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FROM: THE EDUCATIONAL IMAGINATION
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Curriculum Ideologies

"There are as many worlds as there are ways to describe them."
NELSON GOODMAN

Because educational practice is concerned with the achievement of certain desired end-states, it relies on a larger value matrix to identify and justify the directions in which it moves. That values matrix is the subject of this chapter: the ideologies that give direction to one of the school's major means for addressing the aims it values. We call that means *the curriculum*.

The term *ideologies*, rather than *ideology*, is used here to indicate that there is no single ideology that directs education. Values, particularly in America, proliferate, and these values find their educational expression in the ways in which schooling, curriculum, teaching, and evaluation are to occur. Curriculum ideologies are defined as beliefs about what schools should teach, for what ends, and for what reasons. Insofar as an ideology can be tacit rather than explicit, it is fair to say that all schools have at least one ideology—and usually more than one—that provides direction to their functions.

The Significance of Ideologies in Education

Ideologies in general are belief systems that provide the value premises from which decisions about practical educational matters are made. For example, a conception of the aims of education rooted in the desire to help

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students secure Christian salvation will emphasize the importance of developing in the young the ability to read, for without such literacy the scriptures are inaccessible and if inaccessible, salvation is unlikely. A Christian ideology of the kind reflected in the laws of 1642 and 1647 (Cremin, 1961) in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies provided the value premises for both educational policy—schools were legally mandated in towns with over 50 inhabitants—and for curricular goals; biblical literacy, achieved through the ability to read, was of paramount importance.

In some ways, curricular ideologies derive from what might be regarded as *Weltanschauungen*—world views. Although religious ideologies, as they are played out in schooling, often provide the most visible forms of ideological influence, there are many important nonreligious ideologies that have long functioned in schooling. My aim in this chapter is to explore some of the most important and to describe their implications for curriculum practice.

Ideologies in education also influence what is considered problematic and nonproblematic in the curriculum. The term *problematic* can be regarded in two ways. First, what is considered to be a given or believed to be axiomatic in education enjoys a kind of security that is seldom threatened by marginalization: there are few people today for whom the development of literacy is a questionable aim of schooling. In this sense, the attainment of literacy is nonproblematic. By contrast, whether subjects like the arts or courses in sex education should be an important part of the curriculum is another question. Given some educational ideologies, these latter areas of study are problematic in much the same way that for some, federal support to the National Endowment for the Arts is problematic. For some the government has no business supporting the arts, and for others the school has no business teaching adolescents about sex.

Identifying what is problematic in the curriculum by its importance within an ideology is one way to look at the issue. A second way is to recognize that where a curriculum ideology emphasizes the importance of a particular subject, that subject ineluctably becomes problematic. By “problematic” here I mean that because decisions about the best ways of achieving the aims of fields considered important are almost always less than optimal, levels of student performance in the subject is typically a source of discontent and, in this sense, problematic. The problematic character of the most valued subjects makes them continuous objects of attention while those subjects that are marginalized or neglected altogether never achieve, in this latter sense, a problematic status. Anthropology, for example, is simply not a problem in the school’s curriculum because it is seldom considered important enough to care about. The same holds true for the arts and a variety of other fields.

I suggested earlier that curricular ideologies emerge in religious-like views of the world. Any orthodoxy attempts to make the world into its own

image, especially the educational world. Walker (1978) has pointed out that curriculum policies are like political platforms; they present a public position on some array of curricular options. Beliefs about the importance of the neighborhood school or the self-contained classroom or a multicultural curriculum have similarities to the planks in a political platform. Ideologies also function in much subtler ways. Often they do not announce their positions on important educational matters; rather, they manifest themselves in the kinds of language that imply or suggest rather than state explicitly what is educationally important and what the schools’ curricula should address. For example, when the language of industrial competition is used to make a case for particular educational aims—“regaining our competitive edge in a world economy”—our conception of the mission of schools is gradually shaped in industrial terms. The school becomes viewed as an organization that turns out a product—a student—whose knowledge and skills are subject to the same kinds of standards and quality control criteria that are applied to other industrial products. By contrast, when the child is viewed as a biological organism subject to natural laws of growth and atrophy, the kindergarten become a more appropriate model for thinking about the ends worth pursuing and the kind of environment that is most suitable. Getzels (1974) has described how models of the learner influence images of the classroom. When children are regarded as passive receptacles to be filled rather than active, stimulus-seeking organisms, bolting down desks in orderly rows makes sense. If they are thought of as stimulus-seeking organisms, then the classroom is likely to have a very different look.

What is important about such educational practices is that they emanate from ideologies no less powerful than those directed by publicly expressed orthodox religious beliefs. Indeed, because the former practices may obscure their ideological sources, they may be especially difficult to change. Looked at this way, it becomes clear that at the broadest social level, acculturation itself can be regarded as a form of ideological induction. When one ideology becomes ubiquitous it renders those acculturated insensitive to the ways in which their own beliefs have been shaped; they are too close to the scene to recognize its features.

Another impediment to recognition emanates from the incorporation into our language of conceptions that so shape our view of curriculum, or the aims of schooling, or human aptitude that we do not notice them as having this effect. For example, when we define intelligence as the ability to deal with abstraction and identify abstraction solely with the ability to use words and number, we impose on schools standards that reflect those conceptions and, thereby, limit other possibilities.

The foregoing conception of an ideology is neither fundamentally different from a constructivist perspective pertaining to the function of theory in cognition, nor from one that Gruber (1981) calls “images of wide scope.” The purported difference is that ideologies are typically regarded as value-

laden commitments, while theories in the social sciences are frequently idealized as merely descriptions of the world rather than an expression of what is to be valued. Such a distinction will not stand analysis. Language is constitutive of experience; it is not simply descriptive, and the way in which the world is parsed has significant value consequences for matters of educational practice. Gardner (1983) points out that Piaget's theory of cognitive structure is essentially an ascension from lower to higher forms of thought that has as its apotheosis a scientific model of mind. For Piaget (1973) the pinnacle of cognitive achievement is found in the scientist. For Piaget, the human as scientist, rather than as artist, is the end-state of cognitive growth. Gardner writes:

According to Piaget, a final stage of development comes into being during early adolescence. Now capable of *formal operations*, the youth is able to reason about the world not only through actions or single symbols, but rather by figuring out the implications that obtain among a set of related propositions. The adolescent becomes able to think in a completely logical fashion: now resembling a working scientist, he can express hypotheses in propositions, test them, and revise the propositions in the light of the results of such experimentation. These abilities in hand (or in head), the youth has achieved the end-state of adult human cognition. He is now capable of that form of logical-rational thought which is prized in the West and epitomized by mathematicians and scientists. (p. 19)

It takes no huge imagination to recognize how a view as influential as Piaget's can reinforce a certain conception of knowledge and intelligence and how, in the process, it can limit other options. If we believe that Piaget's cognitive structures correctly define a hierarchy of human cognitive attainment, the works of a Mozart, a Matisse, or a Balanchine are likely to be diminished. If, however, we regarded artistic thought as the paramount cognitive achievement, the content of our curriculum and who receives rewards for success might look very different from the what we provide today.

Recognition of the constitutive functions of language and the power of theory to shape perception has been fostered from several sources. First, that branch of psychology rooted in psycholinguistics and represented early in the work of Edward Sapir (1962) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), and more recently in the cognitively oriented work of Bruner (1964), Case (1984), Cole (1974), and Olsen (1988), has emphasized the complex social nature of cognition in general and the functions of what Bruner has called *structure* in the creation of understanding. To these researchers, the mind is a cultural achievement influenced by biological predisposition, but nevertheless, shaped by the features of a culture. Second, there is that branch of philosophy that historically has emphasized the importance of symbol systems in creating different forms of consciousness. Ernst Cassirer (1961),

Nelson Goodman (1978), and Susanne Langer (1942) are scholars whose theories of knowledge are directly related to the ways in which the world is represented. Different symbol systems, they claim, perform different epistemic functions. Third, there are the critical theorists and deconstructivists (Cullen, 1982) who pay special attention to the impact of language on cognition and on the values tacit in the language that is used. Their aim has been to raise consciousness to the covert values residing deeply in the language we use by revealing these values through the techniques of deconstruction—substituting, for example, key terms with other terms representing opposing meanings. Their efforts are not only epistemologically motivated, they are often motivated by particular political commitments (Eagleton, 1983). "Emancipation" from the linguistic and cognitive fetters of the culture is for them an important political aim.

The extension of the concept of ideology into the general sphere of cognitive theory, linguistics, philosophy, and deconstruction is advanced here because it is an arguable case that the most influential ideologies are not those formally acknowledged and publicly articulated, but rather those that are subliminally ingested as a part of general or professional socialization. We may be very much more ideological, given this broadened view, than we realize. Thus, understanding the covert ways in which ideologies operate becomes crucial if they are to be the subject of reflective examination. As long as we remain oblivious to the values that animate our intellectual life, we will be in no position to modify them.

Thus far I have described ideologies largely as a function of acculturation and as an inherent part of the psychological structures—language and theory—that we acquire as members of a culture. Although in some societies ideological commitments can be both uniform and powerful, it is not the case that in pluralistic societies uniformity among ideologies is the norm. More often than not, ideological positions pertaining to curriculum and to other aspects of education exist in a state of tension or conflict. In pluralistic societies, a part of the pluralism emerges in competing views of what schools should teach and for what ends. These competing views prevail or succumb in a political marketplace. For example, the admonitions of evangelical Christians to exclude Darwinist theory in the teaching of biology and to replace it, or at least to complement a Darwinian view with a creationist revelation, encountered sufficient resistance in California to make it possible for a scientific, Darwinian perspective to prevail. In this particular battle for ideological supremacy, evangelical fundamentalism lost.

My point here is that regardless of how powerful an ideological view may be in any individual's or even group's orientation to the world, it is seldom adequate to determine what the school curriculum shall be. There is a political process that inevitably must be employed to move from ideological commitment to practical action. When a society is characterized by value plurality and when the political strength of groups is comparable, the

process almost always leads to certain compromises. As a result, the public school curriculum seldom reflects a pure form of any single ideological position. Indeed, the more public the school and the more heterogeneous the community, the less likely there will be ideological uniformity in schooling.

