lachlan argues that C.B.C. compares more than favourably with Newburyport's much more expensive Protestant independent schools:

When you consider what we start out with and what we get [in H.S.C. pass rates] we're probably more successful than they are.

Such comparisons are by no means idle ones. While the Protestant Colleges are more nationally oriented, C.B.C.'s reputation does not extend much beyond Newburyport. But the negotiable value of a C.B.C. education is, to some extent at least, calculated against a standard of comparison with the more elite schools.

(d) **HSC and Entrance to University**

H.S.C. pass rates are considered in Newburyport and elsewhere to be important indicators of a school's worth. Once the results are released in any year, word quickly spreads through the communities associated with Newburyport's schools and comparisons are made. The C.B.C. results are usually discussed in relation to those of the Protestant Colleges and Brother Carter has actively and selectively advertised the results when they have reflected favourably upon C.B.C.

Of course, a pass in H.S.C. is a basic requisite for any student who wishes to proceed to tertiary studies, and there is no doubt amongst C.B.C. members that the school's curriculum is
geared towards H.S.C. The point is put forcefully by the
science coordinator who is a former C.B.C. pupil:

Question: If I really wanted to get a sense of what the school is about, is there anywhere you would direct me in particular? What should I look at in particular?

Peter Montini: I am not very clear on what you mean by 'What is the school about?' See, as far as I understand it, the school is about putting the [pupils] through H.S.C. - and that is the ultimate aim as far as I can tell based on what I have heard the headmaster say in past years and so on. So I think, really, if someone wanted to find out what the school is about, I think they would look at the subjects offered in year 12 ... and look at the type of pass rates ... I think, basically, that is what the school is based on. Everything seems to aim for H.S.C.

It was noted earlier that throughout C.B.C.'s history, "the whole school has been geared towards to academic achievement."

Encouraging students to attempt university courses is linked by Brother Carter and others to the Brother's historical mission of improving the social and economic position of Catholics in Australian society. It was also noted that such an orientation includes an acceptance of the view that Australian society is essentially meritocratic - talent and effort are the ingredients for success and the job of the Brothers was and is to ensure that talent is not wasted:

Brother Jones: Certainly you have got to have labourers ... but if they have got the talent then they have got to have the chance to use it.

Question: Is that still an important element?

Brother Jones: I am sure it is. I very much believe that you should push [every student] as far as you can and if possible get his matric.
And as more and more Catholics enter the universities and then the professions, others are encouraged to compete for positions of status. Brother O'Hara saw this happen at his previous school and encouraged it:

When I went to St. Peter's first, ... a couple of fellows were going for medicine then. After I got there a couple of years we got close to ten applying and getting in to university ... We did help them over a bit and it tends to build up a bit of a tradition. If we do get a few through then others, who perhaps didn't quite have that drive, they see what Brothers can do and then they sort of come in behind, too.

Despite the emphasis upon year 12 and H.S.C. however, fewer than a third of C.B.C. pupils go on to tertiary education, and many of those attend Newburyport C.A.E. and so remain in the area. For many students, completion of year 12 eases access to banks, offices and Newburyport retail industries as places of employment. Thus the sense of localism, which is strongly present about C.B.C., makes for cohesiveness within the school and eventual integration into the Newburyport business world and community.

(e) C.B.C. and Newburyport Catholics: A Summary

As the "first wave" of Catholics to pass through C.B.C. became economically successful and began to patronize the expensive Protestant colleges, they made way for the sons of Catholic men who had attended St. Patrick's Technical School and were now also "moving up the social ladder" but starting nearer the bottom rungs. In the loss of the sons of wealthy Catholics, the school is also believed to have lost some of its best academic prospects to those more prestigious schools.
C.B.C., although hardly comparable with the expensive Protestant colleges, nevertheless retains a level of prestige which makes it attractive to many lower middle class Catholics. There also seems to be a demand amongst relatively affluent Catholics for the supposedly somewhat prestigious primary education that is offered at C.B.C. Indeed, the primary school coordinator believes that many more affluent parents would transfer their boys from C.B.C. to the Protestant colleges if such education was not available.

Although fees at C.B.C. are minimal, some boys are excluded from the school because of them. Some are excluded because of the religious waywardness of their parents. But many boys are denied access to the school by an entrance or "qualifying" examination and zoning regulations which exclude many less advantaged Newburyport youth. Such exclusion is at odds with the Brothers mission of service to the needy. C.B.C. therefore caters, by and large, to the middle stratum of Newburyport Catholic society, the sons of whom are usually able to maintain or even improve their positions due, at least partly, to a C.B.C. education.

4. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

In Newburyport, the Catholic community has strongly supported the Brothers' mission of education for class relocation and the Brothers are proud of the service that they and their colleagues have provided. In recent years, however, an increasing number of Newburyport's more affluent and upwardly mobile Catholics, themselves educated for social mobility at C.B.C., now send their own sons to more prestigious
Protestant colleges. Between ten and fifteen percent of the enrolment of these schools, the fees for which are over $1,000 per term, is Catholic. As a consequence, those who have been associated with C.B.C. for some time have noticed that the composition of the school has changed. In the halcyon days the products of the "first wave" of Catholics to be educated there, those who became "fairly comfortable financially" in Newburyport, enrolled their sons at C.B.C. and gave to the school added status and even "awe". The gradual loss of this group to the Protestant Colleges - a loss that will be even greater if C.B.C.'s primary section goes, according to many at the school - has left C.B.C. catering now for a relatively stable lower middle class stratum of Newburyport Catholics. An entrance "qualifying" examination and zoning regulations effectively screen from C.B.C. the academically less able and children from less affluent areas of Newburyport, many of whom are from migrant families. Such exclusion seems somewhat at odds with the proudly stated mission of the Christian Brothers of serving the "needy".

A sense of service remains, nevertheless, in that many at the school - especially some of the Brothers - believe that by providing a C.B.C. education they are enhancing the job prospects of their pupils. Despite a curriculum that is oriented towards year 12 and the H.S.C. examination, less than a third of the students proceed to tertiary education. The remainder are split between those who find white collar work and those who attain employment in trades areas. The point is that virtually all of C.B.C. school leavers who seek employment
get jobs - and almost all of them within the local district. While perhaps not quite the "passport to success" that some parents imagine it to be, C.B.C.'s local identity and reputation for discipline and an academic orientation, and extensive localised "old boy" network, enable the sons of many Catholic families to maintain and even improve their position in Newburyport's social and economic system.
CHAPTER 9:
CONCLUSION

1. INTRODUCTION

The foreshadowed problem of this study was to investigate the manner in which forces for both continuity and change are negotiated and dealt with at Christian Brothers College. The problem had evolved during the researcher's several years as a teacher at the school and had been sharpened by his study of the theoretical literature on reproduction and transformation. The problem can be put succinctly in the form of two related research questions:

(i) How does an individual school like Christian Brothers College reproduce itself over time?

(ii) What supports and inhibits such reproduction?

It became clear during the analysis of appropriate theoretical perspectives (Chapter 1), and during the analysis of methodological perspectives (Chapter 2), that adequate answers to these questions would involve an exploration not only of C.B.C. itself and of the perceptions of C.B.C. actors, but also of historical and contemporary linkages between C.B.C. and the wider society. These issues are addressed in this chapter. Firstly, in the following section, a summary of themes of the ethnography is presented. Subsequent sections present a dialectical integration of theory and data through a focus particularly on the issues of reproduction and transformation at C.B.C.; the relationship between C.B.C. and the job market; high status knowledge and social control;
authority relationships and individual autonomy at the school; and the current climate of uncertainty at C.B.C. Finally, an overall assessment is made of the status of the study as a critical ethnography.

2. THE THEMES OF THE ETHNOGRAPHY

In chapters 3 to 8 ethnographic data which were collected during the research period were presented. From this data an understanding of the internal dynamics of C.B.C., and of the social and historical context within which current concerns are mediated among contemporary, local actors, was generated.

Chapter 3 dealt specifically with the historical educational mission of the Christian Brothers as perceived by the Brothers of the C.B.C. community and as played out at C.B.C. The crucial historical importance to the Brothers’ mission of advancing, through education, the social mobility of Australian Catholics was examined and related to the foundation of C.B.C. in 1935. It is apparent from the data, however, that although the Brothers believe that they have contributed to the social and economic advancement of Catholics, once victims of prejudice and poverty and therefore defined as needy, there is now a sense of crisis within the Congregation. The crisis, which has been precipitated by the numerical slump in membership of the Order and dearth of new entrants, has provoked a reappraisal of the current activities of the Christian Brothers at C.B.C., Newburyport, as elsewhere. At C.B.C., the optimistic talk of the younger Brothers of new and different missions and of rediscovering the apostolate of the founder is juxtaposed against the disillusionment of those,
largely older, Brothers who believe that the traditions of their Order are threatened by the majority presence of lay teachers in their schools. The uncertainty which now characterises the existence of C.B.C. is a recurrent motif throughout the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 4 the nature of religious education at C.B.C. was examined. Despite the obvious and distinctive presence of a variety of religious symbols and images, no unity of religious purpose was discernible. Although the purpose of religious formation, which is used to justify the existence of Catholic schools, is made explicit in primary grades, the internalisation of any religious commitment by senior pupils is variable. Moreover, the importance of education for academic success and examination results has assumed priority over religious education. A symptom of the academic emphasis, a selective entrance policy, seems to some to be a clear contradiction of the proudly stated tradition of the Christian Brothers: that of service to the needy.

The ambiguity of the Brothers' priorities regarding academic and religious emphases is a source of tension. In order to maintain the status of C.B.C. as a "Christian Brothers School", religion is very much the preserve of the Brothers. Thus, although 80% of the teachers are lay, most teaching of religious knowledge is conducted by Brothers. This is especially the case at senior levels of the school. However this is also the level at which pupils are largely indifferent or even hostile towards the Brothers and their religious message, and towards the failure of many teachers to acknowledge and tolerate the personal "crises of faith" that many senior pupils experience.
An additional complication arises from the identification of the majority of older Brothers with a traditional view of Catholicism which contrasts markedly with the more modern views of most lay teachers and some younger Brothers. For instance, since the 1960s the influence of the Second Vatican Council has transformed the way some teachers, especially lay teachers and younger Brothers, regard Catholicism and the teaching of religion. 'Post-Vatican' and 'pre-Vatican' attitudes are apparent in approaches to dogma, church history, bible study and, above all, the issues of social justice and 'faith community'. These alterations in attitude have implications for pedagogy and student-teacher relations.

The religious life at C.B.C. is characterised by serious unresolved differences between teachers of religion and between religious and lay staff, and by a failure to confront various contemporary religious controversies. Partly as a result, religious education lacks coherence and is poorly co-ordinated. The individual approaches taken by various teachers within their own classrooms fragment rather than consolidate the religious life that is represented to pupils.

The administration of C.B.C., dealt with in Chapter 5, was seen to be a matter which is formally in the hands of the principal. Like his predecessors, Brother Carter is following his own agenda and his own priorities, and is attempting to preserve the Brothers' minority control of the school. Despite this, several long serving lay teachers have accrued substantial informal power and there is amongst the Brothers some support for suggestions that lay teachers should be given more authority in Brothers' schools. At present, however, many
lay teachers, insecure in their positions and unsure of their status and responsibilities, are reluctant to challenge what they perceive to be the place of a lay teacher in "a Brothers' school". Certainly, few opportunities are provided for either Brothers or lay teachers to influence decision making by means of formal procedures of subject and area coordination. Nevertheless, teachers, including the most recently appointed teachers, have been responsible for a number of recent initiatives - especially curriculum initiatives which have been developed by individual teachers and pairs of teachers behind the closed doors of their autonomous classrooms.

Chapter 6 dealt with control and discipline and showed that the Brothers' tradition of harsh discipline and strict control was being modified at C.B.C. Although control remains an institutional priority, and is perhaps the highest priority of the principal as is exemplified by his dealings with pupils and with staff at staff meetings, the harsh discipline of previous years has been challenged by lay teachers, especially female teachers. Some Brothers, too, have struggled to establish more personal relationships with pupils and to overcome the expectation of students that they conform to the stereotype of the authoritarian Brother. On the other hand, many teachers, especially young lay teachers, feel constrained by institutional expectations to imitate aspects of the Brothers' stereotype. Moreover, many Brothers believe that discipline has suffered at C.B.C. since the Brothers, because of the need for lay teachers who are trained as subject specialists, were forced to abandon the traditional arrangement of each Brother being almost totally responsible for the teaching of one class.
The theme of order, which has woven through each chapter and was the focus of Chapter 6, was apparent again in Chapter 7 in the examination of curriculum and evaluation at C.B.C. The curriculum has been governed in the past by the priority of gaining good results in the Higher School Certificate examinations. This emphasis is still pronounced and ensures that, for the most part, an extremely narrow curriculum is followed. The mechanistic curriculum, with its orderly, linear path to the H.S.C., is in harmony with the emphasis upon social and economic advancement for C.B.C. pupils through examination success. The curriculum is also a competitive one, and regular and pervasive assessment is used to exclude from academic progress those pupils whose marks are not compatible with H.S.C. standards. But the curriculum is not totally monolithic. Indeed, considerations of "relevant" curriculum have encouraged some curriculum initiatives at C.B.C. Such initiatives, however, as with initiatives in religious education and student-teacher relationships, are mainly the work of individuals or pairs of teachers who develop their own programmes in their uncoordinated classrooms. A more public example of curriculum initiative is the Year 11 transition course - but this course is offered only to boys who will not be permitted to proceed to H.S.C., thus directly protecting H.S.C. standards.

Chapter 8 returned to the Christian Brothers' mission of education for social mobility and examined education at C.B.C. in Newburyport as an example of that mission. From its foundation, the school, the Brothers and their mission were enthusiastically supported by Newburyport Catholics who, like
the Brothers, wanted to see Catholic people in influential positions from where they could challenge the Protestant dominance of society and commerce.

It appears that many Catholic men in Newburyport have indeed gained positions of some influence and prestige in the town – especially in banking and retailing industries. While many of these relatively prominent citizens are said to owe their success to C.B.C., some do not send their own sons to the school but to the more prestigious, more expensive Protestant private schools in Newburyport. Nevertheless, even during a period of economic recession, the old boys of Christian Brothers College have been instrumental in assisting the school's exit students to secure employment.

