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Table of Contents

From the Editors, <i>What Does It Mean to Be a Child in this Democracy?</i>	v
<i>Dedication to David Snelgrove</i>	xi
2014 Presidential Address, “Engendering” <i>Educational History: Some Methodological Musings</i> , Lucy E. Bailey	xv
The 2014 Drake Lecture, “ <i>We Ain’t Dead Yet!</i> ” <i>Sustaining Hope and Vitality in Teacher Education</i> , Neil O. Houser	xxxi

Evaluating New Technologies

<i>Plato’s Educational Foundations and the Future of College Teaching</i> Adam David Roth.....	1
<i>The Teacher Leadership Effectiveness (TLE) Evaluation Tool for Oklahoma Teachers: A Foucauldian Analysis</i> Naomi K. Poindexter	15

Challenging Conservatism

<i>The Neo-Conservatives’ John Dewey: An Analysis of Online Discourse</i> Kelley M. King	29
<i>Taking Religion Seriously in the Public Square</i> John F. Covalleskie	49
<i>Sketches of Student Dysphoria: Analysis of Cartoons in an Underground Campus Newspaper, 1969–1971</i> Lee S. Duemer, Curtis Crump, Kevin Fry, Dana Gilchrist, Ana Torres, Regina Wilson, & Vivian Windom.....	65

Rethinking Religion and Spirituality

<i>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Released Time for Religious Education: Reflections on the Policy’s 100th Anniversary</i> Benjamin J. Bindewald	81
<i>Spirituality and the Practice of Educational Leadership</i> Michael D. Boone, Kathleen Fite, & Robert Reardon.....	95

Reexamining History

Reflections on the Termination of Two Universities and the Creation of a New University

Martha May Tevis 109

The Centrality of Experience in Carter G. Woodson's The Mis-Education of the Negro

Magnus O. Bassey 123

From the Editors

What Does It Mean to Be a Child in this Democracy?

While many U.S. education scholars write about democracy, democratic education, democracy in education, and educating for democracy, little has come forward on the meaning and value of U.S. democracy *for children* in the United States. What does living in democracy mean for children in the United States of America? Are our children citizens with rights? Although this question of children's rights has surfaced, gone underground, and resurfaced many times, probably the best known issue from which this question of children's rights arises is that of abortion: the fetus' "right to life." I refer to on-going questions concerning the fetus as life and the fetus' right to life only to highlight citizens' neglect of children except, it seems, during this one political moment of attention, this one political moment of children having rights before their births. Once the fetus grows and is born a child, that whole and holy child seems to be without rights, without meaning, without value, and therefore without sustenance, support, protection, and, largely, without advocacy. On the nightly news, one can indeed learn of children having been beaten, sexually abused, or killed at their parents' hands, the hands of a neighbor, relative, or unknown passer-by. "Americans hate children," a teaching colleague from Russia once told me as I listened aghast.

What does it mean to be a child in this democracy, in this United States of America?

To answer this question, one must ask such prior questions as, "How does one recognize a life and a subject?" "Who and what counts as a life?" and "Who and what counts as a subject?" To begin answering these questions, Judith Butler (2010) distinguishes among apprehending a life, the intelligibility of a life, and recognizing a life; positions them on a continuum of ways of knowing before locating life itself within an interdependent network of persons and their relation to the environment; and, more broadly, locates life within the political and social conditions necessary to sustain it. Clarifying that apprehending a life relies in part upon the norms producing that life, norms that in turn qualify it both as a life and as part of life, Butler (2010), not unlike

Foucault (1975, 1978), explains normative constructions of the subject are not deterministic. Instead, overarching powers influence the relation among norms, when and how they recede and advance often bumping into “spectral versions of what they claim to know” (Butler, 2010, p. 4). As a result, she argues, some subjects are not recognizable as subjects; some lives are not recognizable—ever—as lives. Apprehension involves perceiving, sensing, knowing that which is not yet or at least not always conceptual, that which is not yet recognizable and perhaps is irreducible to recognition.

Butler locates intelligibility on the continuum between apprehension and recognition. Referring to Foucault (1970, 1972), she defines intelligibility as a historic *a priori*, a dynamic field constituted of general historic schema(s) founding fields of the knowable: “life has to be intelligible as a life, has to conform to certain conceptions of what life is, in order to become recognizable...schemas of intelligibility condition and produce norms of recognizability” (p. 7). A stronger term than apprehension, recognition derives from Hegelian texts. Over time scholars have therefore repeatedly revised and critiqued recognition as a Hegelian concept. Although norms of recognition do not limit *when* one apprehends a life, these norms do facilitate what one *can* apprehend. Recognizability consists of general conditions shaping and readying a subject for recognition. That is, norms and conventions fashioning a body into a living, recognizable subject make recognition possible. Again similar to Foucault, though stated quite differently, Butler insists life requires social and political conditions that nourish and support it including the interdependency of persons and their relation to the environment: “simply put, life requires support and enabling conditions in order to be livable life” (pp. 20–21). Because life is precarious, conditions that support flourishing and persistence reign supreme, for without them the question of living or of personhood are irrelevant. Butler asks, who decides under which conditions precarious life has the right to protection? On what basis is the decision made? Do we secure and assure conditions for our children to live livable lives?