Where schools are private, and Christian fundamentalist schools are examples, it is much more likely that not only the curriculum of the school, but also that other aspects of school life will reflect the values of the group. Peshkin (1986) points out that in the Christian fundamentalist school he studied virtually every aspect of the school—from the hiring of maintenance workers to the extracurricular life students led outside of school—was governed by religious values that went virtually unquestioned. Is such uniformity a virtue or a vice? Is the need to compromise values a necessary evil or something that represents a form of corporate wisdom? Answers to these questions depend, I think, on one's own degree of commitment to an ideological position. If one believes that the truth resides in a particular conception of the human being, compromising that conception for political expediency is not necessarily an asset. Perhaps the major virtue of a democracy is the instantiation of a process that allows individuals to exercise choice, even if at times out of ignorance.

In the foregoing section I described curriculum ideologies as a set of beliefs about what should be taught, for what ends, and for what reasons. I pointed out that although such ideologies are most clearly visible in orthodox views of schooling, whether secular or sectarian, ideological commitments are expressed and developed through the processes of acculturation and professional socialization and are reflected in the tacit as well as the explicit assumptions we make about the nature of reality, knowledge, mind, and education. These ideological commitments reveal themselves in the kind of language we use to describe schools, teaching, and learning; metaphors count in creating a value valence in our attitudes and beliefs about curriculum. Hence, curriculum ideologies can be said to reside on a continuum from the most explicit forms—for example, in positions about education presented, for examples, in manifestos about what should be taught—to the most implicit, delicate shadings of language about education, including language that is intended to be purely descriptive. Indeed, the less visible an ideology is, the more insidious it can be, for in that form it often eludes scrutiny.

It should not be inferred from my remarks that ideologies are, somehow, a kind of infection in education that is to be cured by taking the proper medicine. Nor should it be inferred that ideologies somehow interfere with the exercise of "pure rationality." Because education is a normative enterprise, it cannot be approached value free. Such a position would leave educators with neither rudder nor compass. Any normative enterprise is, by definition, guided by certain beliefs about what counts. These beliefs, in one

form or another, constitute an ideological view. Finally, schools or school systems seldom develop their programs through the straightforward application of political decisions deduced from a codified array of value assumptions. The political process in democratic and pluralistic societies requires deliberation, debate, adjustment, and compromise. As a result, examples of "pure" ideologies in action in schools are rare.

One other point. Schools are not objects that once modified in a particular way remain so. Because schools and school districts are subject to the vicissitudes of local and national expectations, changes in schools based on the prevalence of a particular ideological view may last for a short time. As the social and economic conditions of a community change, as its political climate alters, as staff come and go, it becomes necessary for schools to make adjustments and to accommodate to these newly emerging conditions. What this means at the level of practice is the continual readjustment of programs and priorities, even if one wishes to maintain the direction the school has taken prior to those changed conditions. Educational practices and priorities reflecting ideological commitments need modification in order to survive, just as a tightrope walker must correct for movement in the wire if he or she is to remain on it. Put another way, sustaining a direction in schooling or maintaining a set of priorities in the curriculum is much more like nurturing a friendship than installing a refrigerator in the kitchen. The latter requires virtually no attention after installation. The same cannot be said of friendship.

A Comment on the Current State of Curricular Ideologies

Although in the foregoing section I pointed out that ideologies in education can be located on a continuum from the most obvious, public, and articulate statement of purpose, content, and rationale, to the most subtle, private, and latent view, there is a tendency among writers on particular topics—in this case curricular ideologies—to succumb to the temptation to see the world in terms of the topic about which they write. As important as curricular or, more broadly, educational ideologies are for schools, curricular ideologies are rarely presented in a public and articulate form. This is not to say that values do not direct the enterprise. They do. It is to say that American schools are driven by a complex of values and traditions, and by fairly uniform expectations for a shared way of life that is both long-standing and widespread, rather than by a manifesto-like, publicly available ideological doctrine. There are, to be sure, statements of philosophy that school districts dutifully formulate; they are seldom read and what they have to do with the actual operations of schools is less than clear. In this sense most

(nonmagnet) public schools in the United States, once one goes beyond general statements of philosophy, do not “stand” for anything. That is, they do not display a uniform articulate ideological position that allows citizens to say this educational view is for me, that isn’t.

What most citizens want are good schools. “Good schools” for most parents means teaching children basic skills, preparing them for the world of work or for college, helping them avoid the evil of drugs, and paying attention to those less central topics and issues that arise from time-to-time and from place-to-place in schools across the country (Gallup & Clark, 1987). The major mission, however, of schooling remains largely the same. So, too, does the structure and practice of schooling. Its use of time and space, what it offers, and what it requires of students are remarkably constant. If these features constitute what might be called the operational ideology of schooling, ideological uniformity more than ideological diversity prevails.

If we examine the schools from an operational perspective, as Dreeben (1968) and others have done, that is, from the way in which their day-to-day operations inculcate and tacitly express beliefs and values, and if we regard these beliefs and values as ideological, the following picture appears.

Schools teach children to be punctual. At the middle and secondary school levels where departmentalization prevails, students must arrive and leave class on time, 16 times each day (Eisner, 1985b). Most of these arrivals and departures occur within 5-minute intervals between classes. Schools also teach children to be alone in a crowd (Jackson, 1968) and to delay those gratifications that issue from providing the teacher with the correct answer in order to allow classmates to have a chance to do so. To be in school is to acquire a worldview that appears in the form of largely disconnected subject matters. Children learn to separate ways of knowing that reflect the different subjects they study because of the way those subjects are organized in the curriculum (Eisner, 1985b). Being in school means learning how to complete assignments on time and how to accept such assignments from others rather than generating them for one’s self (Apple, 1982). It means regarding rationality as the need to have clear-cut goals in mind at the outset of any intellectual enterprise and to regard means related to those goals as a kind of experimental treatment; rationality is tacitly modeled after a scientist or technological form rather than, for example, an intuitive one.

Schools also convey to students a need to compete. Resources—particularly rewards—are limited and the garlands go to the swiftest. Swiftness, in turn, is defined mainly through achievement in particular forms of cognition. Verbal and mathematical aptitudes are the most useful, given the tasks in which students compete, and the emphasis on these particular aptitudes teaches the young that intellectual ability is defined largely in terms of verbal and mathematical performance.

Because of the ways in which schools organize and sort children, opportunities to learn from other students, younger or older, is diminished. Schools organize children by “litter”—children of the same age are assigned to the same grade and progression through the school keeps constant this form of age-grading (Goodlad & Anderson, 1959). This form of school organization reinforces the idea that the task of being a successful student is to learn the content of the grade, a condition that results in promotion to the next. It also reinforces the idea that knowledge is fixed and tidy, that smart people possess it, that textbooks contain it, and that the aim of schooling is its orderly transmission (Jackson, 1986).

The kind of curricular tasks and subjects emphasized in the early grades are also instructive in ways well beyond their original intent. Reading, writing, and arithmetic at the early levels of schooling are subjects that are highly rule-governed in character. By rule-governed I mean that these so-called skill subjects emphasize the correct application or use of social conventions. Spelling and arithmetic are two examples of rule-governed tasks. Such tasks convey to children that their most important activities in school have single, correct answers, that those answers are known by the teacher, and that their primary responsibility as students is to learn the correct ones. The school creates an environment that does not put much premium on imagination, on personal spirit, or on creative thinking. It emphasizes a form of rationality that seeks convergence on the known more than exploration of the unknown. It emphasizes the virtues of hard work. It limits the degree to which personal goal setting can occur and it rewards conformity to correct outcome more than it rewards productive idiosyncrasy.

Can such practices be regarded collectively as a curricular ideology? The answer to this question is, at base, arbitrary. If an ideology is defined as a *public* statement of a value position regarding curriculum, then the absence of such a statement would disqualify it as an ideology. If, however, an ideology also refers to a shared way of life that teaches a certain worldview or set of values through action, then schools everywhere employ and convey an ideology because they all possess, in practice, a shared way of life or what may be called an operational ideology.

It needs to be said that the ideologies that make a difference for those in school—teachers and students—are those that permeate their activities on a daily basis. A written manifesto of educational beliefs that never infuses the day-to-day operations of schools has no practical import for either teachers or students; such beliefs are window dressing.

The view presented in this chapter is that it is useful to conceive a curriculum ideology, or even more broadly an educational ideology, in two ways. That is, it is useful in comprehending educational practice to understand how beliefs about what is valued influence what is taught, for what ends, and for what reasons. Shifts in those beliefs can have substantial con-

sequences for how schools function. At the same time, it is the way in which schools actually function that, de facto, help shape the way students come to view the world of schooling and the values they secure about it. It is also useful to examine schools to uncover their tacit ideologies, their subtexts, as well as what they publicly espouse. Such inquiries have been undertaken by Dreeben (1968), Eisner (1985b), Jackson (1968), Smith and Geoffrey (1968), Waller (1932), and many others.

It is important to note that in the United States in recent years there has been a movement toward the creation of schools that *do* reflect particular educational ideologies. Magnet schools (Metz, 1986) have been developed throughout the country that provide special programs, emphasizing particular kinds of educational values. For example, there are magnet schools that advertise an emphasis on traditional educational values: homework each day, achievement testing each week, and an emphasis on the three R's. There are other schools that advertise an experientially based program: individualization of the curriculum, hands-on activities, field trips, group projects, and cooperative learning. Such schools provide very different educational environments. Each is guided by a different image of its mission and what students ought to learn in the course of their education. Given their distinctive mission, they do what the typical public school does not do; they hoist an ideological flag that tells the community what they stand for and therefore give the public a choice.