Although high youth unemployment in Newburyport is making the task of getting students into influential positions increasingly difficult, C.B.C. pupils do virtually all get jobs. This is largely because of the school's reputation for "academic standards" and discipline, and is also due to the extensive C.B.C. network within the local area. The school's work experience programme develops the networks of individual pupils and further extends the C.B.C. network and C.B.C.'s reputation as a producer of suitably disciplined labour.

Collectively the six chapters of the ethnography show how and why a particular set of circumstances and meanings has emerged in the specific locale of Christian Brothers College in Newburyport. It must be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 2, however, that what may appear to be stable, institutionalised meanings have resulted from the creative actions of C.B.C. members since 1935 and are open to continual
transformation and change. Indeed, these chapters have indicated that the comfort and stability of a combined unity of purpose, the predictability of institutionalised traditions which once characterised C.B.C. and which were the active creations of an earlier generation of Christian Brothers and Newburyport Catholics, have given way to a period of uncertainty. Although, as the data have shown, an appearance of stability and conformity persists at C.B.C., and an idealised notion of what constitutes "a Brothers' school" endures, changes have occurred and are occurring at the school. These changes in turn are mediated by the legacy of C.B.C.'s continuing traditions and history.

The purpose of this final chapter is to integrate a discussion of stability and change at C.B.C., the essence of the foreshadowed research problem, with a discussion of theoretical perspectives upon reproduction and transformation which are related to the main concerns outlined in Chapter 1. Such an integrated discussion will allow a deeper understanding of the complexities of continuity and change in the specific locale of C.B.C. It will also facilitate the essential task of relating issues of continuity and change at C.B.C. to wider social and educational issues of reproduction and transformation.

Chapters 3 to 8 of this thesis, in the manner of conventional ethnography, have presented a description of the lived experience of Christian Brothers College and its participants. Such ethnographic description, however, is by itself insufficient for the purpose of this study as discussed in Chapter 2. The notion of critical ethnography requires
that, through an *explanation* of the situation that is described in ethnography, both the dialectical relationship between agency and structure, and the emancipatory potential of the C.B.C. situation, be examined.

In order to achieve these purposes the ethnography must now be contextualised *theoretically* whereas, in the earlier chapters, the ethnography has been situated historically and, to a limited extent, socially. It is the major task of this chapter, therefore, to develop a critical perspective by means of the dialectical task of interrogating theories of reproduction and transformation through the data of the study, and interrogating the data of the study through the substantive theories related to stability and change that were discussed in Chapter 1.

This task is undertaken in the following sections which deal respectively with reproduction and transformation at C.B.C., C.B.C. schooling and access to the job market, school knowledge and social control, individual autonomy within institutional control, and finally, uncertainty and crisis at C.B.C.

3. **REPRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION AT C.B.C.**

In this section, the task of constructing a critical ethnography is continued through an examination of the historical importance to C.B.C. participants of both *reproducing* the values and traditions of the Catholic religion, and *transforming* working class attitudes and values to accord with middle class, secular Protestant values in order to promote upward social mobility. The contradictions in the
attempt to achieve both tasks simultaneously, and C.B.C.'s attempts to accommodate these contradictions, are explored through the theoretical constructions of class and hegemony and the notions of reproduction, resistance and transformation.

The ethnography confirms that those associated with Christian Brothers College perceive the school to have been founded on a mission of class intervention and transformation. As part of the wider plan of the Catholic hierarchy, the social position of Catholics in Newburyport society was to be transformed through education. C.B.C. was established by the Christian Brothers as part of the broader attempt to shift the class location of Australian Catholics. That early commitment had a strong radical element of contestation of the Protestant dominance of secondary education, white collar employment and the professions. The radical nature of the attempt, however, was, from the start, flawed and partial in that the predominant, meritocratic view of Australian society was not challenged. Rather than demanding class justice, Australian Catholics, largely Irish and working class, sought to win dignity by escaping from their class through the aggressively competitive education that was offered by schools like C.B.C.

The part played by C.B.C. in the reproduction and transformation of social and economic status is discussed in this section through an examination of, firstly, the social mobility of Catholics in Newburyport, and secondly, the theoretical constructs of cultural markets and hegemony as well as mobility and reproduction.
(a) The Social Mobility of Newburyport Catholics

The mission of the Christian Brothers, which was enthusiastically supported by the Catholics of Newburyport, was to improve the status of the Catholic community by facilitating the entry of Catholics to the semi-professional and business sectors of the town — to the "middle" class. But the objective of upward social mobility from working class to middle class, if not ruling class, status sought by the Brothers was not, of course, based upon a sophisticated Marxist notion of class as a complex set of social relations. Class was, to the Brothers, a much more popular notion of categories including income, education and employment which separated social and political status groups from each other. Such a conception is much more akin to the Weberian notion of status groups (Weber, 1968), and it is in such a sense that the notion is used in this discussion.

Catholic schools like C.B.C. have played a major part in the "class struggle" of Catholics once predominantly Irish and working class. This theme pervaded all chapters of the ethnography but was especially apparent in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8. The Irish working class, according to the Brothers and associates of C.B.C., used the school as an avenue to white-collar employment. Over the generations, however, the fierceness with which examination success was pursued seems to have resulted in the Catholic school's identification with the middle class values that facilitate upward social mobility and maintain middle class "positions". Ironically, however, the very success of C.B.C. in promoting social mobility may have ultimately alienated many Catholics from their class origins.
By positively embracing and reinforcing the middle class attitudes that are essential for the upward social mobility of working class Catholic children, teachers at C.B.C. have attempted to prepare children to take their places in the dominant society without questioning it. C.B.C., then, has become a Catholic school in which one can find:

... little evidence of Church schools forming a new man, rather than the man required by, and fitting into, the established order (Buonhorn, 1979:113).

This observation carries implications regarding a second aspect of the mission of Brothers schooling that was emphasised in the ethnography by C.B.C. participants: the education of Catholic children in the Catholic faith. The case of C.B.C. is one in which access to the established social order, as evidenced by the priority which is currently given to academic subjects and preparation of pupils for examinations in comparison with that given to religious education, is treated in a mechanistic and nonproblematic manner. The Christian message at C.B.C., instead of provoking analysis of the justice of human relationships, including class relationships, has become merely an agent of social integration (Bates, 1982b; Watkins, 1984). This point was discussed in Chapter 4 and will be developed further later in the analysis.

The historical task of educating Newburyport Catholic youth for social mobility is seen as part of the apostolate of the Christian Brothers to serve the needy – Catholics having been regarded historically as victims of prejudice and of their class location. But as was apparent in Chapter 6, the sense of service that remains at C.B.C. has long lost the radical element that once sustained it. The contestation of Protestant
domination of society and the attempt to ensure social justice to Catholics by altering their class location has itself been transformed. The social hierarchy is taken as given and the place of Catholics in its middle reaches is to be maintained. The business of the school, according to the principal and many teachers, is to fit its students for entry into or continued membership of these levels. The mission of service, therefore, has become transformed into a conservative reproductive mission — one of equipping middle class Catholics to take their places in a predominantly middle class society.

Such a conclusion seems reasonable given the abundant evidence from C.B.C. participants which has been employed in this thesis in the construction of a description of the history of C.B.C. The question to which a critical ethnography must also address itself, however, is that of explaining theoretically the significance in the wider social and cultural context of the changes that have so far been described. The task of explanation is undertaken in the following section which utilises Collins' (1977) notion of cultural markets as a starting point.

(b) Cultural Markets, Hegemony, Mobility and Reproduction

Christian Brothers College both meets and simultaneously produces a demand for its education services — a demand which can be seen more broadly as part of a "cultural market" (Collins, 1977). Through this cultural market Newburyport Catholics have historically attempted to extend their own opportunities relative to those of the previously predominant and more economically powerful Protestant groups. Although
empowered throughout this historical period by their relative autonomy (Althusser, 1971), by entering into the production of cultural goods for a cultural market C.B.C. participants were also entering into a relationship with the dominant culture of capitalism that fits the Gramscian notion of "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971). This is an important theoretical construction which has considerable explanatory power in the case of C.B.C.

The hegemony of the dominant culture, as discussed in Chapter 2, is mediated through the institutions of civil society. And while such mediation encourages the reproduction of cultural patterns and social arrangements, actors in specific institutions always retain a degree of relative autonomy which allows for "those nonreproductive moments that constitute and support the critical notion of human agency" (Giroux 1983a:285). Because such agency forms an active and constant link between structural limits and lived effects:

...institutions are also sites for the production of alternative cultural forms, which may or may not be counter-hegemonic. Those forms which work within (i.e., are limited by) the dominant hegemony serve to reproduce existing cultural categories. In their turn these categories legitimate and reproduce existing social structures and relations. Counter-hegemonic activities, on the other hand, produce tendencies towards changes in existing social relations, through particular institutional sites within civil society (Gordon, 1984:112).

The possibility of counter-hegemony, therefore, is ever-present even though such moments are by and large controlled and defused by being incorporated into the dominant hegemony. The latter appears to have been the case at C.B.C. This helps to explain the transformation of an oppositional movement into a reproductive one.
For Giroux, as for Gramsci, the dominance or hegemony of certain classes is achieved and maintained not so much through coercive practices as through ideological practices. It is by means of ideological hegemony that ruling classes gain the consent of the dominated in two ways (Giroux, 1981). Firstly, the "fundamental class exercises moral and intellectual leadership over allied classes" (Giroux, 1981:17). Such leadership is not imposed, as Gramsci emphasises, but instead "represents a pedagogic and politically transformative process whereby the dominant class articulates a hegemonic principle that brings together common elements drawn from the world views and interests of allied groups" (Giroux, 1981:17). Hegemony then is both an outcome and a process of ideological leadership. Secondly, hegemony exists in the nature of the relationship between classes which, as Giroux explains:

... involves the successful attempt of the dominant class to utilize its control over the resources of the state and civil society ... Through the dual use of force and consent, the dominant class uses its political, moral, and intellectual leadership to shape and incorporate the 'taken-for-granted' views, needs, and concerns of subordinate groups. In doing so, the dominant class not only attempts to influence the interest and needs of such groups, but also contains the radical opportunities by placing limits on opposition discourse and practices (1981:17).

Although both forms of hegemony can be detected in the case of C.B.C., this last point of Giroux is especially significant in the light of the transformation of C.B.C.'s mission from one of change and contestation to one of reproduction and social stability. The concept of hegemony allows an understanding of how, despite the fact that "at any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society ... the decisive hegemonic
function is to control or transform and even incorporate them" (Williams, 1977:113). This is because the hegemony presents a universal and "natural" view of the world which includes common sense or taken for granted perspectives of "the way things are". Thus, even movements of resistance are likely to be steeped in the common sense, hegemonic "reality".

In the case of C.B.C., the resistance of Catholics to Protestant domination simultaneously incorporated the ideological hegemony contained in common sense notions of social advancement, economic influence, and success and power in society. As a result, education at C.B.C., although oppositional in one sense, never developed a truly radical significance. Instead, the case of the C.B.C. illustrates the dialectical nature of resistance. The logic that informs the attempt to raise the social and economic standing of Catholics in Newburyport, in opposition to historical Anglo and Protestant domination, is itself rooted in the premises of capitalist Anglo Protestant rationality. C.B.C.'s very "success" in accommodating its pupils to this hegemony has rendered it no longer oppositional. By seeking and gaining access to a social level from which Catholics had been excluded, C.B.C. provided a particular instance where "informal intentional opposition is contained by accommodation from or even by incorporation into the system" (Wexler and Whitson, 1982).

In the cultural production that has been ongoing at C.B.C. since 1935, the human agency which created a moment of resistance cannot be clearly separated from, or understood in isolation from, the hegemonic structure which limited and
incorporated the struggle for self-formation. As Gordon suggests, reinforcing a point made by Willis's (1977) study, in such situations:

... cultural choices made in one direction may bring about, in profound yet unperceived ways, unintended effects in another. Thus, transformation and reproduction may exist, in always contradictory ways, side by side within a culture (Gordon 1984:114).

Through the institutionalisation of particular cultural and organisational processes, C.B.C., despite its consciously oppositional origins, has contributed to the dominant hegemony by means which were unintended and largely unforseen. Two ways in which this appears from the data to have occurred are similar to those called "ghettoization" and "rationalization" by Wexler and Whitson (1982:38).

"Ghettoization" refers to the initial creation of an "organized enclave" (Wexler and Whitson, 1982:38) which fiercely maintains its founding mission of resistance. The oppositional intention may become diluted through "rationalization", however, as is the case at C.B.C., "when the leadership is willing to accommodate to the environment in order to win popular acceptance" (Wexler and Whitson 1982:38). The school's mission of facilitating Catholic entry to the middle class required that it be seen by the Newburyport community as an effective producer of cultural commodities including academic credentials. Moreover, as Wexler and Whitson (1982) suggest in regard to organisations that seek public acceptance, organisational effectiveness and legitimacy as perceived by dominant social groups is often "achieved at the cost of oppositional intentions ... Oppositional practices take on an unintended meaning through which they become
articulated to the hegemonic system" (1982:38-9). This seems to have been the case at C.B.C.

While the school's initial opposition was founded in the experience of Catholics of marginality, its effectiveness as a cultural producer made C.B.C. acceptable not only to Catholics who sought social mobility but also to dominant social groups. This illustrates the complexity of the theoretical construct of social reproduction which, according to Robinson, refers to two different things:

First, it refers to the ways in which the structure of classes in the social relations of production is legitimated and maintained over time... Second, reproduction refers to the means whereby the relative position of individuals or families in the class structure is maintained throughout their work lives or from generation to generation (Robinson, 1984:182).

In Newburyport, although there is perceived to have been some improvement in the overall status of the Catholic cultural group, and although this is attributed by participants largely to the influence of C.B.C., the contestation of social reproduction that occurs at C.B.C. is essentially of the second form noted by Robinson (1984). Although they are pushed by the Brothers, as seen in chapter 6 and chapter 7, it is ultimately through pupils' own individual efforts and individual academic successes that they are thought to improve their positions. But as many theorists argue (for example, Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Poulantzas, 1975), and as Robinson points out, as far as basic social transformation is concerned, "the relative position of individuals in the class structure is irrelevant as long as the structure of class relations itself remains intact" (1984:183). These theorists insist that the obvious presence of some individual mobility
actually reinforces and legitimates the inequality of the wider class structure (see, especially, Bourdieu, 1977a). By encouraging the belief that class mobility is an actual possibility for all citizens, C.B.C. contributes to the mystification of the structures of class relations (Bourdieu, 1977b) and to the maintenance of class inequality in which many Catholics are still enmeshed.