Are we in this democracy, in these United States of America, minimizing the precariousness of life for our children?

I have begun with the apprehension, intelligibility, and recognition of life as a life because one must be able to recognize a life in order to identify it as worthy. In war one recognizes one’s people as “lives”; one values one’s own people’s lives as worthy; and because they are worthy lives, one counts them as they drop dead to the ground; one counts them as they become worn and wounded. They count as lives. Although

politicians have embraced the language of war apparently to galvanize citizens to eradicate such ills as poverty, drugs, and child abuse, the metaphor disintegrates when it comes to counting those lives, valuing those lives as lives lost in war, as lives lost to we the citizens of these United States. What does it take to be a child whom one recognizes as a life, whom one values, whom one identifies as worthy of nourishment, support, protection, and being granted the conditions for flourishing?

What does it mean to be a child in this democracy, in these United States of America?

While we know children are beaten, sexually violated, or killed daily—not only in far away Africa, far away Asia, the far away Middle East, and far away Europe but in our own backyards—I have been pondering these questions of apprehension, intelligibility, and recognition, these questions of children’s value and worthiness because I have recently become aware U.S. middle schools are the favored U.S. hunting grounds from which child sex traffickers pursue, trap, and abscond with children whom they traffick.¹ Indeed, traffickers seize girls at their sex-trafficking prime of 12–14 while traffickers prefer to nab the more-profitable, younger, 11–13-year-old boys and transgender youth (FBI, 2011). I have learned, too, that school superintendents, principals, and teachers remain largely unaware that traffickers sweep children from their schools, objects—never subjects—to be trafficked, often drugged into compliance, sold as objects, tortured, confined in squalor, and used up. Because child sex trafficking has exploded to epidemic levels, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) now provides training materials for school administrators, faculty, and staff in which its researchers estimate “as many as 100,000–300,000 American children are *at risk* of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States” annually (DHS as cited in Zurita, 2014). While accurate numbers are difficult to come by since child sex trafficking is a clandestine crime, creates frightened, shamed, often confused victims ignorant about what has happened to them, the various agencies and researchers agree the numbers available represent only about 1% of children sex trafficked in the United States. Because sex-trafficked children have a mere, 7-year life expectancy from time seized for trafficking, child sex traffickers need maintain these children only for a short time as part of planned obsolescence, for they seem to view children much as colonial settlers viewed trees, birds, and buffalo—a plentiful, never-ending source of wealth and labor. Often doomed never to become subjects, these child sex objects seldom survive their enslavement to tell their stories and rarely tell them when they do survive (Zurita, 2014). Those who survive have few places to go for help and recovery. Those who survive suffer post-traumatic stress, and the volunteers who council them—unlike any other kind of counselor—become traumatized from helping these children work through their many lifetimes of suffering condensed into a

few horrendous years. How is it that we have chosen our children as the prime population to expose “to conditions that jeopardize the possibility of persisting and flourishing” (Butler, 2010, p. 28)? What does it take to count as a life, a life recognized, valued, and worthy of sustenance, protection, and the conditions for flourishing?

What does it mean to be a child in this democracy, in our United States of America?

One cannot help but ask with Talal Asad (2007) and Butler (2010) citing Asad why some losses (here, this country’s children) horrify—mortify us—while we regard other losses with indifference, even righteousness. Perhaps child sex traffickers’ and certain other U.S. citizens’ apparent indifference or righteousness stems from their perceiving sex-trafficked children as dispensable not only because a renewable resource but dispensable in an almost survival-of-the-fittest way—dispensable within schools where only the fittest survive and then dispensable within the sex-trafficked environment-cult where even the fittest have a meager, 7-year life expectancy. Again, I use the economic term, planned obsolescence, to drive home the fact thousands of children are treated as objects monetized, bartered and exchanged, objects consumed within the current neoliberal economy designed to depersonalize and disconnect each one from all others. In this economy, child sex traffickers lure economically disadvantaged children with objects in order to capture and then sell those children as objects. The ever-present knowledge that no one can sell a child into sexual slavery were it not for consumer demand magnifies child sex trafficking’s unpleasant reality. Perhaps this taboo subject of market demand for child sex objects has adults donning blinders. Perhaps so many sex-trafficked children coming from families living in poverty or otherwise troubled circumstances makes one comfortable about these children’s planned obsolescence and ultimate demise, or perhaps some individuals adjust their discomfort by perceiving sex-trafficked children as objects fallen, irrecoverable, and forever sullied. It is not law-enforcement officers alone who ever-weigh the difference between sex-trafficked, child victims developmentally and legally incapable of granting consent and adults consensually and illegally living in prostitution.