Six Curriculum Ideologies

Thus far I have provided a general description of some of the ways in which ideologies function in the schools. In this section I will identify six curriculum ideologies and describe their core values and views about curriculum, including their views of the mission of the school. Although these six ideological positions do not exhaust those that influence schools, they are among the most prominent. It should also be said that ideologies are never as definite or clear in practice as they are on paper. In addition, interpretations of any particular ideology differ, even among their adherents; hence, what follows are, of necessity, general characterizations of ideological positions rather than unassailable descriptions of the particular views of individual adherents. The six ideologies are referred to as Religious Orthodoxy, Rational Humanism, Progressivism, Critical Theory, Reconceptualism, and Cognitive Pluralism.

Religious Orthodoxy

One feature that all religious orthodox ideologies share is their belief in the existence of God and the importance of God's message in defining the con-

tent, aims, and conditions of educational practice. In America, about 90 percent of all private or independent elementary and secondary schools are Roman Catholic. The major aim of the Roman Catholic schools is to induct the young into the Roman Catholic Church, and through the Church, to Christ. American Evangelical Christians have similar aims, though clearly not "the same" God. Orthodox Jews, whose schools serve less than 1 percent of the American school-age population, are similarly engaged. At the heart of the religious enterprise is a conception of how life ought to be lived and a conception of the kinds of habits and beliefs that will lead to its realization. How do religiously constituted groups with relative clear opinions about the constituents of educational virtue go about realizing their educational aims in schools? How do their beliefs affect the experience of the young? Certain religious groups, the Jesuits for example, have had a longstanding interest in social justice (Kuntz, 1986). This interest is displayed in their educational priorities and in their attention to this aspect of religious life in the curriculum. Kuntz (1986), himself a Jesuit and a student of Jesuit education, writes:

In the Jesuit tradition, it is the teacher who must be responsible for the success or failure of education for justice. The teacher in the Jesuit school has a double purpose: to enable the students to appropriate Christian norms of morality even in the face of external cultural pressures, and to encourage the students to conduct their lives in accordance with those norms. Jesuit educators place the primary responsibility for moral education on the teacher. (p. 113)

Convictions such as this are central to the Jesuits, but they are not nearly as critical for other Catholic orders. Thus, Catholicism as one variant of Christianity is itself varied, even pluralistic in its orientation to education. When it comes to other forms of Christian belief, evangelical Christianity, for example, the variability is just as wide within, not to speak of the differences between, evangelicals and Catholics.

Jews express their common faith in three major religious belief systems: orthodox, conservative, and reform. Members of each group embrace different ideas about what it means to be a Jew and therefore the kinds of personal attributes, beliefs, and behaviors children and adolescents ought to develop under the aegis of their schools. For orthodox Jews, only certain forms of adaptation to secular life are acceptable. For example, on the Sabbath it is not permitted for orthodox Jews to walk more than 2,000 "paces," a safeguard against using the Sabbath for purposes of work. The orthodox Jew must not only eat kosher food, he or she must keep a kosher home, meaning, among other things, that eating utensils for dairy and meat products must be kept separate. In addition, daily prayers are mandatory, and the Sabbath—the holiest day of the week—must also be kept.

For conservative and reform Jews, religious laws pertaining to daily life are, arguably, less demanding and the relationship between religious and secular life more forgiving. Thus even within the same religion, the meaning of what it means to be religious has considerable variance and those differing views find their practical expression not only in how their adherents behave in general, but also what is emphasized in schools. For example, in orthodox Jewish religious schools, it is estimated that about 60 percent of the time during the day is devoted to the study of religious texts. In reform Jewish schools, about 30 percent of the time is devoted to such materials. In orthodox schools, boys and girls are separated. In conservative and reform schools, the classes are mixed. Each group has a different view of what God requires, even though each of the three groups honors the "same" God.

At the upper reaches of secondary schooling, a special place of curriculum privilege is given to the interpretation of text. Religious texts are traditionally subject to various interpretations and the ability to discover God's meaning has been the ultimate aim of biblical and Talmudic scholarship. As a result, hermeneutic analysis has been one of the important intellectual practices in the development of religious scholarship. In this process, conflicting interpretations among authorities are sometimes employed to stimulate readers into participating in the intellectual puzzlements that emanate from competing, but at the same time plausible, interpretations of text. Such practices, when they occur, appear to have a paradoxical quality in the context of a dogmatically committed educational ideology, yet this apparent paradox can be said to reside at the very heart of a spiritual life.

As indicated earlier, the aim of an orthodoxy is to shape the views of others so that they are compatible with the views contained in the orthodoxy. Orthodoxies are not essentially about doubts, but about certainties. Indeed, to become orthodox is to become a true believer. The exploration of competing views regarding biblical interpretation is, at the very least, an admission that truths, even biblical truths, are uncertain. Hence, the cultivation in the young of attitudes that seek and even reward the exploration of ambiguity—for interpretation always requires some ambiguity in order to have the space to function—seems paradoxical. True beliefs revealed through dogma appear antithetical to ambiguity, yet biblical interpretation as *an intellectual process* requires it.

It is clear that at the elementary grades the propensity among the young to question, doubt, and criticize the basic tenets of religious orthodoxy is discouraged, particularly in evangelical schools where the mission of the institution is to pass on God's word, not to question it (Peshkin, 1986). In this environment the cultivation of a critical attitude is troublesome for it can undermine the very ideology directing the system and can erode the structure of authority it requires in order to maintain its intellectual hegemony.

In *Smith v the Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County et al.* (N. D.), a suit filed by evangelical parents not only alleged that the Board omitted culturally appropriate Christian content from the curriculum, it also alleged that the attitudes fostered by instruction in the schools undermined parental authority by encouraging children to critically question traditions and their parents' conventional beliefs. Smith's attorneys argued in their brief to the Court:

Plaintiffs Smith now seek relief from this Court from (1) the unconstitutional advancement of the religion of Humanism in the curriculum used in the Mobile County school system; (2) the unconstitutional inhibition of Christianity caused by the curriculum used in the Mobile County school system; (3) the unconstitutional violation of the free exercise of religion rights of teachers and students by the exclusive teaching of Humanism and the systematic exclusion from the curriculum of the existence, history, contributions, and role of Christianity in the United States and the world; (4) the unconstitutional violations of the rights of students to receive information, of the rights of teachers to free speech, and of the prohibitions against governmental disapproval of religion, inhibition of religion, and discrimination against religion caused by the systematic exclusion from the curriculum used in the Mobile County school system of the existence, history, contributions, and role of Christianity in the United States and the world; and (5) the violation of the statutory mandate to teach the "established facts of American history, tradition and patriotism." (p. 3)

What is clear is that at least some of the values embraced by the Mobile, Alabama, Board of Education were in direct conflict with the values held by evangelical parents. Parents embracing the evangelical ideology represented by their religion had no interest in developing in their children the kind of critical skepticism that is prized in rational or humanistic orientations to education. For them the development of such skills and attitudes could only serve to weaken the religious commitment that parents believed essential to salvation. In addition, parents argued that not only did the Mobile, Alabama, curriculum omit important factual content, such as attention to the influence of Christianity in the history of the United States, but also that the curriculum advertently or inadvertently promoted an alternative religious doctrine. Rational humanism, they argued, constituted this doctrine and the school board, therefore, not only violated students' rights by acts of omission, but also by direct acts of commission. The parents went to the Court to remedy what they believed to be a violation of their religious rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution.

In related cases, beliefs about the theory of evolution, which pertains directly to beliefs about the nature of human nature, has been subject to legal review motivated by people whose religious convictions find evolutionary theory antithetical to their own certainty concerning the human being's

genesis on earth. When religious groups create and manage their own schools, the presence of strong religious views and the virtual absence of more widely held secular views pose no significant, overt problem. The public schools do what state education codes and their trustees think best and those directing religious schools follow their own path. To be sure, court cases and local pressures emerge from time to time and are resolved largely on an ad hoc basis. In general, though, secular and sectarian schools operate within their own sphere of influence and induct the young into the views their parents hold dear.

At first glance it seems that insulation and isolation from mainstream values is simply a form of benign neglect or a congenial way to cope with a potential problem of value conflict. One must, however, raise the question about how far a democratic nation can permit groups to inculcate into their children beliefs that, should their children achieve political saliency, would restrict the very freedoms that have been afforded them in their own schools. Peshkin (1986) raises this important question in his analysis of evangelical fundamentalist schooling in America. It is the issue that James Madison (1961) raised in *The Federalist Papers*, where he struggled with creating a set of principles that would provide for minority protection and minority rights, and that maintains a system of government "ruled" by the majority. The tensions that Madison identified in 1784 are still with us.

Although not itself a religious ideology, political belief structures can approximate some of the dogmatic features of religious views regarding the ways in which schools should function and the ends they should seek to attain. Teruhisa Horio (1988), a Japanese scholar, writes of the current tendencies of the Japanese Ministry of Education to promulgate educational policies for Japanese schools that are uncomfortably close to the militaristic policies promulgated by the Ministry of Education during the days of imperialist Japan prior to and during the Second World War. According to Horio, in Japan, local control of schools is being eroded and the scope of teacher authority is being diminished. In addition, Horio claims that textbooks have failed to provide Japanese children with the kind of balanced social view that he believes a viable democracy requires. As a result, the Japanese educational system, he says, is being guided by a subtle but influential array of authoritarian beliefs that may in the long run undermine the democratic potential of modern Japan. In Horio's view, business interests now dominate educational policies and traditional reliance on authority and status hierarchy in Japan is being recultivated by government. The same ideologies that led Japan astray in the early decades of the 20th century are, in Horio's opinion, reappearing today. He writes:

At about the same time, the then Vice-President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, declared on an official visit to Japan that the Peace Constitution

represented a major "mistake" in America's postwar policy for the reconstruction of Japan. Thus peace education was conceived of by both American and Japanese leaders as an obstacle to constitutional revision and remilitarization. Patriotic education was strongly advocated as the most desirable way to correct what were then being spoken of as the "excesses of democratization." Through their calls for a new emphasis on patriotism the anti-pacifist, anti-socialist, pro-American elements in Japanese society had found a new way to revive the prewar *kokutai* ideology and reassert what were ultimately anti-democratic values. (p. 148)

If one substitutes dogmatism for religious ideological views, the scope of the category increases considerably, for under such an umbrella can fall all types of dogmatic positions, especially those advocated at either end of the political spectrum. Both the ultra left and the ultra right are utterly convinced in the veracity of their own opinions and values.