The same logic also inspires some researchers to conduct detailed statistical analyses of inter-generational mobility and to construct models of status attainment (e.g. Blau & Duncan, 1967). This thesis deliberately eschews such analysis as being irrelevant to its purposes and even misleading since, as Bourdieu quite rightly states, such analysis "claims a certain fidelity to reality [only] by disregarding the structure of relations whence these elements derive all their sociologically relevant determinations... to the detriment of the study of mechanisms which tend to ensure the reproduction of the structure of relations between classes" (Bourdieu, 1977a:487). The functionalist view of social structure that is assumed by mobility and status attainment studies celebrates the notions of individual mobility and meritocracy, and, as Horan notes:

... like a free market model, the status attainment model assumes 'that the allocation process by which individuals are placed in occupations is open and competitive across all individuals and occupations' (Horan, 1976, in Goldman & Tickamyer, 1984:197).

Society is seen as an unproblematic, stratified hierarchy in which individuals climb up or down the social ladder by accumulating different amounts of education, income and occupational prestige. In such a simplistic picture, however:
Overlooked is that the structuring unit underlying this conceptualization of status is the commodity form. This status attainment model not only describes a dimension of social relations structured around the commodity form, it is itself also structured by the same logic (Goldman & Tickamyer, 1984:205).

It is a similar logic that convinces the clients of C.B.C., both pupils and parents, that they can pursue and accumulate the commodities - starting with a C.B.C. education - that are badges of individual penetration to the higher rungs of social life, and which undermine older patterns of community and social solidarity (Goldman and Tickamyer, 1984). That this effect, which is partly the consequence of the Brothers' emphasis on social mobility, was unintended and unforseen was apparent in chapter 3. Many Brothers, especially Brother Gordon, expressed disappointment at the materialism and consumerism of modern society which they believe has seeped into the consciousness of Catholics in Newburyport. Such materialism, they maintained, was responsible for the dearth of religious vocations and decline of spiritual values. But one could argue that educating several generations of Catholic boys to take their places in the middle and upper levels of society may have resulted in the products of Brothers' schools eventually accepting, indeed promoting, middle class materialistic values to the impoverishment of spiritual values. Rather than transforming the Australian middle class through "the message of Jesus", as Brother Gordon and his predecessors had hoped to do, many of these "successful" Catholics were, instead, seduced by the consumerism of their adopted class. Thus, the class system is not transformed through the introduction of radical Catholic religion - rather,
sections of the Catholic working class who "made good" through education may be said to have simply appropriated, uncritically, middle class values and cultural mores. Such appropriation was aided and abetted by the Christian Brothers' educational mission. "Successful" Catholics were merely co-opted and became assimilated within the dominant order.

It was merely an extension of the same logic for many of these "successful" Catholics to abandon C.B.C. and attempt to purchase the more expensive commodity of an education from one of the more prestigious Protestant colleges for their own children, for such a commodity, it may be argued, facilitates entry to a still higher level of society. Thus, the belief that education can foster the social and economic advancement of individuals and groups has worked at C.B.C. to "extend and legitimate the marketisation of schooling" (Ashenden et al., 1983).

An important point about hegemony, however, should not be overlooked in this analysis. Gramsci (1971) emphasised that although the common sense of dominated groups plays into the hands, as it were, in a non-reductive fashion, of the dominant group, there are always moments of "good sense" within common sense. As Shapiro argues, education "cannot be viewed as merely an extension of the activities of the dominant economic class... [or] as simply the reflection of the ideology of monopoly capitalism" (Shapiro, 1981:21). When the Christian Brothers and other religious orders founded secondary schools in the early twentieth century, they were satisfying a genuine need for Catholic schools at that historical moment. Public secondary education was still virtually non-existent at the time.
of C.B.C.'s foundation and Catholics were generally excluded from the Protestant schools. Catholics felt that they were victims of prejudice and exclusion and sought to compete equally with advantaged groups. This explains the early emphasis on public service examinations since, as several Brothers emphasised during the ethnography, entrance to public service positions was decided by examination performance, or "merit", compared to many areas where Catholics and Irish were spurned. The myth of meritocracy was not naively accepted, therefore, as Catholics were only too familiar with prejudice and Protestant patronage. This was no simple example, then, of equality of opportunity merely making for mobility within the status quo. Therefore, although the ultimate result is that "the meritocratic principle of social mobility merely legitimates inequality, making its continued existence acceptable as a kind of safety-valve" (Entwistle, 1978:10), the C.B.C. example is nonetheless of real and substantial historical importance. It demonstrates that educational institutions in Australia were not solely the product of the dominant group but represent also the struggle by subordinate groups for social justice. The establishment of impartial public service examinations was a complementary aspect of this struggle. This element of "good sense" (Gramsci, 1971) can still be detected at C.B.C. in the recent emergence of "social justice" as a curriculum issue, especially in religious education.

The C.B.C. case, therefore, illustrates Giroux's (1983a) point that any social and political context exhibits "a combination of reactionary and progressive behaviours -
behaviours that embody ideologies both underlying the structure of social domination and containing the logic necessary to overcome it" (Giroux, 1983a:285. See also Giroux, 1983b). That is, although education at C.B.C. was initially an expression of the opposition of Catholics towards their social marginality, Catholic resistance to Protestant, Anglo domination took the form of a bid for comparable Catholic social and economic power. This supports Giroux's (1983a) argument that, "on one level, resistance may be the simple appropriation and display of power, and may manifest itself through the interests and discourse of the worst aspects of capitalist rationality" (Giroux, 1983a:285). As has been illustrated, despite its elements of good sense and historical appropriateness, the common sense logic that informed resistance to social arrangements was a dominating rather than a liberating logic, one that expressed "the repressive moments inscribed in such [resistance] by the dominant culture rather than a message of protest against their existence" (Giroux, 1983a:286).

(c) Conclusion

This section, through a discussion of cultural markets, class and hegemony in relation to the historical, social and religious purposes of C.B.C., has demonstrated that the school's initial oppositional and transformative intentions in relation to the social status of Catholics were rooted in a logic that was incapable of challenging the essential injustice of a hierarchical capitalist society. The school's continuing emphasis upon individual achievement as a means of gaining
upward social mobility ignores the wider structural forces which ensure that inequality is perpetuated. Indeed, despite its oppositional intentions, C.B.C. now actually contributes to the legitimation and reproduction of social inequality by endorsing the middle class values that assist pupils in gaining employment. This issue is examined in detail in the following section.

4. C.B.C SCHOOLING AND ACCESS TO THE JOB MARKET

Those aspects of schooling at Christian Brothers College which have a tendency to reproduce ruling class dominance, as discussed in the previous section, facilitate the integration of C.B.C. students into local economic life and the job market. Several chapters of the ethnography, in particular chapter 8, indicated that the rigid control and "academic" curriculum that are associated with C.B.C. appear to enhance the job prospects of its school leavers. In chapter 6 it was also apparent that pupils, although they resisted absolute control over their school lives, rationalise their compliance through the notion that the harsh discipline and academic demands will eventually pay dividends in employment opportunities. Many participants, especially elderly Brothers, praised the living Brothers' tradition in which education involves a contradictory blend of harsh, often physically harsh, methods of control and a mission of serving and genuinely helping pupils. Grace's assessment of education in Victorian Britain notes a similar blend of intentions:

The basic imperative to control coincided with a genuinely humanitarian and Christian impulse to help, a radical interest in equipping the people for political membership, a capitalist interest in
rendering them competent and efficient workers, a religious interest in making them 'good' and a liberal/cultural interest in 'elevating' and 'refining' them to an appreciation of a higher order of culture. That many of these interests were nothing more than variations on the basic theme of control is clearly an arguable position (Grace, 1978:10).

It should also be noted that at C.B.C., given the unproblematic acceptance of existing social structures and of individual effort and attainment as the legitimate and feasible means of social and economic advancement, these interests also share a tendency to reproduce existing structures.

In arguing that C.B.C. contributes to cultural reproduction, however, it is clear that no simple or mechanistic notion of reproduction explains the C.B.C. case. As discussed at length in Chapter 1, reproduction must be seen in a dialectical relationship with resistance, and in a manner which does not itself reproduce a false distinction between agency and structure. For, as Giroux cautions in relation to recent ethnographic work:

... despite their concrete differences, resistance and reproduction approaches to education share the failure of recycling and reproducing the dualism between agency and structure, a failure that has plagued educational theory and practice for decades, while simultaneously representing its greatest challenge. Consequently, neither position provides the foundation for a theory of education that links structures and institutions to human agency and action in a dialectical manner (Giroux, 1983a:261).

One scholar who has attempted to deal with the dialectic of reproduction and resistance, and of agency and structure, is Bourdieu (see, especially, 1977b). It is by means of his concept of habitus that Bourdieu attempts ...
structures have subjective consequences is not incompatible with the view that the social world is constructed by individual actors (Swartz, 1981:330).

The habitus, the general mode of thinking by which individuals perceive and assess their own life chances on the basis of their individual situations and life experiences, provides students ...

not so much with particular and particularised schemes of thought as with that general disposition which engenders particular schemes, which may then be applied in different domains of thought and action (Bourdieu, 1971:184).

Through the habitus, individuals perceive their own class location and their chances of social mobility.

In a way that extends Weber's (1968) definitions of class and status, Bourdieu sees social class as a dynamic "composite profile of possessions, or capitals, that may be accumulated, monopolized, or exchanged in order to maintain or improve positions in the stratification order" (Swartz, 1981:331). The concept of "cultural capital" is especially significant in C.B.C.'s case. Bourdieu (1974, 1977b) uses this term to convey the manner in which the values, dispositions and culture of dominant social groups can be transacted in much the same way as economic capital. Capitalist society is so structured as to reward the possessors of appropriate cultural traits. In schools, the culture of dominant groups is taken for granted as the legitimate culture. Hence, the reproductive nature of schools derives from their tendency to treat all children as if they had equal access to the cultural capital that is possessed by the dominant group (Harker, 1984). The dominance of such groups is thus preserved as their children cash in their cultural capital in schools and upon entering the job market:
Once finished with schooling, individuals carry a fund of culture which, if it is worth enough on the existing cultural market, gives them entree to particular occupations and social circles. This movement of individuals through a system of cultural inculation thus reconstitutes the structure of society (Collins, 1981b:176).

The economy of cultural capital, therefore, exists in a direct relationship with the material economy but in a way which is obscured because the cultural market exerts what Bourdieu calls "symbolic violence":

... the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety' (Bourdieu, 1977b:192).

It is through such symbolic violence that reproductive tendencies in society and in institutions are taken for granted as natural and neutral.

At Christian Brothers College, the cultural gains made on behalf of the school's clients are to be defended. The status culture of appropriate traits, dispositions and conventions is reproduced in the crucial, ongoing struggle to maintain, or extend if possible, the status and prestige of C.B.C. in the socio-cultural system of Newburyport (Watkins, 1984). In the interplay of individual, family, school, Catholic and work cultures that make up the social networks of Newburyport, it was apparent throughout the ethnography that, as Watkins observes:

At C.B.C., the family and school values of discipline, self-control, and obedience find themselves in harmony with each other and with the demands of the local employers (Watkins, 1984:67).

Such cultural traits were perceived to be important factors in the successful entry of C.B.C. students to the labour market.
Bourdieu emphasises that the habitus is never static. Initially acquired in the family, the habitus "underlies the structuring of school experiences" (Bourdieu, 1977b:87) but also, importantly for this study, school experiences in turn influence the habitus which then influences the individual's future accumulation of further cultural capital through job, economic and cultural markets:

... the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences ... from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu, 1977b:87).

For ruling class individuals, the passage from family to school to social and economic success is a relatively straightforward progression since it is the culture that is authorised by the dominant class that is taught in schools. But, as Harker points out:

For an individual from a non-dominant background to succeed ... the appropriate cultural capital has to be acquired (1984:118).

It is in this latter sense that the role of C.B.C. in the production as well as the re-production of "the cultural commodities needed by a corporate society" (Apple, 1982:45) becomes especially significant. It is also in this sense that Bourdieu's work is seen by recent critics to be somewhat limited (but see Harker, 1984). Apple, for instance, argues:

[Bourdieu's use of 'cultural capital'] fails to catch the school's role in the production of a kind of capital. Bourdieu's work is still something of an allocation theory. For him, cultural capital is used as a device to allocate students, by class, to their 'proper' position in society. Students without it are, by definition, deviant. What such an approach does not catch is that schools also act as one of the primary modes of production of the cultural commodities (1982:45).
It is through such cultural production that C.B.C.'s mission of social transformation is pursued:

Bourdieu perceived that with the development of capitalism, reproduction has become more dependent on cultural assets or cultural capital instead of inherited wealth. These cultural assets were also perceived as important by the Christian Brothers in their self-appointed task of facilitating the entry of working class Catholics into the 'middle class' of Protestant society. Schools like C.B.C. therefore attempted to ensure that poor Catholics could overcome their lack of wealth and property by the acquisition of specific cultural assets (Watkins, 1984:74).

This study has demonstrated that C.B.C. has had, and is having, considerable success in this regard. But it is also clear that in a larger sense C.B.C. has, in the process, helped to cement the symbolic domination of economic/cultural elites. This is because:

... even when [the school] does not manage to provide the opportunity for appropriating the dominant culture, it can at least inculcate recognition of the legitimacy of this culture and of those who have the means of appropriating it. Symbolic domination accompanies and redoubles economic domination (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1978:217).

That is to say, the meritocratic myth, upon which an inequitable hierarchical society is based, is legitimated and reinforced by schools like C.B.C. The unquestioning pursuit of academic credentials and local status is in turn supported by that section of its clientele which is middle class and directly involved in business and industry, and especially by those recently upwardly mobile who consciously regard the school as having contributed to their success. But it is also supported by working class parents who want their children to succeed within the existing social and economic order.