Another example of ideological influence on curriculum can be found in the Waldorf Schools. These schools, and more important the programs they provide, were initiated in 1919 by German philosopher Rudolph Steiner. Asked by the owners of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company to create a school for the children of its employees, Steiner set about to design an educational program based on the principles of anthroposophy. Uhrmacher (1990) writes:

Anthroposophy might be thought of in two ways. First, it is a path of self-development for those who wish to follow Steiner's direction toward spiritual cognition. According to Steiner, human beings can develop latent organs of cognition so that they may directly perceive the spirit world. Second, Anthroposophy is also the fruit born from Steiner's ideas and methods. Biodynamic farming, Anthroposophic medicine, eurythmy and Waldorf schools are a few of the results from Steiner's spiritual knowledge. (Chapter 1)

Steiner tries to connect the life before birth to life after death, to conceive of human development in mystical yet optimistic terms. As an educational movement, Waldorf education has had an impressive growth throughout the world. At present there are about 330 Waldorf Schools functioning in 40 countries throughout the globe. In America alone, there are over 80 such schools. What we have in Waldorf education is a stunning example of a nonevangelical movement growing slowly but surely over a 60-year period. Waldorf Schools, largely neglected by mainstream educators and educational researchers, not only provide a curriculum based on philosophical and developmental principles, but also an organizational structure and teaching practices that reflect those principles. For example, it is the individual teacher who admits students to any particular Waldorf School. It is a teacher council that determines the educational policy for the school. Students remain with the same class teacher for an 8-year period rather

than moving from teacher to teacher each year. Even the color of the classroom walls is determined by developmental principles that Rudolph Steiner articulated. These and other practices, such as a main lesson each day, an emphasis on myth and legend in the curriculum, and keeping of a log by each child, are a part of the educational regiment of Waldorf Schools. These schools, as much as any I know, attempt to relate classroom and school practice to philosophical beliefs. Given growth they have enjoyed, they are apparently succeeding.

All of the foregoing ideological views are in one way or another rooted in religious beliefs. They all share a belief in a supernatural being at the core of their philosophy and some permit no critical analysis of their basic value assumptions. For some ideologies, this prohibition of critical scrutiny of core beliefs leads to a form of dogmatism that could be regarded as the antithesis of an educational process. When the aim of an enterprise is directed toward the production of true believers, consideration of alternative sources of evidence in the weighing of belief is in jeopardy. Yet, those who hold dogmatic beliefs believe that their first obligation to children is to induct them into their belief structure. They claim that human rationality at its best is incapable of fully understanding God's plan; only arrogance and ignorance would suppose otherwise. It is precisely our inability to fully comprehend God's ways that leads to faith, a central tenet of any religiously oriented ideology. The result is a kind of stand-off between those who claim that orthodoxies of any kind lead to dogmatism and that dogmatism is inherently alien to education, and those who say that faith in God's word transcends human rationality and that it is our overblown sense of self, our inflated conception of our own limited powers, that leads us to believe that we can "test" God's word.

When ideological beliefs make no difference in the content of educational practice or the conditions within which such practices occur, those beliefs can make no difference in the lives of the young. The fact of the matter is, however, that such ideologies are hardly ever without consequences for the practice of education.

Rational Humanism

Now we turn to a second ideology bearing on schooling—Rational Humanism.

Rational Humanism locates its modern roots in the Enlightenment and its ancient roots in Plato. Today, its most visible educational manifestation is found in Mortimer Adler's (1982) *Paideia Proposal* and, in the 1930s through the 1950s, in the Great Books Program promulgated by Robert

Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler. There are some important distinctions to make regarding the aspirations of Enlightenment scholars such as Auguste Comte and modern day Rational Humanists.

Comte and others believed that the universe in which we live is, in principal, understandable and that through rational methods, best exemplified in science, the workings of the clocklike character of the world could be discovered. Mysticism and religious revelation were practices that for them were ill-suited to the human's rational nature and that that rational nature, as Aristotle had indicated, was to know. With the Enlightenment, a new optimism was cultivated and the promise of success was sufficiently attractive to lead scholars to believe that the order of the universe would someday be discovered by a rational mind. Scientific method was the procedure, par excellence, for achieving this enlightened status. With it came a new faith in the power of the human, particularly in the human's intelligence to guide and control his or her own future, to take control of his or her own life. The spirit that animated the Rational Humanism of Hutchins and Adler is broader than the methods of science. The laboratory was, according to Hutchins (1953), only *one* of the important resources for learning and knowing. There were others, and these were, at base, even more potentially powerful than science.

The pedagogical method that Hutchins and Adler espoused is based on their view that the distinctive feature of the human being is the capacity to exercise reason, and reason does not ultimately depend on empirical demonstration or on the conditions necessary for scientific knowledge, but on reflection and insight. Reflection and insight, in turn, could be fostered, they argued, by providing two educational conditions in the classroom. First, the content of the curriculum needed to offer students old enough to reason the very best that humans have written and created. *The Great Books of the Western World*, the program that Hutchins and Adler began in 1938, reflected this belief. Hutchins reasoned that because not all human works were "created equal," and because time in school is limited, students should study the very best rather than the mediocre. Hence, content inclusion and content exclusion decisions were of paramount importance (Walker & Schaffarzick, 1972).

Of equal importance was the method through which the great works were studied. In a great many schools, there is a heavy emphasis on the memorization of information, a process that is reinforced through the use of short answer and multiple choice tests (Cuban, 1988). When teaching methods emphasize the transmission of information and testing methods assess the extent of its recall, they are not likely to develop rational powers. To develop such powers it is necessary to employ what Adler (1982) calls *mieutic processes*. These are processes that engage students in in-depth reasoning about the material they study. Ideally, the teacher's behavior is

dialectic rather than didactic. It is intended to enable students to provide reasons for their opinions and to find evidence and counterarguments to the views being expressed. For such matters the most useful pedagogical method is likely to be philosophical, literary, or artistic in character. It is likely to invite or stimulate analysis, even controversy. Rationality, according to Hutchins and Adler, is a potential achievement of human nature, but its cultivation is required in order for it to flourish.

The very principles that Rational Humanism advances—the centrality of human reason, man as the measure of all things, the contextualized nature of knowledge as a human construction although, at the same time, recognizing the existence of Truth—are principles that religious dogmatics reject. If God exists, and if God is truth, then to conceive of education in terms that make man the measure of all things is to lead children into spiritual damnation.

The practical educational implications of Rational Humanism center on curriculum content and teaching methods. As I already indicated, humanists believe that once students have learned how to read and cipher, they ought to be exposed to the best of the best. This, incidentally, does not mean reliance on secondary commentaries, but on the contrary, on the appropriate use of primary source material. It is much better to read Thomas Jefferson than to read about Thomas Jefferson. Indeed, from recent commentaries of contemporary critics of education regarding the vacuity and lifelessness of school textbooks, the admonition does not seem far off the mark. But, in addition, discussion, analysis, and debate are to be among the critical methods of instruction. As long as the issues students address are not cut and dried, debate is possible. As long as debate is possible, the higher mental processes can be stimulated and developed.

Rational Humanism, as an educational ideology, is often accused of being culturally parochial—only Western content is offered—and elitist. The former accusation is, in my view, unjustified, certainly at the level of principle. There is no reason why the content of the curriculum must necessarily be derived from works of the Western world, even if traditionally they have been so derived. If the premise that goodness adheres unequally in different works is accepted, there is no reason within Rational Humanism to restrict goodness to works created in the West.

As far as elitism is concerned, there are several ways to respond to this charge. One is that the proper aim of education is to expand the elite, that is, to enable all students to encounter and to be informed by the best works humans have created. A second is that if the best works that have been created are restricted to those now able to decode their meaning—the upper-middle and upper classes—then surely those in the lower socioeconomic classes will be consigned to a second-class intellectual status because of the second-rate curriculum that they will be offered. If it is argued that the quality of a work is simply determined by arbitrary judgment that has no

possible justification or evidentiary base, then the selection of content becomes not only arbitrary, but relativistic, and if relativistic, there can be no basis for the appraisal of educational development. If *all* works are of equal value, *any* selection is as good as any other.

The cornerstone of Rational Humanism is a belief in the primacy of reason and in the human's ability to make rational and defensible judgments about the goodness of things. As long as this cornerstone remains intact, relativism must be rejected as a basis for the selection of curriculum content.

Although Rational Humanism has received much fanfare, mainly from its critics, its implementation in American schools is not widespread. Except for some private schools and those public schools that have attempted to develop Paideia Programs, the ideas of Rational Humanism are more like latent ideals than operating processes. The national penchant for evidence regarding educational attainment through measured performance does not sit comfortably with an orientation to education that celebrates reason, rationality, and extended explanation. Exegesis is difficult when the optical scanner must be used to score student responses. In short, our assessment technology imposes its own practical values and limitations on the content and methods of schooling. Those practical values are often incongruent with the values that Rational Humanists hold dear.

A few recent developments in American education reflect some of the values found in Rational Humanism, although the match is far from perfect. The developments I speak of are the efforts among some to define a curricular canon and to use original source material, especially in literature and history, to provide curriculum content. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1988), which in many ways is antiethical to Rational Humanism, nevertheless participates in the view that not all content is created equal. Knowing what counts matters and Hirsch and his colleagues have endeavored to identify what every American should know, best represented in their effort to create a cultural dictionary: Rational Humanism properly conceived places little emphasis on the idea of a dictionary of content, indeed such an emphasis, even tacitly, misconceives the meaning of content in Rational Humanism. Content is not to be construed as memorizing the facts, but as the development of a critical understanding of the values and premises that underlie important works. The implication of a fixed body of content to be found in Hirsch's "dictionary" runs counter to the spirit of the enterprise, even though it shares one of its important features.