Moreover, in the effort to move up the ladder by gaining educational capital, "working class pupils ... have exchanged
working class capital for their educational capital which is now their sole possession" (Marker, 1984:124). Working class pupils who battle their way through to year 12 at C.B.C. may well become lost to the working class. Thus, it can be argued that Christian Brothers College, along with similar Catholic schools, has played a substantial part in the fragmentation of the Australian working class. Upwardly mobile Catholics have formed, as it were, a "class fraction" which in Newburyport comprises now both lower-middle and middle class groups with links to C.B.C., predominantly, and to other Catholic schools.

There is little doubt that C.B.C. is perceived as conferring the "cultural capital" and establishing the old boy network necessary to facilitate employment and advancement in the local Newburyport area. The more exclusive and expensive Newburyport private Protestant schools, however, are seen to confer even more status upon their clients than C.B.C. does. Moreover, the extensive social networks associated with the prestigious Protestant schools ensure that their pupils are equipped with cultural capital that is more readily negotiable and more widely redeemable than that which C.B.C. can provide. Thus, many of Newburyport's more affluent Catholics, in many cases educated for social mobility by the Brothers, and now increasingly assimilated into the dominant culture by a process of 'embourgeoisement' (Bourdieu, 1977b), favour these elite schools for Australia's 'ruling class' (Connell et al., 1982) which represent much greater commodity value than C.B.C. does.

As was shown in chapter 8, C.B.C. students and teachers believe that job seekers from the school have an advantage over other Newburyport students because the discipline and academic
emphasis of the school, examined in detail in chapters 6 and 7, are attractive to prospective employers. A major emphasis in the school's program is to inculcate and reinforce such dispositions as compliance, obedience, self-control and respect for authority, which are major tenets of both Catholicism (especially Irish Catholicism) and capitalism (Watkins, 1984). The school therefore, like British schools studied by Grace, is "essentially engaged in a domesticating and job-selecting activity for a capitalist economy" (Grace, 1978:53). This works doubly to the economic advantage of C.B.C. pupils in a period in which academic credentials alone have become relatively devalued (Collins, 1979) so that appropriate dispositions and the status of C.B.C. carry even greater market value.

Because many competitors in the labour market are likely to have similar credentials, employment opportunities are enhanced not only by the possession of appropriate cultural traits but also by access to appropriate social networks (Granovetter, 1974, 1981), an important component of cultural capital. As Watkins explains:

... the concept of cultural capital includes not only resources such as verbal facility, general dispositions, and cultural awareness, but also social connections and contacts which may provide important information about educational and economic systems (1984:71).

An extensive social network was seen in Chapter 8 to operate to the advantage of C.B.C. pupils relative to other job seekers. This circumstance is highly ironic given the founding mission of serving needy Catholics who were disadvantaged in employment and access to positions of status because of discrimination and
Protestant patronage. This was stated many times throughout the ethnography as the reason for the emphasis in Brothers' schools upon examination results which were thought to be fair measures of effort and ability. Catholic entrance to the public service was encouraged since selection was by public examination - one of the few means by which prejudice and patronage could be avoided. Yet a C.B.C. network now extends patronage to its own.

The recently instituted, and quickly expanded, work experience program contributes to an extension of both C.B.C.'s network and its status as a producer of cultural capital. Through this program:

The discipline of the school is legitimated and substantiated by the 'reality' of the business world with which students come into contact during work experience. In addition this reality is reinforced by the influence of cultural resources such as religious affinities, social contact, and the old boy network in gaining entry into the labour market. In this way their daily life experiences influence, interact, and renegotiate their lifetime patterns and expectations (Watkins, 1984:76).

The internalisation of values that are held dear by capital leads to jobs and, although less so in times of economic contraction than expansion, to promotion within the firm (Salaman, 1979; Collins, 1979; Edwards 1979). Thus, even though C.B.C. leavers may "go down a few rungs" from the lofty expectations of some of their parents, for the present they are getting jobs while many of their contemporaries from other schools, state high and technical schools, are missing out. At the local level, however, this may have less to do with the "academic advantage" that Brother Ernest believes C.B.C. confers on pupils than with a cultural ethos of discipline and
compliance that is valued by both the school and the firm. Again, therefore, the radical moment in the ongoing attempt to transform the socio-economic location of Catholics and the conditions of Catholic working class life, while not entirely lost, is considerably diluted since the educational mission of C.B.C. promotes compliance with the class relations implicit in capitalism and embraces an uncritical view of present social and economic structures within which individuals compete for places. Thus, the rungs of the social ladder can be gained only by outreaching contemporaries. Other individuals are challenged rather than the social hierarchy.

This section has examined the relationship between the Newburyport job market and the cultural traits that are emphasised by a C.B.C. education. In the following section, the analysis of the connections between schooling and the economic order is extended through an examination of school practices which, through the management of knowledge in particular, contribute to a form of social control.

5. SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Various institutionalised educational practices, evident at C.B.C. and elsewhere, have been argued to help sustain and legitimate the existing social structure and dominant culture in which the interests of some groups in society are advanced. In this section, the management of knowledge at C.B.C. is discussed in relation to the prevailing social and economic order through an examination of, firstly, the C.B.C. curriculum, and secondly, the processes of pedagogy and evaluation which govern access to what is regarded as high status knowledge. It is in these day to day practices of
schooling, in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (Bernstein, 1977), such as those examined at C.B.C. and reported in chapters 6 and 7 in particular, that education is shown to be a less than politically neutral enterprise.

(a) The Hegemonic Curriculum and Cultural Politics

The concept of hegemony has been an important one in explaining the linkages between the independently creative actions of human agents in Christian Brothers College and the patterns of social and economic structure to which they are dialectically related. This study has attempted to examine the operation of hegemony at the institutional level of C.B.C. since:

... ideological hegemony, as a part of the actual workings of control, is not something one sees only on the level of macro-social behaviour and economic relations; nor is it something that resides merely at the top of our heads, so to speak. Instead, hegemony is constituted by our very day to day practices. It is our whole assemblage of common-sense meanings and actions that make up the social world as we know it, a world in which the internal curricular, teaching and evaluative characteristics of educational institutions partake (Apple, 1982:39-40)

In such instances, 'by the very nature of the institution, the educator [is] involved, whether he or she [is] conscious of it or not, in a political act' (Apple, 1979:1). As Apple emphasises in relation to the management of knowledge in schools:

I find this of exceptional import when thinking about the relationships between the overt and covert knowledge taught in schools, the principles of selection and organization of that knowledge, and the criteria and modes of evaluation used to 'measure success' in teaching. As Young and Bernstein, among others, have provocatively maintained, the structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society (1979:2).
C.B.C. conserves the dominant hegemony in these ways, and, as was discussed in the previous section, especially by its mechanistic view of its relationship with the economic sector whereby the school unproblematically strives to domesticate, select and certify a compliant labour force. Moreover, by encouraging the false assumption that education is able to redress social inequalities and lead to economic rewards commensurate with ability and effort, C.B.C. actually promotes inequality in the guise of fairness and neutrality (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b). Of pupils passing through schooling, "those who are successful in the system acquire legitimate domination, while those who are unsuccessful acquire a sense of legitimacy and inevitability of their own subordination" (Collins, 1981b:176).

The reproduction over generations of social and economic privilege is far from absolute, however, and an important point is that C.B.C. is perceived to have contributed to a real improvement of the relative social positions of its clients over time. But such status improvement, although genuine, is achieved by individuals in an institution which assiduously grooms candidates for advancement and which, moreover, does this in a way that also fulfills the school's ideological function of legitimation of predominant political and economic values. The particular education that is offered is misrecognised as being "neutral". This is a further illustration of Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic violence" which was discussed in section 2 of this chapter.

Symbolic violence acts especially through the hegemonic curriculum and in the manner in which "achievement" is measured
within the confines of that narrow selection of knowledge that counts as valid. Curriculum controls the content of formal schooling, and evaluation ensures the compliance of all those pupils who trust that their individual life chances will be enhanced by the accumulation of satisfactory reports and marks that indicate mastery of curriculum content. Such an approach to curriculum and evaluation encourages the individual commitment of pupils to competition with their peers for academic success and advancement.

Despite the efforts of some teachers to the contrary, the curriculum that prevails at C.B.C. is one that Connell and his colleagues (1982) call the "competitive academic curriculum". It is a curriculum which measures its success against the achievement of standards, especially the H.S.C. and, as such, must be guarded and supported by a system of assessment which "weeds out" at each level those pupils who are deemed as unsuitable material for the next level. It is also a curriculum which prescribes the activities and issues which are considered appropriate for classrooms.

As Kemmis explains, the school with a competitive academic curriculum is a school which:

... is about conformity. It has ideas about what students should say and think, and it rewards them with the grades that pass them on to higher and higher strata in its own class system. It ... is about teaching those who already give evidence of conformity to what are reverentially referred to as academic 'standards', and finding justifications for denying the interests of those who don't already conform to middle class mores. [Competitive academic curriculum] schools are schools where teaching is easy, because they are schools where students, not teachers, fail, and where learners, not the curriculum, is at fault (1983:4).
Those who fail in this process of selective advancement are taught to blame no one else but themselves and are prepared to accept "a second class position in a culture imposed on them" (Wood, 1984:225). In a similar manner each student who succeeds, who manages to successfully negotiate each cut off point, perceives that his individual talent and effort have been rewarded. These students, therefore, recognise as legitimate the criteria by which they are deemed successful and, in accepting the values that are inherent in the hegemonic curriculum, become more like each other and less like their diverse backgrounds (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This means that at each cut off point teachers who conduct assessments have progressively even less cause to question the assumed neutrality of the assessment procedures (Bourdieu & Saint-Martin, 1974). The unquestioned acceptance of the necessity for evaluation, of the criteria upon which it is based, and of the individualist and competitive ethos on which it relies, provides a justification for the inequalities that are an integral part of the capitalist division of labour. At C.B.C., curriculum and evaluation have historically been narrowly pursued and mechanically implemented in the effort to achieve academic success and social status within the existing order. There, the hidden curriculum, "the tacit teaching of social and economic norms and expectations" (Apple, 1979:44), is openly and instrumentally pursued.

The competitive academic curriculum pervades C.B.C., as was seen especially in chapters 4 and 7. And, as Ashenden et al., (1983) write of such a curriculum:
Its chemistry was made in the meeting of an elite academic curriculum with a mass clientele organised around individual competition ... But while everyone, or nearly everyone, had access to this curriculum at some stage or another, it never became the only curriculum. It became, rather, hegemonic ... It attracted the best resources, the greatest prestige. It defined what education really meant, and made its rivals seem inferior. It pushed its challengers to the margins of school life - to cater to the younger children, the 'failures', to offer 'electives' (Ashenden et al., 1983:9).

At C.B.C. the only public alternative to the competitive academic curriculum is the year 11 transition course. But it is a pathetically weak rival. The boys who take the alternative course have been "cooled out" (Clark, 1960) from the competitive academic curriculum and so have "chosen", on the basis of assessments and teacher recommendations, that they do not wish to attempt the Higher School Certificate. As was seen at several points throughout the ethnography, the channelling of poor H.S.C. risks into the alternative course at year 11 level minimises failures in the final H.S.C. results by which C.B.C. itself is largely assessed in the local community. This feature of the transition course seemed to be prominent in the thinking of Brother Carter and several teachers who otherwise had little regard for the notion of alternative courses. In response to some recent poor performances in the H.S.C. examinations, there had also been recent moves to tighten entry requirements to year 12.

The general narrowness of the C.B.C. curriculum in which "everything is geared to the H.S.C.", illustrates a point made by Giroux:

By linking power and culture, Bourdieu provides a number of insights into how the hegemonic curriculum works in schools, pointing to the political interests underlying the selection and distribution of those
bodies of knowledge that are given top priority. Those bodies of knowledge not only legitimate the interests and values of the dominant classes, they also have the effect of marginalizing and disconfirming other kinds of knowledge (Giroux, 1983a:268).

The priority and status given to certain types of knowledge in the C.B.C. curriculum, and the connections between the emphasis upon such knowledge and the maintenance of dominant social and economic structures, requires closer examination.

(b) Access to High Status Knowledge

Clearly, the knowledge which receives "top priority" at C.B.C. is that required for academic success in mathematics and science. This is a matter of contention for some humanities teachers as the most able students select or are guided into the higher status subjects whose teachers maintain relatively demanding entrance requirements at the year 11 and, especially, the year 12 levels. This means that humanities subjects suffer from a double disadvantage - they are perceived as being of lower status and they cater in many cases for students who fail to meet the requirements for entry to the science stream.

The emphasis and status given to mathematics and science knowledge in the C.B.C. curriculum is related to the wider social and economic structures in at least two ways. Firstly, as has been seen, it is through testing in all curriculum areas, but especially in mathematics and science, that decisions about pupil chances for their subsequent school careers are made. Such testing occurs at several "cut-off points". Since a major purpose of schooling is to allocate pupils to a hierarchy of status and opportunity:
The constitutive or underlying social and economic rules make it essential that subject centred curricula be taught, that high status be given to technical knowledge. This is in large part due to the selection function of schooling ... it is easier to stratify individuals according to 'academic criteria' when technical knowledge is used ... Thus the cultural content (legitimate or high status knowledge) is used as a device or filter for economic stratification, thereby enhancing the continued expansion of technical knowledge ... as well (Apple, 1979:38).

Apple's last point is related to the second way in which the emphasis on technical knowledge serves wider social and economic purposes. As Apple (1979) explains, the production of the particular commodity of high status knowledge is of more concern than its distribution. Just as it is efficient in a capitalist economy to maintain at least a minimum level of unemployment so that a shortage of jobs will stimulate competition for employment, so the premium of high status knowledge is available only to those who are successful in the competition to gain access to it. High status knowledge "is seen as macro-economically beneficial" (Apple, 1979:38) to society's ruling classes over time since:

With the growing power of the new petty bourgeoisie in the economic and cultural apparatus, the focus on technical administrative knowledge enables the school to do two things. It increases its own legitimacy in the eyes of this crucial class segment and, just as importantly, it enables this same class segment to use the educational apparatus to reproduce itself (Apple, 1982:54).