Perhaps more closely identified with a rational humanistic ideology is the publication of the National Endowment for the Humanities, *American Memory* (Cheney, 1987). This public policy statement does echo much of the spirit of Rational Humanism: the emphasis on great works and humanistic forms of understanding, the desire for a common core curriculum for all, regardless of ability, and the promulgation of the higher mental processes

through critical analyses of primary source material. These features of sound curricula are quite congruent with the humanists' educational values.

It should be said that although some might feel that the prescription of a common curriculum for a nation of 250 million is utopian, or naive, or ethnocentric, the case Rational Humanists wish to make is that without such commonality some children—most likely those of the poor—will receive an inferior program of studies, thus condemning them to a further life of poverty. Rather than to differentiate educational quality on the basis of ethnic, social, or economic criteria, all children should be afforded the very best culture has to offer. Where variability might be required is in method, not in content or educational aim. It is those who wish to accommodate group differences by differentiating content and aims that are the true elitists. Societies that differentiate the educational programs provided to the young on the basis of their economic or cultural roots deny opportunities to the less advantaged. As Hutchins (1953) has said, because in a democracy all who vote rule, all should have the education of rulers.

One other feature of rational humanistic ideology is important to mention. That feature pertains to matters of curriculum electives and vocational specialization prior to graduate school. To those who share the values of Hutchins and Adler, both options are anathema. Electives are undesirable, they believe, because the child is not in a good position to know what will best serve his or her educational interests. Because to know that requires that one have an education, something the child does not yet have, the child is not in a good position to make such decisions. As for vocational specialization, that option is appropriate only after the student's general education has been completed. Furthermore, it is inappropriate to attempt to provide such specialized content in public schools because the public schools are notoriously out-of-date regarding vocational matters. In addition, Hutchins asserts, the good schoolmaster is known by the important subjects he *refuses* to teach. Not everything that's important—and vocational skills are important—are the responsibility of elementary and secondary schools. But even if this were not so, it would be premature to focus a student's attention on vocational concerns before the course of general education has been completed. It is the virtual absence of a common intellectual culture that weakens the nation's ability to communicate: we lack a common cultural context. This is one of the major problems that Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1988) was intended to solve.

Given America's current romance with the world of commerce—remember, regaining our "competitive edge" is the current catchword—it is unlikely that in the short term Rational Humanism will have much of a place in mainstream American schools. Where this idealized orientation is more likely to flourish is in those private schools that serve a social and economic elite, and perhaps in those schools that have for so long failed minority populations that virtually any new approach promising success will

be tried. Currently, the appetite for approaches to education that appear noninstrumental to practical ends measured in standardized ways is not very large. A nation that has little toleration for ambiguity in its politics and a need for happy endings in its movies is likely to regard Rational Humanism as a bit too intellectual to be appropriate for today's world.

Progressivism

The third curricular ideology that I examine, progressivism, is most forcefully expressed in the writings of John Dewey and the large group of followers he and his ideas attracted. As Cremin (1970) and others have pointed out, Progressivism in education has had two related but distinguishable streams. One of those was rooted in a conception of the nature of human experience and intelligence, the other in social reform. Although Dewey addressed the romantic and reform side of his educational philosophy at different periods in his career, these two streams within American Progressivism are perhaps most clearly represented in the works of Harold Rugg and Ann Schumacher (1928) on the one hand, and George Counts (1932) on the other. Rugg and Schumacher's *The Child-Centered School* was influenced by the desire to create schools that addressed the covert, emotional life of the child, a life that Freud paid so much attention to. George Counts (1932), however, was concerned with the social and economic inequities of American society and thought schools had a positive obligation to "change the social order." Some of the manifestations of Rugg and Schumacher's orientation to education find expression in the work of A. S. Neill (1960) and are echoed in the present-day work of some curricular reconceptualists, particularly Grumet (1988) and Pinar (1988), while Counts's legacy appears in the writings of critical theorists such as Apple (1982) and Giroux (1989).

In one sense, the two streams within Progressivism can be regarded as on the one hand emphasizing the personal, on the other, the political. Dewey himself would never have made such a distinction because he believed the character of the political process inevitably influenced the kind of personal life the individual led, and the kind of individual life an individual was able to lead shaped the kind of politics he or she was able to embrace.

Because Dewey's work is so central to any analysis of Progressivism in American education, and because Progressivism, writ large, has been such an important ideological strain in American educational thought, Dewey's works will be used to exemplify progressive ideology.

Dewey's work is rooted in a biological conception of the human being. By this I mean that he regards the human being as a growing organism whose major developmental task is to come to terms, through adaptation or transformation, with the environment in which he or she lives. Because the environment is not always hospitable to the comfort or even the survival of the

organism, thinking is required. It is through the exercise and development of intelligence that the environment is reshaped. It is through the reshaping process that the individual learns and through which intelligence grows. In this sense, for Dewey, human life is a continuous process of constructive adaptation. Intelligence itself is not fixed, it grows. It is not a thing, it is a process. It is not restricted to a limited sphere of content—words or numbers—but manifests itself wherever and in whatever material problems can be posed and solved.

The development of intelligence—what Dewey called *growth*—does not emerge from biology or genetics alone, it requires the resources of culture. Young humans are notoriously dependent on adults for survival. The early manifestations of dependency are largely physical, but later, as biological development occurs, cultural resources are provided and the child begins to incorporate into his or her intellectual repertoire the variety of social skills and cultural tools—language, for example—that is made available. These cultural resources are, in a sense, intellectual amplifiers: they expand the individual's ability to cope with the objective conditions of the environment. Such coping includes the ability to conceptualize or pose problems through which constructive adaptation occurs. Indeed, one of the school's major tasks, according to Dewey (1902), is to create what he calls the *educational situations* through which a child becomes increasingly able to deal with ever more complex and demanding problems. What grows through this process of increasing competence is the child's intelligence.

The roots of Dewey's Progressivism are found in Darwin's (1897/1975) evolutionary theory in biology and in Hegel's (1900) ideas concerning thesis-antithesis. They were also shaped by the temper of the time. The turn of the century was an intellectually exciting period in America, indeed in the world. In the young behavioral sciences, a new optimism was emerging: the possibility of creating a scientific understanding of human nature. On the social side in America, waves of immigrants were populating American cities and workers were organizing to secure their rights in industry (Cremin, 1961). The schools were being both criticized for their lack of productivity (Callahan, 1962) while, at the same time, they were expected to do more and to serve a wider and more diversified population. In addition, a more dynamic view of human development was appearing among American intellectuals. The climate was right for educational change. Cremin writes:

The same era that saw the rise of social Darwinism—both the conservative and the reform varieties—also witnessed the birth of a new psychology dedicated to the scientific study of human behavior in general and the phenomena of mind in particular. As with correlative developments in sociology, European influences were critical, but they were always tempered by the distinctive demands of the American scene. Thus, Edwin Boring has noted that the

paternity of American psychology was Germany, deriving from the work of Gustav Fechner, Hermann von Helmholtz, and Wilhelm Wundt; while the maternity was English, and is to be found in the work of Darwin, Francis Galton, and of course, Spencer. The child, however, was much influenced by the environment in which it grew up; for the Americans, as usual, borrowed selectively, and ended up fashioning a psychology clearly designed to serve the practical needs of their own civilization. (p. 100)

The conditions that Cremin described provided a fertile ground for the liberal ideas that Dewey advanced, particularly in that most optimistic of institutions, education. No longer was it appropriate to regard the child as a passive receptacle to be filled with curriculum content. No longer could mind and emotion be regarded as independent. No longer could the curriculum be thought of as a static, fixed body of content, created in administrative offices and handed down to teachers. The child acted on the environment, he or she did not simply digest it, and in the process, that environment was personally transformed. Emotion could not be disregarded in dealing with matters intellectual, because how children felt about what they studied influenced how they thought about what they studied. As for the curriculum, it could not be optimally developed by people who had never seen the child; hence, teachers needed to play a fundamental role in its creation.

As familiar and reasonable as these ideas may seem today, their introduction in the late 1880s was innovative, indeed radical. As they began to transform and develop in the first 4 decades of the 20th century, they took a direction that Dewey himself felt compelled to caution against.

Dewey's concerns about the excesses of American progressive education are most succinctly expressed in his 1938 publication *Experience and Education*. Simply stated, his small book is an effort to save his philosophy of education from his friends.

Despite Dewey's reservations concerning the ways in which his ideas were interpreted, his work provided then as it does today a powerful ideological view of what school, curricula, and teaching should be about. His conception of cognitive development—a term that he did not use—is consonant with the ideas of psychologists such as Piaget (1973) in Switzerland and Vygotsky (1962) in the once-Soviet Union. And his conception of intelligence as an active *process* rather than a static or fixed entity, as an event that is displayed differentially by individuals depending on the circumstances and the form of representation employed, is congruent with recent theoretical conceptions of intellectual ability (Gardner, 1983). In short, Dewey's work adumbrated many of today's most advanced notions pertaining to the intellectual and social development of children.

There are three points I wish to emphasize regarding Dewey's thought that are central to a progressive educational ideology. These pertain to his

conception of the school as a whole, his view of appropriate curriculum content, and his view of the teacher's professional duties.

For Dewey, the "envelope" for the educational process was the school itself. Broader than the formal curriculum, it provided a shared way of life and social conditions that convey to the child the norms of social living. Although Dewey did not believe that there could be parity between adult and child in educational decision making—after all, the teacher did know more—he did believe that to the degree possible, the school and the classroom should reflect democratic principles. What this meant in practice was that schools and classrooms should offer children appropriate opportunities to formulate their own rules for social living, that internal and personal needs should be respected in the creation of learning activities, that group processes should be fostered so that children learned how to use collective intelligence to cope with problems in which their peers had an equal interest. It would be fatal, Dewey believed, to espouse the virtues of democratic life and to impose on schools an authoritarian form of management. The school, in a sense, was to be what the society under the best of circumstances was to become. This lesson, alas, is one that is yet to be learned in most schools.