The reproduction of domination through the production of technical knowledge at schools like C.B.C. is achieved partly through the maintenance of a distinction between mental and manual labour - "a distinction that lies at the heart of the social division of labour" (Apple, 1982:50). Browne claims that the reproduction of this distinction "represents one of
the central structural forces impinging on the school and defining its role and limits" (Browne, 1981:460). The distinction is all the more effectively maintained because the relative autonomy of the school, especially C.B.C. as an independent school, from production allows the "mystique of knowledge and the superiority of mental labour" (Browne, 1981:460) to remain unquestioned. Inherent in such an approach to curriculum is the further separation of the knowledge taught in schools, which is seen as an abstract commodity, from the actual life experience of pupils. Within "a fairly uniform and rigid pacing and sequencing of the learning process", the competitive academic curriculum "emphasizes the separation of the experience and knowledge of the learner from what is to be learned; and the separation of learning from activity or practice" (Ashenden et al., 1983:9). Hence, C.B.C.'s physics teacher uses experiments only rarely, and then merely to demonstrate scientific "laws" that the pupils have already been taught and have learnt. Similarly, senior English students study "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" as a literary piece to be critiqued in the appropriate style, but without connecting Huck's life and experiences with their own.

Each pupil must battle to master the competitive academic curriculum since, as Giroux maintains, "education is defined primarily through a struggle for economic success and individual mobility" (1984a:191). The interpersonal competition which is enshrined in such a definition...

inhibits challenge to the social formation through mass transformation of individual identities. Competition reinforces privatized identity and makes the coordination of collective activities and commitment to common goals difficult. Competition
anchors individual identity in difference, hierarchizes difference, and diverts energies from perceiving common needs and goals (Wexler & Whitson, 1982:32).

The individualism and competition of such a position is strengthened at C.B.C. by the emphasis upon order and discipline. And the maintenance of order, as several teachers who have tried to reform student-teacher relationships at the school have discovered, requires the sort of effort that, according to Mitchell's (1981) study of public school teachers, frequently destroys "the social relationships of trust and openness needed to encourage student to question, challenge and inquire for themselves - thus destroying an essential prerequisite of the educational mission itself" (Mitchell, 1981:2).

Leading the challenge against coercive, physical, masculinist traditions of enforcement of control and discipline at C.B.C. are several competent and articulate women teachers. Their resistance to forms of oppressive discipline, which they refuse to administer and are often physically incapable of administering, is based largely upon the realization that the actual or threatened use of physical punishment in a routine manner by many male teachers entrenches patriarchal authority while simultaneously reinforcing a view of women as "soft" and ineffectual. But the resistance also reflects a broader challenge to authoritarian and hierarchical control. The women who oppose the physical intimidation of pupils have attempted in their own classes to develop humane personal relationships
with students, to encourage them to express their personal identities and values, and to use these as a basis for discovery of self and for encouraging social interaction. These women also, as was clear from the discussion in chapter 7, often attempted to encourage and support each other both in the development of curriculum and in the establishment of cooperative relationships amongst teachers and pupils based upon mutual respect. All of these strategies, while they may be correctly interpreted as forms of resistance on the part of some women against patriarchal and hierarchical authority, may also be seen as an attempt to contribute to a non-bureaucratic form of collective life. These women draw not upon predominant patriarchal values but upon women's traditional experience in order to challenge the bureaucratic separation of the public from the personal life in institutional contexts.

Ferguson (1984) points out that, because of the particular roles that have been available to them both in the family and in public spheres, the experience of women is structured in a way that is different from that of men. She argues, moreover, that "while women have been victims ... they have been actors, creators, builders of objects and of relations, confined, certainly, to a limited private realm but nonetheless immersed in a world that possesses some of its own positive merits and is more than a reaction to exclusion from the public world of men" (Ferguson, 1984:23). Such a perspective helps to explain
why it is that a number of women at C.B.C. assert in their work practices many of the person-oriented values that are often associated with women's traditional role. In doing so they resist masculinist and bureaucratic domination by fostering a collectivist, cooperative orientation in classrooms and in professional relationships.

The above analysis should not be interpreted as any attempted glorification of women's traditional role of caregiver and subordinate. Nor should it be taken to indicate that particular characteristics of women's or men's experiences are biologically determined. They are culturally produced. The point to be emphasised is that, as Ferguson succinctly states, "Women will not be liberated by becoming 'like men'" (Ferguson, 1984:94). Thus, although women at C.B.C. do not necessarily interpret their struggles in terms of women's liberation or feminism, many of them nonetheless refuse to try to "prove themselves" in masculinist terms. They refuse to be subordinate to men or to accommodate to patriarchal values. At C.B.C., however, an important element of the struggle of these women is that it occurs on a terrain which has been historically established as a site of patriarchal relations (c.f. Apple, 1983).

The very presence at C.B.C. of teachers who are attempting to introduce curricular and pedagogic reforms demonstrates that curriculum and control are not entirely monolithic at the
school. But two generations of pupils and parents have developed a construct of the type of teacher and teaching which is appropriate in "a Brothers' school". Both lay teachers and some Brothers were seen to feel trapped by institutional expectations that were pushing them into becoming a type of teacher that they did not wish to be. Alternative strategies to the imposition of discipline, "work" and narrow curriculum content were often interpreted by pupils, not as positive reforms, but as "softness". Only a minority of teachers attempted reform or even thought critically about the possibility of alternatives to an imposed, competitive academic curriculum. And those teachers who were attempting to
implement moderate reforms, even in the publicly tolerated transition course, defined themselves in opposition to the institutionalised image of a Brothers' school and the traditions of order and academic intimidation which were believed to have produced outstanding examination results. In the main, however, the competitive academic curriculum is not questioned - by teachers, pupils, or parents.

Such a curriculum is in harmony with C.B.C.'s orderly image. There is no doubt that substantial reappraisal of it, anything more than merely the tampering with the edges or small pieces of it that individual teachers are attempting to do at present, would have implications for a number of other issues which would be brought to the surface. In particular, forms of pedagogy and evaluation, and the nature of teacher-pupil relationships, would need to be addressed in any curriculum review. And even the fundamental notions upon which curriculum and assessment at C.B.C. are based would become subject to scrutiny.

One such notion is that of C.B.C. as an "academic" school. While there is evidence that this conception is contested at C.B.C., the formalisation of the TOLA "qualifying test", the barriers to promotion from level to level and the consequent "weeding out" of some pupils, as well as recent moves to restrict entry into years 11 and 12, suggest attempts to reinforce the "standards" upon which C.B.C.'s academic reputation is based. This reputation is further supported by the "no frills" curriculum that guides pupils towards H.S.C. The discussion in chapter 6 demonstrates, however, that the school can be seen as "academic" in only the narrowest sense.
Intellectual concerns are reduced to a functional, mechanistic production of credentials.

And while such an orientation can be seen as continuing the Brothers' historical mission of educating Catholic boys for social and career advancement, the competitive selection and promotion of pupils calls into question the most fundamental tradition of all of the Christian Brothers — that of service to the needy. For in another of the supreme ironies of education at C.B.C., the school's entrance and zoning policy tends to exclude those children who could most readily be regarded as needy, economically, intellectually and spiritually. The needy are now deemed unacceptable for entrance to C.B.C. And, in a more subtle denial of service to the needy, the generally wholehearted and unreflective support of the hegemonic curriculum, with its associated practices of pedagogy and evaluation, has been shown to entrench a social order in which the disadvantaged are blamed for their lowly position on the social and economic scale because of their possession of too few and inappropriate cultural resources.

C.B.C. unhesitatingly embraces the curricular knowledge that is required for success at H.S.C. This is clearly a case of traditional education of the type critiqued by Giroux:

The rationality that dominates traditional views of schooling and curriculum is rooted in the narrow concerns for effectiveness, behavioural objectives, and principles of learning that treat knowledge as something to be consumed and schools as merely instructional sites designed to pass onto students a 'common' culture and set of skills that will enable them to operate effectively in the wider society (Giroux, 1984b:36).

Within such rationality, knowledge is regarded as a commodity to be accumulated by students who are seen as
"passive receptors rather than active producers or expressors - exactly the role they are expected to play politically" (Wood, 1984:229). Knowledge that is deemed appropriate for the hegemonic curriculum is largely treated as objective fact and is divorced from its human origin so that teachers and students are unlikely to consider that such knowledge can be regarded as problematic or even can be reinterpreted. Thus, the sense of agency of pupils and teachers is reduced as they confront a factual and cultural world that is "perceived and explained by others as being finalized" (Bowers, 1978:62). The production of high status, technical knowledge, in particular, contributes to the dominant ideology of technocratic consciousness which reifies science and regards technological progress as unproblematic. This legitimates the power of dominant groups in society and works to "impede making the foundations of society the object of thought and reflection" (Habermas, 1971:111-2).

The autonomy of teachers at C.B.C. is especially limited by the demands of the H.S.C. curriculum which, as was seen in chapter 6, stretches its tentacles down even to the most junior levels of the school. This curriculum reigns supreme despite marginal challenges to it and despite the fact that less than a third of C.B.C. pupils proceed to tertiary studies, for which H.S.C. is required, upon leaving the school. Yet the high status of H.S.C., especially of mathematics and science at that level, ensures that the school attempts to produce that commodity as effectively as possible and, in the process, holds out high status knowledge as the most worthy form of knowledge that all should strive to gain. By stratifying
students on the basis of such knowledge, C.B.C. plays its part in "fitting students to the preexisting roles for them in the cultural, political and economic matrix of post industrial capitalism" (Wood, 1984:228).

Again, it is in the area of religious education that a potential challenge to the processes of the hegemonic curriculum is discernible. Some teachers of religion, particularly younger lay teachers, are attempting to develop a "post-Vatican" spirit of community and inquiry in their classes. Such an approach avoids the simple presentation or imposition of "correct" religious knowledge and encourages instead open discussion and a common search for values that are appropriate to a faith community based upon broad Christian principles of social justice. These teachers are conscious of the incompatibility of physical intimidation as a form of discipline with the notion of an inquiring and sharing faith community. In such a community, authority relations would be based upon mutual respect rather than fear and coercion. Women teachers, in growing numbers, have taken a lead in challenging intimidatory disciplinary practices and transforming teacher-pupil relations. They have also challenged the predominantly patriarchal culture and values of C.B.C. by their very competence. But the successful implementation of innovation cannot be achieved at C.B.C. without considerable struggle. Both parents and pupils expect teachers to conform to a stereotype. Innovators must first win at least passive tolerance from the C.B.C. administration, and then overcome not only institutionalised expectations of a "Brothers' school" but also pupil expectations of a "good teacher".
(c) Conclusion

This section has attempted to explain the relationship between everyday life at C.B.C. and the reproduction of society through an examination of the school's message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Although current practices are challenged in some quarters of the school, there is a broad acceptance amongst most teachers, pupils and parents of a competitive, selective process of education which guides individual pupils towards an uncritical acceptance of the status quo. Education at C.B.C. is geared to H.S.C. success. Curricular knowledge, especially high status technical knowledge, is regarded as unproblematic. In this way, not only are current social arrangements and the power of dominant groups legitimated, but also neither pupils nor teachers are given any sense of their own human agency.

6. INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL

Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this chapter have dealt generally with the social control of pupils at C.B.C. by means of an emphasis upon the upward social mobility of "successful" pupils (section 2), placement in the job market (section 3), and curricular, pedagogical and evaluative processes which encourage a competitive, individuated approach to schooling (section 4). Each of these factors, while promoting individual transformation, has a tendency to reproduce overall social patterns of wealth and status. Such social reproduction is achieved at C.B.C. through the largely uncritical acceptance by the majority of teachers of the supposed neutrality and legitimacy of the school practices which are emphasised. One
task of this section is to show how the symbolic forms of control displayed by teachers towards pupils necessitates various similar forms of control over the teachers themselves.

The essential point, however, is that such control is never absolute. The focus in this section, therefore, is upon the manner in which changes in authority relations are possible at C.B.C. This is examined, firstly, through a discussion of authority relations and instances of individual autonomy at C.B.C. This discussion is then extended and related to theoretical analyses of the nature of transformation of organisations and society. Finally, specific constraints to change at C.B.C. and the possibilities of participants overcoming them are discussed.

(a) Authority and Autonomy at C.B.C.

Throughout the ethnography, especially in chapter 4 through to chapter 7, it has been clear that although control of pupils, teachers and the curriculum seems pervasive and uniform at C.B.C., numerous individual curricular initiatives could be cited. It was found, indeed, that control existed most obviously in symbolic displays and rhetoric rather than actual practices. Thus, for instance, staff meetings are largely comprised of Brother Carter's monologues on the topic of control - but teachers parody his presentation and his directives in the sanctuary of the lay teacher's work room, and most of them continue as before in their own classrooms. Details of curriculum content and yearly syllabus plans are supposedly required to be collated by subject coordinators and delivered to the headmaster each year - but the syllabus
statements bear little relationship to what teachers actually do with their classes. No one checks them, and some teachers are unaware of their existence. The prevalence of a rhetoric that suggests rigid control and punitive action against wayward teachers was especially apparent in Brother Carter's numerous comments about the desirability of firing certain teachers, especially those who regarded themselves as "curriculum people". Yet although many lay teachers seemed insecure about their jobs, teaching performance was inspected only in the case of the most junior classroom teachers. Systematic subject and area coordination was seen to be virtually nonexistent.

All of this suggests that "the Brothers' system" is not holding up terribly well at C.B.C. The analysis indicates, in fact, that system perspectives of organisation are inadequate to explain the C.B.C. case. More useful explanations are found in the work of Giddens (1979, 1981), theorists of organisational paradigms and culture (Brown, 1978; Smircich, 1983), and in critical administration theory (Battey, 1984; Forester, 1982).

Despite the numerous examples of individual autonomy throughout the ethnography, C.B.C. is clearly not a case of organisational anarchy. Isolated individual initiatives, while they clearly demonstrate that control is never absolute nor entirely one-directional, do not displace ingrained authority relations which remain largely intact. This is indicated by the predominance of Christian Brothers in administrative positions even though they comprise only 20% of the staff. It is most clearly illustrated in the headmaster's pursuit of authoritarian control over his teachers and the
school. Principal-teacher interactions at C.B.C. are analogous to teacher-student interactions (c.f. Hansen, 1979; Hunter, 1980), and communication tends to be in one direction, from superior to subordinate. This is apparent in the conduct of staff meetings and in principal-teacher exchanges in the playground before the start of the school day. Teachers, both religious and lay, expressed regret and frustration during the course of the study that Brother Carter openly shared with the researcher information that had been denied to them. They were disappointed that they, as members of the regular staff, were outside of this kind of communication and relationship with an individual whose position is important to their professional lives. Moreover, the denial of such information to teachers clearly gives Brother Carter a further measure of control over the school and staff.

It was noticeable that Brother Carter's staff meetings are preoccupied with matters which are related to the control of teachers and pupils. He is clearly a proponent of what Young and Beardsley (1968:182) call "the Rule-directed Rule", the rule that everyone must follow rules and comply with a superior's directions. Lay teachers, especially, are warned that they must work within a "framework" and not attempt to "shift the boundaries" which are marked by Brother Carter according to his own interpretation of the traditions of his Order, and in conjunction with the priorities for C.B.C. that he has set.

It is often assumed that power in schools is hierarchically structured. Such assumptions were particularly apparent at Christian Brothers College where, as the ethnography
demonstrates, it is common to hear talk of "a good strong boss", "running a tight ship" and of teachers who "have got good control". In such a situation, however:

The idea of 'some' having control over 'others' suggests an acceptance of the principle of control as a fundamental component of organizational life, and this acceptance is clearly grounded in a belief that it is 'the done thing', and a part of 'what everyone knows' (Golding, 1980:772).

But such common-sense understandings can lead administrators and teachers, and also pupils, to perform their school duties on the basis of a false comprehension of the nature of power. Such language and beliefs reinforce a distorted view of power as something that can be possessed by individuals (Knights & Roberts, 1972) whereas, as Greenfield argues:

Power lies in relationships among people. Organizations are expressions of these relationships and are therefore instruments of power. The organization is a tool that enables (more or less) some people to do what they want and that requires others to participate in the realization of others' desires, wants, beliefs and purposes. In this sense, organizations are tools for action. They do what some people want to see done and they do it by enlisting or compelling the participation of individuals so that their efforts and talents produce what other people want (1983:40).

This suggests that what appears superficially in C.B.C. as order and stability - an essential aspect of "the Brothers' system" in which units fit neatly into the school's collective organisation - shrouds the possibility of illegitimate power "by assuming consensus where there may only be compliance" that is gained by a form of coercion (Knights & Roberts, 1982:47) in which superiors view subordinates in an instrumental fashion. Brother Carter, in the belief that he is maintaining the tradition of being "a good strong boss", crosses well over the boundary between legitimate authority and arbitrary power.
And, as Pusey warns about the exercise of arbitrary power:

This creates specially oppressive pressures on people in subordinate positions ... [as] problems and failures in the vertical relationships between levels in the hierarchy create feelings of personal vulnerability and dependence throughout the system (1980:49).

Brother Carter clearly views his power as personal and as something that arises out of the quality of his relationship with his staff, but as a property simply of his position in a hierarchy of control. Despite his claim that his "door is always open", Brother Carter's personal distance from his staff, with the exception of the trusty David Welsh, precludes any possibility of his developing what Knights and Roberts (1982:55) call authoritative rather than authoritarian power relationships. Authoritative relationships require a personal relationship between administrator and staff in which:

... the possibility of a real consensus is not ruled out of existence by the domination of coercion and compromise. Instead there is a commitment to a form of practice that through dialogue (Habermas, 1972) generates an acceptance rather than a self-defeating avoidance or denial of the interdependence of action (Knights & Roberts, 1982:51).

Thus, while Brother Carter struggles to impose his own definition of school reality upon C.B.C., teachers exercise their own creative human agency in ways which both support and undermine that definition.

The type of school that Brother Carter wants C.B.C. to be is his own idealised version of the paradigm of "a Brothers' school". This concept of an organisation as a paradigm is explained by Brown:

By paradigm we refer to those sets of assumptions, usually implicit, about what sorts of things make up the world, how they act, how they hang together, and how they may be known ... [The] tacit intersubjective
property of paradigms constitutes in effect the ‘agreement’ between members that enables the orderly production of role enactment. That is, the structuring of organizational interaction requires members to rely upon shared but largely tacit background knowledge that is embodied in an organizational paradigm. Roles as well as the definition of ‘problems’, ‘responsible opinion’, ‘leadership’, and so on, are afforded by the dominant model (1978:373-4).

The features of the Brothers’ school paradigm are not held at C.B.C. by Brother Carter alone but are shared, with greater or lesser variations, by his fellow religious, parents and pupils, those teachers who are former Christian Brothers, teachers who have worked at the school for a number of years, and by teachers who are former pupils of C.B.C. or other Brothers’ schools. In such circumstances, the Brothers appear as a school elite whose rational-legal authority (Weber, 1968) is supported by their monopoly of ownership and administration of the school, and is extended by the history, traditions and sagas of Brothers and Brothers’ schools. In both of these ways the authority of the Brothers at C.B.C., and of Brother Carter who is attempting to follow in the footsteps of the “great men” of the Order, is legitimated and ritualised. Their authority remains strong despite their minority presence.

Thus, the dominant approach to school administration at C.B.C., by stressing the precedence of traditional organisational patterns over individual involvement, encourages an uncritical acceptance of the dominance of preexisting structures of the “Brothers’ school” paradigm. Such an approach leads to an exaggerated conception of the power of such structures. Thus, many teachers are expected to act out roles that they have not shaped. They must imitate
institutional expectations or face the disapproval and possible sanctions of Brother Carter and other supporters of the dominant "Brothers' school" paradigm, including parents and pupils.

The experience of working within organisational expectations or traditions may lead to the further acceptance of organisational practices and organisational power as natural. On the other hand, it can also lead to the partial penetration of formerly accepted practices. The latter was the case, for instance, when the long-serving ex-Brother, John Carlton, began to regard the much-vaunted expectation that lay teachers be "committed" to the school as being a form of exploitation because the commitment of such teachers was not matched by any genuine sharing or contribution to decision making. Teachers are expected to dedicate themselves to a cause which they are unable to influence. In Carlton's case, a critical incident, when he began to see through the manipulative reality of the Brothers' minority control (o.f. Knights & Roberts, 1982:59), occurred when Brother Carter, as newly arrived principal, unilaterally reversed several decisions that had been made by the previous administration. A similar realisation was expressed in chapter 5 by Heather Verdun in the form:

It's all very well to [ask you to] be dedicated and to give you extra duties to do - and then cut you off from any say in the place. If you try and do anything they [the C.B.C. administrators] just cut you off at the ankles.

This insight was prompted partly by Brother Carter's obvious disapproval of attempts by Jim Karn to foster discussion about curriculum and authority relations. The rhetoric of duty,
obligation and commitment was seen by these teachers as a "manipulative trap" (c.f. Watkins, forthcoming) which is designed to facilitate the acceptance of the organisational practice of minority control (Chapter 5) as natural, and to legitimate the reproduction of the social system of the organisation, that is, to reproduce the Christian Brothers paradigm.

Although some Brothers would prefer more genuine sharing of responsibilities with lay staff, at present the administration of C.B.C. is still dominated by Brothers who seem insecure at the loss of their numerical predominance on the staff. They hang on grimly to formal administrative positions in the hope that such "presence" will sustain "a Brothers' stamp" upon the school as well as something of the predictability and comfortable certainty of the Brothers' "golden age". Their suspicions of lay teachers, who may render problematic accepted aspects of the established paradigm, coupled with the view of many lay teachers that they are denied a role in shaping a new or revised paradigm, impedes attempts to establish cooperative relationships.

(b) Changing the "System"

In the bygone days when the Brothers' world was relatively certain, before the mass defections from the Order, the challenges to the old "religious certainties" of Vatican II, and the influx of lay teachers into Brothers' schools, the comfortable unity of purpose, of values and of the mission of the Order, was underwritten by an obsession with control and obedience. This is illustrated in the recollections of Brother
Sterling who faced severe reprimands for daring to wear a watch and to ride a bicycle without wearing a hat. Brother Jones is frustrated by younger Brothers who are incredulous of the deprivation that Brothers were, in his earlier days, expected to endure as part of their apostolate. Brothers' traditions and values were supported by the training of novices in their religious and educational duties within Brothers training institutions. But control was never absolute even in those generally fondly remembered days when a Brother's life closely resembled that in a "total institution" (c.f. Goffman, 1959). Submission to the authority of superiors and obedience to "the Rule" was even then a matter of choice despite the coercive nature of authority relations for, as Knights and Roberts maintain:

At first glance, coercion appears to contradict the notion that power is only ever realized in relations between people. Thus coercive power appears as something one person has over another, and for those coerced it is often seen or described in terms of the denial or removal of individual choice. Nevertheless, this mechanistic view of coercion is ultimately untenable, for, as Giddens notes, however wide the asymmetrical distribution of resources involved all power relations manifest autonomy and dependence in both directions (Giddens, 1979:119). By virtue of being self-conscious creatures, individuals always retain some control over their actions, and coercion can therefore never become an automatic process through which one person gains complete control over another. At the very least, coercion requires the active submission of one person to another (Knights & Roberts, 1982:49-50).

Giddens (1982) regards this as a "dialectic of control" in which, no matter how imbalanced relations of autonomy or dependence may be, those in apparently dependent positions can often convert their limited resources into "some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system"
(Giddens, 1982:32). It is in this realisation that the potential power of human agents to transform even the most institutionalised social and cultural situations can be appreciated.

A partial but underdeveloped realisation of such transformative potential can be found in the work of Goffman (1959, 1961). Although Goffman's work suffers from the criticism made in chapter 2 of symbolic interactionism and of the interpretative tradition in general, it does nonetheless convey "a sense of the potential fluidity and hence fragileness of social realities" (Collins, 1981b:230). This is because, unlike Parsons (1957, 1960) who sees social order as being based upon shared, internalised values and moral obligations, Goffman sees social order as a more arbitrary and tentative construction in which individuals exert moral and material pressure on each other to conform in the continual reconstruction in specific situations of a consistent definition of reality. In this case there is an external rather than internal morality that governs the behaviour of individuals in social situations, and, in order to live up to this external morality, individuals often maintain the impression that they are conforming to the required rules and standards. They become manipulative performers in a two-sided version of social life (Collins, 1981b). Backstage, the "true" self may harbour reservations about institutional or social life, but frontstage, each individual must in a completely amoral way perform as if she or he were a dedicated and committed member of the particular moral order (Goffman, 1959). At C.B.C., Brother Sterling, for instance, stated that
rather than confront the administration by "making waves" he chooses to "go along with them".

It is backstage at C.B.C., in individual classrooms or in the sanctuary of the lay teachers' workroom, that individual autonomy most clearly operates. Thus, despite what appears to be the imposition of a paradigmatic reality by the Christian Brothers' administration and those who support the traditional definition of a Brothers' school, the sense of unity and stability is illusory. For instance, decision making at C.B.C., although formally in the hands of Brother Carter, is often of a type that Brown (1978) has noted in industry. Such decisions represent:

... a choice between options within the official paradigm that management has established. Yet at the same time that this 'decision making' is going on, a subtle, diffuse, hierarchically low level complex of negotiations is being created. What emerges from these subterranean activities is a redefinition of the official paradigm in the very process of its application (1978:376).

Thus, while not directly confronted by dissidents, decisions made unilaterally by Brother Carter may be pragmatically adhered to or circumvented privately by teachers. While appearing to conform, teachers may express their indifference or hostility to decisions or to institutionalised standards or expectations when meeting "backstage". Thus, as Giddens writes of Goffman's analysis of institutions:

The existence of front/back discriminations normally indicates substantial discursive penetration of the institutional forms within which interaction is carried on (Giddens, 1972:203).

Goffman's analysis of human behaviour as calculated performance suggests that organizational actors do indeed penetrate the presumed neutrality of social life. Yet,
according to Grumet (1980), "Goffman's theatre is bad theatre [in which] ... human action and conflict are predictable and repetitious confirmations of the status quo" (Grumet, 1980:97-8). Reinforcing criticisms that were made of symbolic interactionism and the interpretative tradition in chapter 2, Grumet claims:

The theatre that deserves its name does not merely fill in the spaces of traditional formulas, but is a creative response of particular persons to particular conditions. It is hinged on suspense rather than predictability and harbors the possibility, however slim, that this time the ritual will collapse (1980:98).

Thus, what needs to be added to Goffman's analysis is the sense in which backstage interactions, as is the case at C.B.C., show the knowing penetration of organisational forms. Frontstage behaviour may indicate a tendency to reproduce institutionalised norms at the very moment at which, backstage, change is fermenting. Such a conception advances the interaction between human agency and social structure (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1982; Watkins, 1985) which was seen in Chapter 1 to be essential to any explanation of continuity and change.

Within this dialectic, Dahrendorf regards human agency as being facilitated and constrained by options and ligatures (1979:30-31). Options are the possibilities of alternative action within a social structure. Ligatures, however, are the bonds or linkages which connect actors to their established roles and positions within a social structure. In summary, 'Ligatures create bonds and thus the foundations of action; options require choices and thus open for the future' (Dahrendorf, 1979:31). In other words, ligatures are
reproductive forces while options provide moments of potential resistance or transformation. Or, as Watkins explains:

Human agents confront and react to organisational structures as a sequence of constrained choices which form an ongoing life-cycle trajectory. These include past, present and future choices which have affected, are affecting or will affect human agency. Because ligatures also have a temporal quality they are the cohesive forces that bind human agents to the social structure or organization (1985:12).

At C.B.C. the ligatures that bind Brothers, lay teachers, pupils and parents to an established image of the school are strong ones. There is a sense of history of the Christian Brothers in Australia and in Newburyport. This is tied to a sense of community amongst Newburyport Catholics and to a sense of personal and family history of its members who have supported C.B.C. since 1935. Such ties influence the choices of C.B.C. actors when possible options emerge. And yet the notion of options embraces Giddens' essential point that "embodying a conception of action within social theory involves treating the human being as a knowledgeable and capable agent" (Giddens, 1982:29) who can transform organisations and, ultimately, society.

A combination of ligatures and options may result in strains and tensions within an organisation which can be resolved only by institutional change. Morgan (1981) explains this dialectical process of continuity and change by employing a "schismatic" metaphor in relation to organisations instead of the more common metaphor of mechanical or organismic system (Morgan, 1981:24). The schismatic "system" has a tendency towards disintegration as its various factions strive to achieve independence from the system as a whole:
The very nature of schismatic metaphor emphasizes that 'the system' being studied may represent a somewhat arbitrary and problematic construct... for the drive towards functional autonomy and the process of schismogenesis can be seen as attempts at escape from the imposition of unwelcome structure and constraint (Morgan, 1981:33).