As far as the curriculum itself, it was to display several features. First and foremost, it was to be problem-centered. By problem-centered, Dewey meant that the art of teaching was one that enabled the teacher to so construct the environment that children would be motivated to formulate problems or, in other terms, to make their situations problematic. The instantiation of a problem, itself an act of intelligence, provided the conditions for the use of experimental thought in pursuit of its resolution. For Dewey, the "complete act of thought" (1910)—the movement from purpose, to experimental treatment, to assessment of results—so exquisitely exemplified in science, was a model toward which curricula should aspire.

To create such problematic situations, the teacher not only needed to understand the intellectual potential of a body of ideas, he or she also needed to understand the child. "Start from where the child is" became a familiar admonition to Progressive teachers, an admonition that is not very distant from Vygotsky's (1962) notion of the zone of proximal development. The importance of starting from where the child is is directly related to the need to relate the problematic situation to the child's experience, as well as to his or her level of skill and understanding. The artistry in pedagogy is partly one of placement—finding the place within the child's experience that will enable her to stretch intellectually while avoiding tasks so difficult that failure is assured. To achieve this placement, the teacher needed to know the child.

As for teaching the "Progressive way," each child was to be a custom job. This implies an approach that required teachers to appreciate the child's

background, to deal with the "whole child." "Whole" here meant the child was to be seen as a social and emotional creature, not only as an academic or intellectual one. The Progressives quite correctly recognized that children do not park their emotions on the threshold to the school as they enter. What a child had experienced and how he or she was feeling was directly relevant to the teacher's professional aims.

It should be noted that such attitudes toward teaching practice were far distant from the efforts being made during the same period to run schools like factories and to manage the teacher's performance in ways similar to those used in industrial settings. The efficiency movement in education did not speak of the child's needs, or of the child's wholeness (Callahan, 1962). Teaching was not viewed as a matter of artistry, but as a matter of efficiency. The outcomes of schooling were not thought of as the cultivation of unique talents, but the achievement of standardized goals. In short, the images of educational virtue reflected in progressive educational ideology and those reflected in what Callahan (1962) has called "the cult of efficiency" were almost opposite. It requires no great insight to recognize that these polarities concerning the aims and methods of education are still salient today.

In addition to the artistry that Progressives assigned to teaching at its best, the responsibilities of the teacher included in-context curriculum development. This meant that although a school district or even a state might provide a framework for curriculum development, the primary responsibility for designing educational programs, often on the wing, resided with the teacher. The reason this must be so is not only because it is the teacher who knows the child, but also because events within the classroom are often unpredictable and the need to exploit the teachable moment is always present. It is precisely the kind of intelligent pedagogical adaptability, this shifting of aims, that Dewey regarded as exemplifying what he called "flexible purposing."

It is more than of passing interest to note that much of the current debate concerning the improvement of schooling in both the United States and the United Kingdom is centered on the appropriateness of prescriptions by federal authorities of common national standards, or as is the case in the United Kingdom, a national curriculum. When the public becomes concerned about the quality of education provided in its schools, it tends to have two reactions. The first is to monitor more closely than it has in the past the performance of schools; this is called accountability. Second, it reiterates in the public forum its national (or state) goals for education. Through standardization of assessment and prescriptive curriculum, that is, by tightening up and reducing the professional discretionary space for teachers, efforts are made to create more educationally productive schools. Ironically, at the same time that such standardization is occurring, education policies are being promoted that urge that teachers, as the primary

professional stakeholders, should have greater professional discretion in program planning and in monitoring and governing "their" schools (*Tomorrow's Teachers*, 1986).

These tensions are not unusual in nations that permit ideological pluralism. The efficiency movement in American education had its heyday during the very same period in which American progressive education was virtually at its peak. Perhaps one of the indices of democracy is its tolerance for ideological pluralism. Yet, pluralism in the name of democracy ensures neither the virtue nor the efficacy of the positions espoused. It seems to me unlikely that national standards, even national assessment, will be sufficient to improve American or British schools. The problems are more complex and the kind of investment needed much larger. If the public articulation of national goals was sufficient, *A Nation at Risk* (USA Research, 1984), perhaps the most widely disseminated statement on education published in America during the 20th century, should have done the trick. But who today can remember the five "new basics" given such vast publicity in 1983?

One final comment on progressive education as a curriculum ideology: given the visibility that progressive education has had—some laudatory, some hostile—one might conclude that during its peak period, say from the end of the 1920s to the end of the 1940s, Progressive education was a mainstream movement in American public schools. It was not. Where Progressive education did flourish was in small independent schools. Indeed, the first eight presidents of the Progressive Education Association were principals of such schools (Cremin, 1961). Like many other ideologically driven movements—the Plowden Report (1966), which oriented British primary schools of the 1960s, for example—there was more talk than practice. In England my search for Progressive British primary schools in 1972 proved to be more difficult than I anticipated before I left America (Eisner, 1974). I estimate that at the very most only 10 percent of the primary schools in Britain at the time could be said to reflect the spirit of the Plowden Report.

Perhaps the important lesson to be learned here is that it is unwise to confuse the public visibility of an idea in professional journals and in the public media with its practical application in the schools. Schools are remarkably robust institutions, slow to change; it is much easier to talk about innovation than to achieve it. Cuban (1979) describes the situation by making an analogy between the operations of the school and a storm at sea. Although the storm at sea might wreak havoc on the surface of the water—waves of 30 or more feet might be blown about—at the bottom of the sea the waters remain calm and quiet. Similarly, although the public press might have a heyday with new, even radical ideas about educational practice, teachers working alone in classrooms quietly go about business as usual; the most experienced have learned very well how to ride out the

storm. Thus, if we want to know what schools are like, we need data closer to the phenomena than those described or promoted in print.

We turn now to the fourth ideology, one that has substantial visibility in scholarly circles: Critical Theory and its educational variants.

Critical Theory

With few exceptions, critical theorists, have not developed a coherent public statement pertaining to the aims, content, and methods of education. In this sense, Critical Theory is less of an educational ideology than religious ideologies, Rational Humanism, or Progressivism. Yet, Critical Theory provides one of the most visible and articulate analyses of education found in the pages of educational journals and in books devoted to the state of schools. It is for this reason—its salience in the intellectual community and its potential for reforming the current priorities of schools—that it is included here as an ideology affecting education in general and curriculum in particular.

What is Critical Theory and what is its "project"? Critical Theory is an approach to the study of schools and society that has as its main function the revelation of the tacit values that underlie the enterprise. The approach has been influenced by a hermeneutic orientation to texts; critical theorists often regard themselves as revealing the covert assumptions and values in the *social text*.

Critical theorists, almost always on the political left, are typically concerned with raising the consciousness of unsuspecting parents, students, and educators to the insidious and subtle ways through which an unequal and often unjust social order reproduces itself through the schools. In this sense critical theory is aimed at emancipating (their word) those affected by the schools from the school's debilitating practices.

The achievement of such ends typically requires careful attention to the structure of schooling, the ways in which roles are defined, the covert messages that are taught—in short, it requires an awareness of the school's "hidden curriculum" (Eisner, 1985a). The term *hidden* is used intentionally in distinction to the *covert* or *implicit* curriculum (Eisner, 1985a). The hidden curriculum consists of the messages given to children by teachers, school structures, textbooks, and other school resources. These messages are often conveyed by teachers who themselves are unaware of their presence. "Hidden" implies a *hider*—someone or some group that intentionally conceals. Concealment, in turn, suggests a form of subterfuge in order to achieve some gain. Hence, the hidden curriculum is often believed to serve the interests of the power elite that the school, often unwittingly, is thought to serve.

Within the context of critical theory, one of the important questions children are taught to ask of practices and policies in schooling and elsewhere is, "Whose interests are being served?" Although conspiracy theories are currently out of fashion, the political gist of the views of critical theorists is that the covert functions of schooling are rooted deeply in their beliefs that a capitalistic economy cannot, in principle, provide for either an equitable society or an equitable school system. As Bourdieu (1977) has written, the school is essentially an institution whose mission is cultural reproduction. When a society is believed to be inherently unfair, cultural reproduction through schooling is thought to be no virtue.

The roots of these ideas are found in Marx (1948/1987), particularly his views about the alienation of labor. For Marx the objective conditions of work define the realities that workers experience, and when work is organized to provide profit to those who own the sources of production, the working class is inevitably exploited. The essential problem that must be addressed, therefore, is to help the working class assume control of the sources of production, that is, to socialize the economy so that each individual receives according to his needs and contributes according to his ability. Social justice is essentially a function of economic conditions.

Although few Critical Theorists today would take such a doctrinaire view of the ills of the social order, the views they do embrace are descendants of Marx's view. As a result, they claim the school alienates labor—the student—and deskills him in the course of schooling by withholding opportunities for him to formulate his own aims and goals (Apple, 1982). In this way schools encourage in students a dependency on authority, foster one-way communication—from top to bottom—and in general provide a distorted view of American history that in turn undermines the kind of social consciousness needed to bring about change. One critical theorist writing of the deleterious influence of industry on school says:

The industrial-capitalistic interests entertained a very different role of public schooling from that which had been though good under agrarianism and mercantile capitalism. As industry became more complex, the school also had to change to meet its needs. Compulsory schooling became essential and more accepted by the working class, and the compulsory schooling age rose. The high school (an urban school) became a necessity as did industrial education: manual training, vocational guidance, the enactment of child labor and additional compulsory education laws. These developments in public schooling were aimed at striving for greater efficiency in preparing children for occupational roles in the expanding economy. (Pratte, 1977, p. 99)

What is characteristic of this genre of writing is its "half-empty character." Almost always the emphasis is on the negative aspects of schooling, and although pulling weeds is helpful, their elimination in a garden does not ensure the presence of flowers; flowers have to be planted.