The notion of "system" is not used here in a functionalist sense. In fact, the emphasis on strains and tensions within organisations highlights the contingency of any momentary coherence of institutional arrangements. As Morgan is careful to stress:

"The concept of system from this view must be recognized as an abstract notion which is imposed upon a network of constituent elements, the artificiality and arbitrariness of which is emphasized in the strains, tensions and conflicts which emerge as system elements drive towards fission (Morgan, 1981:33).

From this point of view systems exist only in their moment by moment construction and reconstruction by human agents. Thus, organisational stability or change can be seen as a dialectical process in which actors and structures continually interact in a way which makes transformation possible. Such change, according to Giddens (1981), does not occur as an ongoing, gradual, evolutionary process but in irregular "episodes" in which human actors bring about definite transformation. It could be argued, for instance, that in the life of C.B.C. the opening episode in 1935 contained an element of resistance in its attempt to challenge the Anglo, Protestant domination of society. This initial episode was shortlived, however. As was explained in the previous sections of this chapter, in attempting to fit individually upwardly mobile Catholic youths into the established social and economic order, C.B.C.'s oppositional intentions were muted. The episode of
resistance became transformed into one of reproduction, stability and social acceptance as C.B.C. participants endeavoured to demonstrate the effectiveness of their school, especially in terms of examination results, in order to place C.B.C. graduates in favourable positions in the job market. Some current developments at the school, particularly the emergence of a more critical approach to curriculum and religious education, may conceivably signal the opening of a new episode of more open authority relations and social questioning. The possibility of such transformation is examined in the remainder of this section.

(c) The Possibility of Transformation at C.B.C.

It has been apparent throughout the ethnography that those Brothers and lay teachers who wish to implement change at C.B.C. face substantial problems. The emergence of collective rather than individual action which is necessary for any reform movement is impeded in important ways.

Firstly, the communicative action (Habermas, 1972) or communicative performances (Pacanowski & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983), out of which collective critical consciousness and the potential for collective action may grow, must necessarily be rooted in what is perceived to be organisational reality. That is, as Pacanowski and O'Donnell-Trujillo explain:

... past [communicative] performances imbue the present with their specific meanings while the present, by its reconfiguration of the past, transforms past meanings. In short, communicative performances are situationally and temporally embedded in organisational reality (1983:133).
The inheritance of past meanings, of traditions, sagas and folklore about the Christian Brothers and C.B.C., has been seen throughout the ethnography and the analysis to have strongly influenced current perceptions of C.B.C. reality. This is immensely important because relationships among C.B.C. participants reflect this inheritance which influences the alternatives, or potential options (Dahrendorf, 1979), that each participant sees as being feasible for her or him within a perceived institutional reality. And since the traditional image or paradigm (Brown, 1978) of a Brothers' school is so widely held, a surprising number of teachers define themselves in opposition to the predominant paradigm yet, at present, express little hope of establishing any alternative paradigm.

The notion of the Brothers' "system" is still strong and is sustained by the visibility of Brothers in administrative positions, the Brothers' "stamp" upon C.B.C., and in a host of minor ways such as the annual inspection by the Brother Visitor. Despite the minority of Brothers on staff and the shifting values within the Order, the Brothers' system retains the appearance of an objective reality. Thus individually discontented Brothers and lay teachers encounter existing structures as "the way things are" and may not see them as having been humanly and creatively constructed in a particular way in particular circumstances. For these teachers, as for the advertising sales personnel studied by Knights and Roberts, "The 'Company' or the 'Organization' almost seemed to take on the form of an alien entity which had a life of its own, was driven by mysterious forces, and which constrained and restricted the individuals in it" (Knights & Roberts, 1982:60).
By failing to recognise the human origins of structures, actors are less likely to feel that they can be reinterpreted or viewed as problematic (Bowers, 1978). Hence, the individual's sense of agency is reduced. By submitting in a frontstage manner to institutionalised expectations at C.B.C., in spite of personal inclinations to the contrary and personal penetration of the exploitation or injustice of such expectations, these participants must in some way justify their actions (c.f. Denhardt, 1977). By blaming the school, the Brothers, the principal, the system, or Catholicism, personal responsibility is transferred to an impersonal bureaucracy. But the attempted transfer of responsibility represents a denial of the power of human agency. Individuals as a result feel powerless to change things beyond their personal domains in which they may exercise autonomy (c.f. Spencer-Hall, 1982). Despite their dissatisfaction with present arrangements, even those who most want change at C.B.C. see substantial change as being within the domain only of the principal. This explains the fond hope that Brother Carter's replacement will be a "curriculum man" and that under his administration important issues may be addressed.

The vocal dissatisfaction of a number of teachers at C.B.C. illustrates Wexler and Whitson's point that, in reaction to perceived stagnation and a sense of powerlessness, "collective analyses of collective sources of frustration may be diverted to interpersonal critiques" (Wexler & Whitson, 1982:37). Staff members characterise each other, for instance, as religious or lay, post-Vatican or pre-Vatican, shakers and movers or dead wood. C.B.C. seems to be a case in which:
Where competition is salient, the potential for critique degenerates into what Jules Henry (1963) called 'carping criticism' ... Competition also destroys the mutual respect and trust which are prerequisites for undistorted communication (Wexler & Whitson, 1982:37).

The most significant point about such a situation of interpersonal criticism and competition is that, by promoting distorted communication, it limits any possibility of common social action.

This point is appreciated in critical administrative theory (Bates, 1984; Forester, 1983; Foster, 1983; Watkins, 1983) which, as Forester succinctly states:

... not only shows the practical, moral and political significance of particular communicative actions (speech acts and non-verbal communications more generally), but it also investigates how a given social structure may itself be a structure of systematically distorted communicative actions that subtly shape its members' lives (1983:235).

Therefore, structural relations of power and status influence and distort communication and give it particular, situated meanings in organisational contexts. It is through communicative interaction that relations of cooperation, consent or coercion are actively constructed, and institutional understandings of appropriate behaviour and of what may be treated as problematic are defined. Yet, as Forester points out:

... organizations do more than structure practical communicative claims. They may systematically distort those pragmatic claims upon their members' attention ... [However] organizational distortions may not be deliberate and calculated, but rather an ongoing inheritance (1983:242).

One such distorting inheritance at C.B.C. is the historical legacy of institutionalised authority and hierarchy, with associated expectations of unquestioned obedience and total,
uncritical dedication. Within such historical structures and relations of power and authority, Forester argues, "we may find conditions of dogmatism rather than social learning, tyranny rather than authority, manipulation rather than cooperation, and distraction rather than sensitivity" (1983:240). The distortion of communication in such circumstances precludes participants from genuinely contributing to the ongoing process of organising. Yet, even within such conditions at C.B.C., established lay teachers like Cameron Pont have managed to implement innovations and to "encroach" upon the Brothers' administrative territory and so assume a degree of informal power.

Such examples indicate that the human agency of C.B.C. participants, although it is not fully recognised by them, interacts with organisational structures so that both individuals and the organisation may be regarded as being in a continual state of "becoming" (Benson, 1977b; Giddens, 1979). As has been discussed, a sense of agency is impeded by distorted communicative structures and C.B.C.'s historical legacy. Moreover, present structures isolate teachers and administrators and limit the possibilities of involvement in democratic decision making or positive social relations. Present policies of unilateral decision making by Brother Carter, coupled with the institutional expectations that are imposed upon staff, are clearly demeaning to teachers. It was clear from the ethnography that some teachers, especially but not exclusively lay teachers, felt that they were viewed by the Brothers' hierarchy in an instrumental fashion. The reluctance to appoint lay teachers to positions of authority is the most striking illustration of this.
Instead of developing a sense of human agency and an awareness of possibilities for change, teachers at C.B.C. were likely to merely reciprocate what they saw as the administration's instrumental attitude towards them. Thus, two Brothers stated that they were merely "biding their time" at C.B.C. and awaiting transfer to more acceptable positions. Several lay teachers said that they were seeking employment elsewhere largely because they felt that they had no influence upon the school. Several highly regarded teachers had left for similar reasons. In this sense, C.B.C. appears to be similar to the companies studied by Knights and Roberts:

In situations where, at best, one's identity or sense of value as a person is rarely confirmed and, at worst, is constantly and severely threatened or undermined, ... mental distance, if not complete physical separation, appears to be the only viable solution ... [for] re-establishing a feeling of personal control in an environment which denies one influence (1982:61).

The most common "solution" at C.B.C. was for teachers to engage in what Harris (1984) regards as "the most illusory", and eventually the most dangerous "way out" of such a situation, which is:

... to ignore the structural constraints limiting (rather than determining or over-determining) what they are able to do, and instead to individualise their situation completely and apply themselves more fully to, and concentrate only on their lessons, their pupils and their achievements (Harris, 1984:48).

Such "solutions" are illusory because they offer individual responses to what are essentially collective problems (Habermas, 1971). Although individuals achieve real, if limited, autonomy in this way, by ignoring the essential interdependence between participants, their individualistic behaviour is ultimately self-defeating (Knights & Roberts,
1982:51). While such independent action demonstrates the existence of human agency within institutions, it denies the full realisation of a sense of agency because it fails to recognise either the consequences of individual action upon others or the dialectic in which agency and structure interact.

(d) Conclusion

This section has focussed upon the institutional control of teachers at C.B.C., especially through the predominance of institutionalised expectations and the established "Brothers' school" paradigm. This often subtle form of control was seen to be extremely pervasive and powerful, even in comparison with the principal's direct power of hire and fire and authoritarian style of leadership. Nevertheless, both the authority of the principal and the predominant Brothers' paradigm were seen to be challenged in various ways. Such challenges, although they have resulted in numerous individual initiatives, have yet to alter the school's paradigmic authority relations and expectations of teachers. The possibility of change in the future, however, remains and is made increasingly likely by the growing sense of crisis that has emerged at the school. This sense of crisis is examined in the following section.

7. CONFRONTING THE FUTURE: UNCERTAINTY & CRISIS AT C.B.C.

This section examines the growing sense of crisis and uncertainty at C.B.C. Although the sense of crisis has been precipitated by events beyond Christian Brothers College in Newburyport, the resultant uncertainty has important ramifications within the school. Not the least of these is the
realisation by some C.B.C. participants that a crisis has two sides. On one hand the crisis presents a problem. On the other hand it presents an opportunity for reform and change. The possibility of such reform and the difficulties which any reform movement must overcome at C.B.C. are discussed in the pages ahead.

The ethnography indicated, especially in Chapter 3, that there is much confusion and uncertainty amongst the Brothers' community about the future of the Order. The severe decline in the numerical strength of the Christian Brothers, with many defections and few entrants during the past two decades, has caused a dependence on lay teachers to staff the Brothers' schools. This has resulted in much uncertainty about the future of the Order, Brothers' schools and the Brothers' mission. It was apparent during the research that when words like "crisis" or "catastrophe" were raised in relation to the future of the Christian Brothers, nods of agreement followed (Smith, 1982). The sense of crisis within the community of Brothers at C.B.C. in Newburyport, however, has elements other than the feasibility of maintaining the Brothers' enterprise with a declining number of Brothers. C.B.C., along with other Catholic schools, is also facing a crisis of identity which is veiled by the school's superficial stability and uniformity.

Praetz (1982) argues that this crisis of identity has arisen in the late 1970s and 1980s, ironically, because Catholic schools no longer face hostility to their existence but are now generally accepted. This is certainly the case in Newburyport where C.B.C. is highly regarded, especially in the business sector. Praetz notes that other changes have also
altered the nature of Catholic education in Australia in the past decade:

Catholics [by the 1980s] were no longer predominantly working class, excluded from positions of power and authority in Australian society. The Irish character of the Catholic church had also changed ... Further, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics as a social group had become less distinctive in behaviour and belief. The mutual hostility between different denominations has ebbed, resulting in a new flowering of ecumenical co-operation based on the shared affirmation of religious values in a secular pluralist society (Praetz, 1982:66).

The virtual disappearance of the prejudice and discrimination of which Catholics were victims has removed the oppositional rationale upon which the foundation of C.B.C. was based. As has been discussed, however, that oppositional element in the mission of the Brothers never constituted a radical movement of resistance to the social and economic relationships of late capitalism. Nevertheless, the previous marginal and vulnerable social status of Catholics has been greatly modified.

The notion that Brothers in those early days of Catholic victimisation were serving the needy linked C.B.C. to the most important of all traditions of their Order. The sense of purpose that was afforded by such a mission helped to create stability and harmony amongst the religious who comprised virtually the entire staff of the school. Unified in resistance to social arrangements, the Brothers defined their mission in opposition to Protestant power.

The certainty and predictability of the Brothers' traditional institutional life, even relatively recent institutional life of the late 1950s and early 1960s as recalled in Chapter 5 by Brother Sterling, seem 'pre-modern' in Berger, Berger and Kellner's terms:
... individuals lived in life-worlds that were more or less unified ... [and] evinced a high degree of integration. Whatever the differences between various sectors of social life, these would "hang together" in an order of integrating meaning that included them all. This integrating order was typically religious. For the individual this meant quite simply that the same integrative symbols permeated the various sectors of his everyday life ... the individual was always in the same "world" (1974:64).

Such a "life-world" for an individual Brother almost always had its origins in a devoutly Catholic upbringing, began to be more definitely shaped throughout schooling in a Brothers' school, and was finally cast in the Brothers' training institutions. It was then sustained in communities by rigorous obedience to the Rules and Constitution of the Order, and also, as discussed above, by a shared sense of purpose and community.

These have now been undermined by the attenuation of the original mission of serving the needy, and by the intrusion of lay outsiders into the Brothers' world. Moreover, some Brothers have, since the early 1960s, found themselves entering more extensively into the wider world, starting with some academic training at universities. This was the beginning of discontent for Brother Ernest, for instance, who nevertheless "proved his vocation" by remaining in the Order when several of his colleagues, who had shared similar experiences, left. In more recent years, the younger Brothers have received their academic and teacher training in more secular institutions and many have developed values which often differ from those of their religious elders and superiors. Despite this, it has been seen that the traditional Brothers' paradigm is still predominant at C.B.G. In fact, for a number of Brothers in the mainly elderly community, "the prototypical ideal [is]
identified with a representation of the situation 'as it used to be'" (Rein & Shon, 1977:242).

To those many Brothers with a deeply held personal commitment to the traditions to which they have dedicated so much of their lives, any change or incursion constitutes a potent threat. For them, "the 'problem' is how to return to the status quo ante" (Rein & Shon, 1977:242). Yet this is not in all cases merely a sentimental attachment to the past when life was less complicated, for that early mission involved a sense of purpose and was filling a genuine need. Hence, younger Brothers, also, are attempting to return to the origins of the Order and its early mission in Australia in order to seek new motivation and to realign the mission of the Order with the intentions of the founder. Thus, labels like "crisis" or "catastrophe" might be taken as a perspective from conservatism, as, for some Brothers, the changed situation regarding Brothers' schools provides new opportunities rather than constraints. These Brothers talked of new missions which might rekindle the spirit of the founder's apostolate, and of problems of the needy - economic, educational and spiritual.

The various perspectives that were seen in chapter 3 to be held by various Brothers concerning the future of the Order suggest that the Congregation of Christian Brothers is experiencing its own legitimation crisis. Pusey explains that this notion involves reference ...

... first, to a psychological element inasmuch as legitimation depends in some basic way on subjective perceptions; second, to a political element inasmuch as we are concerned with conflicting attempts to secure the legitimacy of rival interests and; third, to the administrative functions of government (Pusey, 1980:45).
Both the conservatives within the Order at C.B.C. and those seeking new apostolates are aware that the imperative and legitimating force of their revered traditions is becoming increasingly hollow. The educational experience at C.B.C. exemplifies changed circumstances in which culturally grounded "interpretative systems", which formerly gave a moral imperative to the older traditions, can no longer be convincingly justified (Habermas, 1975; Pusey, 1980).

The conservative perspective seems to be currently dominant at C.B.C. but to be losing ground within the Order more generally. Adherents to this perspective see a need to contain the uncertainty which is provoked by the possibility that established traditions are less relevant to changed circumstances. Hence, a heavy reliance upon the established bureaucratic system of the Order and upon the authority of Brothers over lay teachers, was apparent throughout the ethnography (c.f. Crozier, 1964). It was noticeable, however, that the system of authority existed more in form than in actual practice. C.B.C. maintains an appearance of a traditional Brothers school. But the orderly veneer does not entirely mask the searching for meaningful solutions, by both Brothers and lay teachers, to troubling educational and administrative issues. The difficulty is that their approach to problem solving, which involves critical reflection and change, is incompatible with the bureaucratic logic of the Order and, more particularly, of the C.B.C. administration.

The uncertainty and potential crisis at C.B.C. is perhaps most clearly revealed in the confused approach to religious education. The teaching of religion in senior grades is almost
exclusively the work of the Brothers whom, it is felt, do not trust such work to lay teachers apart from the devoted and compliant ex-Brother, David Walsh. One of the factors which influenced the reformist John Carlon to leave C.B.C., after twelve years of dedicated service was his belief that he was not "trusted" by the religious administration to teach religion to senior pupils. Lay teachers of religion in junior secondary classes believe that they are merely "plugging gaps" while the lay person most qualified to teach religious education is not given a class at all, apparently because of his presumed inability to control junior secondary pupils. Only in the primary section of the school does religion and religious education appear to be smoothly integrated into the school programme. Elsewhere, religious education is shifted into discrete timetable slots which least interfere with the timetabling of the "academic" subjects. When classes or areas must meet for administrative purposes, time is taken from religious education. And when the whole school assembles, it is during the time that would usually be allocated to religious education in Year 12. Such examples have convinced many teachers that C.B.C.'s "academic emphasis" has clear priority over its seemingly waning commitment to religious education.

Yet the existence of independent Catholic schools has always been justified on the grounds that religious knowledge pervaded the entire curriculum and, indeed, the entire life of the school. It is their raison d'etre. Even C.B.C.'s ostensibly all-important drive for academic success and social mobility is legitimated on the grounds of a religious rather than a material movement. Apart from a mission of Christian
justice to the dispossessed, the elevation of Catholics to the higher levels of society would "spread the message of Jesus" in those sectors and allow prominent Catholics the opportunity to propound Catholic viewpoints on moral and controversial issues. But the decline of religion as an educational priority at C.B.C. makes C.B.C. appear more and more like a relatively inexpensive version of the elite ruling class schools (Connell et al., 1982) with which it is increasingly being compared in Newburyport.

One most significant aspect of religious education at the school, especially as conducted by Brothers in the senior classes, is the reluctance to embrace current controversies within the Catholic church. Such issues are not debated or discussed at C.B.C. in any public way. They do not seem to be treated as interesting or pressing matters at meetings of religion teachers. Although clear lines between "post-Vatican" and "pre-Vatican" teachers seem to have been drawn, there is no evidence of any animated spirit of religious inquiry in staffroom conversation. Even more startling is the apparent lack of consideration and tolerance, especially in senior classes, for the crises of faith of many adolescent students. Such reluctance to deal wholeheartedly with religious difficulties and controversies is symbolic of the wider attempt to maintain a tentative grasp upon the old certainties of a Brothers' school despite the changed circumstances at C.B.C.

"Post-Vatican" teachers, mainly young, lay teachers of junior secondary and primary religion, however, have embraced more liberal approaches to religious education and connect it particularly with social studies and contemporary political
issues through the theme of "social justice". This is a theme with which a number of reformist teachers seem to resonate and it clearly has implications for a number of curriculum issues. Indeed, it is through curriculum reform, in keeping with the notion of social justice, that transformation at C.B.C. seems most likely to occur. Such curriculum considerations, as was clear in chapter 7 and in section 3 of this chapter, will confront and force critical reflection upon the most cherished and long held traditions of Christian Brothers' schools, including those of order, an academic emphasis, and, most importantly, service to the needy.

Such a reappraisal, however, will require the sort of collective communicative action (Habermas, 1971, 1975) that was discussed in the previous section and which would involve:

...practical common sense searching for meaningful solution and working agreement: the participants unwittingly find themselves involved in the search for culturally grounded meanings, meanings which can give normative force, "meaningfulness", and reality to their discussions (Pusey, 1980:49).

Such meanings may well be grounded in an interpretative system that is very different from that which has regulated the Brothers' world. And any challenge to the dominant paradigm of a Brothers' school will confront resistance. But as well as imposing meaning and control upon organisational members, organisational paradigms can be regarded also as "a resource that dissidents may use in organising their awareness and action" (Brown, 1978:373). From this point of view, organisational paradigms, like organisational structures, facilitate practical action as both resources and constraints (Brown, 1978; Giddens, 1981). Thus, for instance, an emphasis
upon the crucial notion of service to the needy in the foundation of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers, in the mission of the Order, and in the origin of C.B.C., may enable the development of an understanding of the social contradictions in current practice at the school. The realisation of the disparity between genuinely reformist intentions and actual conservative practice then can become a resource for producing change (Wexler, 1982). Moreover, in conditions of open discourse (Habermas, 1972) in which opinions could be expressed without sanction, an awareness of alternatives might be developed. Finally, the conviction, achieved through discourse, that such alternatives were feasible options that could be brought into being would decrease the willingness of C.B.C. members to accept frustrating, demeaning or unjust conditions as unchangeable (c.f. Wexler, 1982).

In such a fashion, critical attention would be given to the way in which C.B.C. now caters generally for relatively affluent Catholics and actively embraces the values of the dominant class. This inhibits any critical analysis of Australian and Newburyport society, or of C.B.C. as a part of that society. The possibilities of alternative social arrangements and their political consequences, and the morality of existing and future power structures, are unlikely to be explored if teachers see Catholic schools as a means of reproducing rather than challenging the status quo. Such considerations have implications for religious education, especially for the emerging theme of social justice. C.B.C. teachers would need, therefore, to take seriously the arguments
of Catholic educators who criticise the existing system of Catholic education and claim that, in the late twentieth century:

...those who proclaim the Gospel message do so from a position within a stratified society, and that, whatever those proclaiming it may think about it, it is being proclaimed to a dominated class from within a dominant class, the very opposite of what happened in the beginning. How is it possible they ask that Christianity, which in Gospel times was a leaven of liberation, of social protest and repressed by power, has become an agent of social integration to the advantage of the same power? (Leavey, 1980:40).

To counter such criticism, C.B.C. might be less concerned with simple evangelisation and social mobility, and more with genuine liberation which would involve a critical analysis of power structures (Leavey, 1980) and of the political implications of pursuing social justice (Flood, 1979; Edwards, 1976). A reappraisal of Catholic education would emphasise that the Church and school have a part to play in social protest as well as in social integration (Leavey, 1980; Flood, 1979; Houtard & Rousseau, 1971; Noone, 1983). Catholic education, therefore, would involve reflection upon controversial issues and critical scrutiny of existing social situations (Edwards, 1976) even if established Catholic viewpoints, or the Brothers' traditions, were to suffer in the confrontation with values of social justice (Cruden, 1972). From this point of view, questions about the role of C.B.C. become more problematic, and critical analysis of the liberating possibilities of Catholic education would become possible.

It is important that the difficulties of bringing about such genuine reform should not be underestimated. Although the
present "crisis" at C.B.C. can be seen as a surface manifestation of deeper structural contradictions (o.f. Heydebrand, 1977), any individual dissatisfaction and penetration of the traditional paradigm that it has so far produced "is only an initial condition for the realisation of existing alternative social possibilities" (Wexler, 1982:176). Certainly it is true that lay teachers like Bernadette Healy, Bruce Smith and Jim Karn, as well as Brothers like Brother Dowsett and Brother Ernest, can and do have a definite effect upon C.B.C. Clearly, all power does not reside with the headmaster or with the Brothers. But, at present, the complaint of many teachers is that individual initiatives are not brought into a wider arena for debate and discussion. Thus, ideas remain the property of individual teachers instead of being openly expressed and shared in discourse free from domination. Moreover, the individualistic, sometimes almost conspiratorial, actions of teachers concerning innovation deny for all teachers a sense of sharing in the wider operations of C.B.C. Authority relations, therefore, remain undisturbed despite the ability of individuals to use discretion to follow up their own initiatives, to co-operate privately with other teachers on curriculum matters, and to sometimes secure decisions favourable to them directly from the headmaster.

While such examples indicate a potential for organisational transformation, they do not constitute a collective change movement. C.B.C. as an educational institution still sits comfortably, for the most part, within the dominant hegemony.
8. CONCLUSION

The essential concern of this thesis has been with the problem of continuity and change at Christian Brothers College. It was argued in chapter 1 that these concepts should be understood as a duality, as existing in a single dual state, rather than as a dualism, as being divided into two distinct parts. That is, continuity and change are dialectically interrelated. It was also argued that continuity and change can only be understood in relation to the dialectic between agency and structure. In order to detect and address this dialectic, it was argued in chapter 2, a critical ethnographic perspective would be required. The employment of such a perspective has meant that this research has displayed an ongoing awareness of the fundamental human agency of C.B.C. participants, yet has also been alert to the structural relationships that may exist beyond the subjective consciousness of such participants. The overall approach has been such that there is a logical consistency and compatibility amongst the foreshadowed problem, the research methodology, and the substantive theories that inform the research.

The purpose of this concluding chapter has been to extend the critical perspective to enable not merely description but explanation of the C.B.C. case. The particular situation of the school has been rendered comprehensible through an analysis of the creative human agency of C.B.C. participants who act within the limits of their social and cultural context. The theoretical framework of production, reproduction, resistance and control, with the addition of the important notion of hegemony, has been used to explain continuity and change at the
school. It must be emphasised, however, that notions of production and reproduction, resistance and control, stability and change, are regarded in this analysis not as dualisms but as being dialectically related. Moreover, explanation has required that contested issues be presented not merely in their immediate context but in their emergence in time out of the tensions and conflicts which have been seen to exist both within C.B.C. and between C.B.C. and the wider society. In this way simple notions of reproduction have been challenged and extended by the C.B.C. case.

It has been shown that Christian Brothers College has been able to reproduce itself over time, only in the sense that the human agents who are associated with the school, parents, pupils and especially teachers, have chosen to reproduce it. But the school has also been transformed over time in a series of episodes, in a continual process of "becoming" as the human agents negotiate and renegotiate their relationship to the organisation structure. Those same humans are responsible for C.B.C.'s contribution to the reproduction of conditions of inequality in society also out of choice. Such choice has not been simply imposed upon them but had its origins, paradoxically, in the established tradition of the school that teachers attempt to improve the lot of their pupils. In this sense, C.B.C. is an arena in which hegemonic practices are played out as the "good sense" of well-meaning teachers is caught up in "the web of reciprocally conforming structures, activities, beliefs, and ethics that interact to support the established order and the ... interests which dominate" (Lather, 1984:55). C.B.C., along with other educational
institutions, is thus "the site of active cultural work which makes and remakes an effective dominant culture" (Simpson, 1978:8).

At the institutional level, the wider hegemony is reflected in "the Brothers' paradigm" which, although contested by many teachers, is resisted by them in a manner which is idiosyncratic and apolitical. Such contestation, while it suggests some potential for the emergence of a collective change movement at C.B.C., does not contain the "clear theoretic consciousness" which Femia (1975) argues is necessary for a movement of genuine counter-hegemony. In such a movement people would not simply act out of discontent but in a full understanding of their social situation. This is not necessarily a pessimistic position regarding social change, but it is a counter to the growth of excessive optimism and possibilitarianism that in recent years has characterised an over-reaction of part of the left to the earlier determinism of Bowles and Gintis (1976). Nevertheless, despite the evidence of this study that C.B.C. helps to obscure the overall domination of capitalist relations, the examples of individual resistance suggest that a C.B.C. education could have reformist possibilities which would grow out of the contradictions that have been noted throughout the study.

Through its critical ethnographic perspective, this thesis has been able to explain why, through the interaction of agency and structure, particular relatively stable meanings emerged in the specific context of C.B.C. in Newburyport during a particular temporal episode in which particular structures were institutionalised by the creative actions and interpretations
of participants. The apparent permanence and stability of such structures, however, is illusory as they are open to continual transformation and re-creation by organisational actors. Such transformation is clearly a possibility at C.B.C. as change is being promoted in curriculum, religious education and authority relations by individual teachers, and by small groups of participants who, through discrete actions, are developing an increasing awareness of their essential human agency. It is within the tensions and conflicts that exist both within and between individual backgrounds and aspirations, institutionalised expectations at C.B.C., and broad ideological, cultural and social practices that sources of collective action, and of transformation and resistance, may be found.
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