It should be acknowledged that depending on one's set of values, there is much to improve in the schools. Indeed, it is the mark of any respectable academic to be critical. Yet, the continually strident voices of so many Critical Theorists often becomes relentless and excessive. Consider, for example, the following comments on Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1988).

Read against the recent legacy of a critical educational tradition, the perspectives advanced by both Bloom and Hirsch reflect those of the critic who fears the indeterminacy of the future and who, in an attempt to escape the messy web of everyday life, purges the past of its contradictions, its paradoxes, and ultimately, of its injustices. Hirsch and Bloom sidestep the disquieting, disrupting, interrupting problems of sexism, racism, class exploitation, and other social issues that bear down so heavily on the present. This is the discourse of pedagogues afraid of the future, strangled by the past, and refusing to address the complexity, terror, and possibilities of the present. Most important, it is a public philosophy informed by a crippling ethnocentrism and a contempt for the language and social relations fundamental to the ideals of a democratic society. It is, in the end, a desperate move by thinkers who would rather cling to a tradition forged by myth than work toward a collective future built on democratic possibilities. This is the philosophy and pedagogy of hegemonic intellectuals cloaked in the mantle of academic enlightenment and literacy. (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1988, p. 194)

The tone of these remarks is not uncommon, nor are the code words that populate the text. It is almost as if an entire vocabulary had been developed to display to the world how capitalism has corrupted the schools.

As I have indicated, the major intellectual disposition of Critical Theorists is critical—in the negative sense. They are typically more interested in displaying the shortcomings of schooling than providing models toward which the schools should aspire. Nevertheless, some have described the sense of possibility they value, and in powerful ways. Giroux (1989), for example, emphasizes the importance of teachers and their potential role in defining the aims of schooling and in assessing its performance. Others speak of the potential coalition of teachers and parents as a way of creating a truly educational climate for their children, one free from the constraints of government bureaucracy. Others, such as Apple (1982), emphasize the importance of restoring to children a sense of personal meaning by allowing, indeed encouraging, them to define their own education ends and to relate these ends to the community in which they live. In some ways the directions in which Critical Theorists would take the schools resemble the social side of Progressive educational ideology.

Perhaps because a positive agenda for school programs has been underplayed in the writing of critical theorists, it is hard to say just where their implied agenda for educational reform has been implemented. Unlike the

Christian evangelicals who have created schools to reflect their ideology, or Progressive educators who have influenced school practice, even in public schools, or Rational Humanists who have a league of Paideia schools, there are no schools that I know of committed to critical theory. The primary locus of their writing is found in books and learned journals; their ideas have been lively and often extremely insightful and illuminating, but they speak essentially to intellectuals. As far as I know, they have had little impact on government education agencies or in local school boards. My sense is that if their material was less strident, more hopeful, more generous, and more concretely constructive, it would be much more likely to influence practice.

One example of a program that does share some of the values advanced by critical theorists, but is not itself associated with Critical Theory, is Lawrence Stenhouse's (1982) Humanities Curriculum. Developed in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, Stenhouse was interested in providing adolescents with opportunities to study and debate closed or controversial issues: matters pertaining to race relations, sex, politics, and church and state relations. With foundation support, he devised a humanities curriculum that invited students to debate sensitive issues; he did not take a position on these issues but prescribed a role for the teacher intended to deepen the students' level of discussion and through that his understanding of underlying value conflict. Stenhouse wanted to help students develop a more complex view of controversial issues so that their own value structure would be less secure and more open to examination. Although Stenhouse's curriculum was not *formally* an example of critical theory in action, it had features that critical theorists would, I believe, applaud.

Closer to Critical Theory in a formal sense is the work of Paulo Freire (1970). Working with illiterate peasants in Brazil, Freire devised an approach to the development of literacy that was based on the deep-seated and practical needs of his students. Reading materials were texts whose words and content were directly related to the world of work his students knew firsthand. But Freire did not stop with mere "literacy"; he also used his students' newly acquired literacy to help them understand the conditions of their labor and the interests being served by their work. In short, literacy was an instrument for political education. Freire's work provides a model for the educational development of critical consciousness.

What both Stenhouse and Freire have in common is their practical efforts to create materials designed to enable their students to understand better the values and conditions that affect their lives. Each, so to speak, rolled up his sleeves to demonstrate an approach to educational practice that reflects their educational ideologies. Critical Theorists, in the main, tell the world what schooling suffers from, but they have a tendency to emphasize criticism rather than construction. As a result, the debate has mainly been limited to scholars rather than to the reshaping of practice.

Given this emphasis, is it appropriate to regard Critical Theory as an instance of an educational or curricular ideology? I believe it is. There is no group I know more ardent about its beliefs or as outspoken about the righteousness of its cause. It attracts adherents, it provides a common lexicon for its advocates, and it has a common canon. Its views on the ills of education are often exceedingly plausible; they are frequently both trenchant and accurate. What is missing is a positive agenda. Scholars who have directed their attention to practice, such as Adler (1982), Goodlad (1984), and Sizer (1984), have displayed the ways in which beliefs can be acted on—as did Dewey in his Laboratory School in 1896. This agenda is what critical theory needs to move from text to action. What would a school built on its beliefs and values look like? What would it teach? How would its effects be assessed? Such questions would form the core of an important project.

Reconceptualism

A fifth curriculum ideology is called by its advocates Reconceptualism. Emerging on the educational scene in the early 1970s, this view is far from complete, nor do its adherents wish it to be complete. It is more of an orientation than a dogma. That is, it is a way of thinking about education and the kind of programs that will serve its ends well.

The central ideas for Reconceptualists were implicit in the work of James Macdonald (1975) and especially Dwayne Heubner (1963), but in the United States the major spokesperson for this view is William Pinar (1975). Writing of *currere*, the conception Pinar embraces, he says:

The questions of *currere* are not Tyler's; they are ones like these: Why do I identify with Mrs. Dalloway and not with Mrs. Brown? What psychic dark spots does the one light, and what is the nature of "dark spots," and "light spots"? Why do I read Lessing and not Murdoch? Why do I read such works at all? Why not biology or ecology? Why are some drawn to the study of literature, some to physics, and some to law? Are phrases like "structures of the mind" usable and useful? If so, what are these varying structures, and in what sense do they account for the form intellectual interests take or for their complete absence? What constitute "structures," and what are their sources?

Such questions suggest the study of *currere*. The information our investigations bring us is the knowledge of *currere*. It is its own knowledge, and while its roots are elsewhere, its plant and flower are its own; it is another species, a discipline of its own. (pp. 401-402)

Those familiar with Pinar's publications and those whose views participate in its ideological orbit will recognize the importance that personal experience enjoys in their texts on education. What is missing from American schools, they argue, is a deep respect for personal purpose, lived experience, for the life of imagination, and for those forms of understanding that resist dissection and measurement. What is wrong with schools,

among other things, is their industrialized format, their mechanistic attitudes toward students, their indifference to personal experience, and their emphasis on the instrumental and the out-of-reach. To provide children with a decent educational environment requires a reconceptualization of how we think about educational programs, who develops them, and what they are for. They are not primarily, in the view of Reconceptualists, for learning how to earn a living, but for learning how to live. To learn how to live the child must learn how to listen to her own personal drummer in an environment that makes such attention not only possible but desirable. Like the Critical Theorists, Reconceptualists tend to believe that American schools—perhaps most schools in Western industrialized societies—have been excessively influenced by a means-ends mentality that is modeled after a world that does not exist. Life is not like a scientific experiment or the operation of an assembly line. Schools that intend to prepare students for life mislead when they convey to them the idea that all problems have solutions and that all questions have answers. What is even worse, the message given to students is that not only are answers to all questions and solutions to all problems available, but also that there is a correct one for each. When this occurs the aim of schools for students becomes converted from the expansion of consciousness and the exploration of the possibilities of the imagination to successful adaptation to a technocratic routine.

For Reconceptualists the current dominant mode of curriculum theory, best represented perhaps in a narrow reading of Tyler's (1950) rationale, reinforces what is problematic and ill-conceived in schools. Such a rationale urges educators to regard curriculum planning as a type of experimental treatment: objectives are to be operationalized through measured procedures; treatment consists of the curriculum provided and is to be revised on the basis of its efficacy. After objectives are achieved, another set of objectives and curricular treatments are implemented. The entire enterprise is aimed at the achievement of specific, standardized goals. The efficient and effective convergence on what is a common aim is the ideal that guides the enterprise.

Reconceptualists regard such a view as seriously misconceived and oversimplified. What is needed, especially in a culture already characterized by high levels of alienation and personal indifference, is an approach to teaching that does not exacerbate one of our culture's major problems, indifference, but, on the contrary, compensates and helps students overcome it. What is needed is not more of the same, only better, but a basic reconceptualization of the aims and processes of schooling. Rather than attending solely to the child's behavior, Reconceptualists believe educators should try to understand the nature of the child's experience. In other words, the need is to turn from a behavioristic to a phenomenological attitude.

Although there are magnet schools and individual teachers that foster what might be called a phenomenological attitude, there is no unified,

organized, or concerted program to create schools or teaching practices that develop or implement a Reconceptualist approach. In many ways, the virtual absence of organized efforts to create teaching practices congenial to Reconceptualism is understandable. Ideologies that lead to specific, more or less routinized procedures are indeed implementable; behavioristic teaching practices are examples. Reconceptualism is partly an attitude and unless teachers have acquired a disposition congruent with it, no routinized prescriptions are likely to be effective.

How then can such an approach to education be promulgated? Mainly through persuasion, it seems. Whenever an approach to practice requires artistry, even craft, standardized routines will be found wanting. Reconceptualization, like Critical Theory, is an orientation to schooling, indeed to living, that functions through the use of particular perspectives rather than through the application of rules.

Given the fact that in the United States there are over a 100,000 schools and more than 2½ million teachers, is it likely that a nonprescriptive, non-standardized approach to teaching will gain saliency? Probably not, unless there is an unforeseeable social change in the culture at large that supports its major tenets. The factors that drive schools—standardized testing and the maintenance of "our competitive edge"—are widely accepted. As long as this remains so, Reconceptualists will have an uphill battle to fight. After having said that, it also needs to be said that those associated with Reconceptualism have not simply stood by waiting for a miracle to happen. They have sponsored a journal, *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, that publishes articles related to their interests and hold an annual conference, The Bergamo Conference, that explores educational problems from their perspectives. Intellectual interest is there and a community of scholars sympathetic to its ideological commitments has been formed. Whether these efforts will be sufficient to have a significant impact on schools is another question.

Cognitive Pluralism

The sixth curriculum ideology is called Cognitive Pluralism. Although the concept of Cognitive Pluralism is at least as old as Aristotle's distinctions among three different forms of knowledge—theoretical, practical, and productive—it has only been in the last two decades that a genuinely pluralistic conception of knowledge and intelligence have been advanced in the field of education. Cognitive Pluralism is a conception of mind and knowledge that has two different but related branches. As a conception of knowledge, Cognitive Pluralism argues that one of the human being's distinctive features is the capacity to create and manipulate symbols. These symbols are powerful cultural resources that are employed in mathematics, music, literature, science, dance, the visual arts, indeed, in any area of human life in

which action or form is used to give expression or to represent experience or intention. Language, in the narrow sense of the term, is but one of the means through which the private, personal life of the individual is given a public presence; the symbol systems previously identified constitute a few of the others.

There are several functions that symbol systems or "forms of representation" perform that make them particularly important (Eisner, 1994). First, the ability to use a symbol system or form of representation makes it possible to stabilize evanescent thoughts and feelings: nothing is more elusive than an idea. Second, such stabilization makes it possible to reflect on what has been represented and to edit one's thinking. Third, the public transformation from what is private into a public form makes its communication possible. Fourth, the opportunity to represent through some material or device provides the occasions for the invention or discovery of ideas, images, or feelings that were not necessarily present at the inception of the activity. Put another way, the act of representation is also an opportunity for creative thinking. Finally, and most important, the features of the particular symbol system or form of representation used both constrains and makes possible particular types of meaning. Poetry, for example, allows one to represent or recover meanings that are inexpressible in mathematics or in prose.

Because the quest for meaning, it is argued, is part of human nature, the ability to represent or recover meaning in the various forms in which it can be experienced should be a primary aim of schooling. Some philosophers go even further. Symbol systems are regarded as so significant that Goodman (1978) goes so far as to say that they are foundational in the construction of our personal worlds. "There are as many worlds," he tells us, "as there are ways to describe them."

The roots of Cognitive Pluralism go back to Aristotle's tri-part distinction among the ways of knowing. Its modern variants can be found in the works of Ernst Cassirer (1961), Nelson Goodman (1976), and Susanne Langer (1976). In the curriculum field, similar ideas have been found in the work of Paul Hirst (1974) and Richard Peters (1960) in England and in Elliot Eisner's (1985a) and Phillip Phenix's (1964) work in the United States. The latter four curriculum theorists have all, in one way or another, emphasized the plurality of knowledge and the unique functions of different cognitive forms. These conceptions have, in turn, served as foundations for their views of what school programs should teach and what educational ends should be prized.

Related to the emphasis on the plurality of meaning is an emphasis on the plurality of intelligence (Gardner, 1983). The long psychometric tradition influencing American education has emphasized the identification and measurement of the general or "G" factor in intelligence. What most psychometricians have sought is the essential property or function that makes general intelligence possible. Further, they have eschewed the idea that

intelligence was multiple, or that its presence depended on the context, material, or the circumstances in which individuals function. Related to the disposition to find essences has been a tendency to emphasize genetic rather than environmental influences. In some ways it is understandable that those who seek essences should have little appetite for measuring a process subject to the vicissitudes of the environment. What kind of mental science can be built on such a tentative personal feature?

During the past 15 years, the pluralism that has accompanied our conception of the nature of knowledge has also appeared in the way in which intelligence itself is conceived. Its meaning has shifted from a noun to a verb; intelligence for more than a few cognitive psychologists is not merely something you have, but something you do. Furthermore, these doings are precisely that: different ways of acting. Gardner (1983), one of the leading spokespersons for this idea, identifies seven intelligences that he believes individuals possess in varying degrees. For Gardner, these are not "simply" aptitudes or talents, but socially important ways of solving problems. Furthermore, he argues that environmental conditions have something to do with the particular kind of intelligence that will be valued and practiced. The relationship between knowledge types and forms of intelligence is an important one. If the kind of mind that children can come to own is, in part, influenced by the kinds of opportunities they have to think, and if these opportunities are themselves defined by the kind of curriculum schools provide, then it could be argued that the curriculum itself is, as Bernstein (1971) has suggested, a kind of mind-altering device. In this view it's easy to see how curriculum decisions about content inclusion and content exclusion are of fundamental importance.

I (Eisner, 1985a) have argued that what is omitted from the school curriculum—what is called the null curriculum—is every bit as important as what is left in. The kind of decisions that individuals make is not only influenced by what they know, but also by what they don't know. Hence, large areas of important but unexamined content can have a very significant influence on the kinds of decisions people make and the kinds of lives that they lead. Thus, symbol systems not only have the potential to provide unique forms of meaning, they also have the potential to practice and develop particular mental skills. Without these skills, the meanings made possible through the various symbol systems will be unrecoverable.

By opening the door to Cognitive Pluralism, a whole new array of *potential* consequences flow for curriculum. First, given this orientation, the concept of literacy would be expanded. Although the term *literacy* typically refers to the ability to read, it would be extended to include the encoding or decoding of information in any of the forms that humans use to convey meaning. (Eisner, 1982) At its broadest level, the concept merges with semiotics, the theory of signs. At a somewhat narrower level, it recognizes that each of the various cultural forms impose their own requirements on representation as well as on interpretation. In Phenix's (1964) words, each form

of representation provides its own "realm of meaning." Because the pursuit of meaning is a basic part of human nature, and because meaning is in large measure achieved through the use of symbol systems, the ability to read symbol systems that mediate meaning is critical if meaning is to be secured. The kind of pluralism advocated in the curriculum writing of Phenix, Peters, Hirst, and Eisner leads to programs that intentionally provide for the development of multiple forms of literacy.

Another potential consequence of Cognitive Pluralism is the expansion of educational equity in the classroom. Given the fact that there are differences in aptitudes among children, the creation of programs that restrict the use of aptitudes for that dealing with curricular tasks provides an advantage to those children whose aptitudes are consonant with the tasks provided. Children whose aptitudes are not useful in dealing with the tasks schools emphasize are disadvantaged. By creating a wider array of curricular tasks, those that require the use of different forms of intelligence, for example, or depend on different aptitudes, opportunities for success in school are expanded. These opportunities are expanded if success on this wider array of tasks is regarded as having equal intellectual merit. If, for example, high level ability in the arts is regarded as laudable, but nonintellectual in nature, and if the school gives its most highly prized awards to what it regards as intellectual achievements, children who shine in the arts will never shine as brightly as those who are excellent in mathematics; the arts, like the children attracted to them, will remain second-class citizens in the hierarchy of curricular values.

Thus far, no consortium has been created to promote or implement programs reflecting a cognitively pluralistic orientation to curriculum, although individual schools can be found that do attempt to provide such an approach. The Key School in Indianapolis, Indiana, is currently attempting to develop a curriculum that is consistent with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and Malkus, Feldman, and Gardner (1988) have been attempting to identify what they call proclivities among preschool children. Although their efforts are still too new to assess, they do represent a move into the practical world of schooling.

Each of the foregoing curricular ideologies has a different degree of implementability. Rational Humanism and religious orthodoxy are two ideologies that have their counterparts in schools. Indeed, there are consortia and organizations whose primary mission is to expand and improve the practice of schools embracing these ideological positions. Progressivism is probably more prevalent in American schools than Reconceptualism, Cognitive Pluralism, or Critical Theory. The programs needed to implement a cognitively pluralistic approach to curriculum are scarce, and Critical Theory and Reconceptualism are, in some ways, more attitudinal in nature than methodologically prescriptive. In all, their ideological presence in curriculum is quite limited.

As I indicated earlier, in the public arena, ideas about priorities, goals, the allocation of resources must survive a tough array of competing proposals from those who feel equally convinced of the correctness of their views. Educational policies are modified not only behind the closed door of the classroom, but also in the arena in which they are debated. With 50 states responsible for educational policy and 16,000 school districts making and interpreting policies, homogeneity in micropolicy terms is hard to find. The local control of schools complicates the use of research in schools and classrooms: one never knows if the conditions that existed when the research was undertaken in one educational experiment also prevail in the school or district in which one wishes to implement the experimental practice. When national policy for schools is determined by a national ministry of education, the problem of implementing policy and the practices associated with it is not *quite* so complex, although it is very far from simple. Teachers still close the classroom door and do what they know how to do and believe is best for the students they teach. In this sense, changes in the teacher's ideology may be among the important changes that can be made in the field of education.

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4



The Three Curricula That All Schools Teach

Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time.

JOHN DEWEY

The Explicit and Implicit Curricula

In Chapter 3, six curriculum ideologies were described. These six ideologies provide a way of rationalizing what schools teach. But schools teach much more—and much less—than they intend to teach. Although much of what is taught is explicit and public, a great deal is not. Indeed, it is my claim that schools provide not one curriculum to students, but three, regardless of which of the six ideologies a school follows. The aim in this chapter is to examine those three curriculums in order to find out how they function.

One of the most important facts about schooling is that children spend a major portion of their childhood in school. By the time the student has graduated from secondary school, he or she has spent approximately 480 weeks, or 12,000 hours, in school. During this time, the student has been immersed in a culture that is so natural a part of our way of life that it is almost taken for granted. In that culture called schooling there are certain publicly explicit goals: teaching children to read and write, to figure, and to learn something about the history of the country, among them. There are, of course, other aims, many of which are associated with the explicit curriculum that the school offers to the students. There are goals and objec-