Caught in the current, neoliberal, political and economic culture of “I-ness,” a political and economic system that separates rather than unites into the common “we,” citizens in this democracy may fail to understand that everyone shares life’s precariousness: “the recognition of shared precariousness introduces strong normative commitments of equality and invites a...robust universalizing of rights that seeks to address basic human needs for food, shelter, and other conditions for persisting and flourishing” (Butler, 2010, pp. 28–29). Life’s conditions

are reproducible, socially, politically, institutionally, relationally reproducible. Butler argues we live in politically induced conditions that expose certain populations—here, children, especially children living in poverty and/or in otherwise troubled homes—to greater violence than others. What would it mean to prevent harm, to protect from harm, and to guard against injury to and violence against our children? What would it mean to train and educate children in ways that would contribute to this preventing, protecting, and guarding? What would it mean comparably to train and educate parents, school personnel, and other individuals who work with this nation’s youth? I ask again:

What does it mean to be a child in this democracy, in our United States of America?

While I have only touched the surface, in a small way called attention to children’s precarious status in our democracy, and begun to theorize what it means for children to call this democracy “home” or for many “hell,” paying particular attention to child sex trafficking, I close by doing what Stacy and I have perceived since beginning our editorship as our editorial privilege and responsibility: call the membership to arms. Let us consider how we might unite our voices to call large-scale attention to this taboo, child sex trafficking phenomenon; let us consider possible avenues through which to gain collateral and momentum toward protecting our children from injury and violence, toward recovering those already sold into slavery, and toward nurturing and sustaining those recovered toward persisting and flourishing in life as a life recognized, valued, and worthy. In the Society of Philosophy and History of Education, we tend to do theoretical work. Let us join together to do the theoretical work necessary to undergird the empirical research in which our colleagues and certain agencies engage in their efforts to call attention to the taboo; prevent child sex trafficking; protect our children from objectification, abuse, and certain demise; recover those sold; and establish venues where those children recovered may be nurtured and sustained, supported and loved, valued and guided into a worthy, meaningful life.

Virginia Worley
Oklahoma State University

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Endnotes

- ¹ I would like to thank Dr. Denni Blum and Ms. Lynett Rock for bringing the child-sex-trafficking phenomenon to my attention and graciously updating me on efforts to recover children in Oklahoma; service learning opportunities; professional development for educators; empirical research in Oklahoma; and local law enforcement, the FBI, and local citizens' collaborative efforts to prevent injury and violence to children, protect them from injury and violence, recover children sold into slavery, and nurture, support, and guide these recovered children to lives in which they flourish.

Dedication



David Snelgrove

I cannot recall the exact year of the annual meeting at which I met David, but I certainly remember the impression he made on me. Once I heard him give his paper and listened to his thoughtful responses to the audience’s questions, I never again missed one of his papers. For many years we both attended SoPHE and ISEB, so I was fortunate to have many opportunities to hear what he had been thinking about. David has influenced so many with his kindness, intelligence, love of family, friends. He is rich with and shares freely his enthusiasm for life-long learning, laughter, and a deep knowledge of Czech beer—he is in every way a true connoisseur. Virginia Worley, with whom David has worked both in Oklahoma public schools and at Oklahoma State University, tells of the day a pre-service teacher came to her to say—as if she had had an epiphany—“Dr. Worley, Mr. Snelgrove is a real intellectual!” Her epiphany represents a fact we each have found, and after knowing him only a brief time: David is the best kind of intellectual, one who never seems to realize he is an intellectual, and one who takes all discussions seriously and never makes others feel small.

David Snelgrove served as a career teacher for 33 years in the Oklahoma City Public Schools and, at the time of his retirement, taught Russian language and social studies in an inner-city high school. David

entered teaching through the Teacher Corps program which recruited non-education majors into teaching. Through the Teacher Corps he finished his teaching certificate in social studies and foreign language and completed his Master of Arts in Teaching at Oklahoma City University, going on to teach in inner-city middle-school and high-school classrooms. David became an adjunct professor, teaching foreign language, education, and history at several nearby colleges and universities. He served as adjunct professor of Foundations of Education at the University of Central Oklahoma and is currently adjunct professor of education at Oklahoma State University supervising pre-service teachers.

It was through the Teacher Corps program that David became acquainted with longtime SoPHE members John Pulliam, Chipman Stuart, Thomas Wiggins, and Gene Shepherd from the University of Oklahoma and Dan Selakovich from Oklahoma State University. He became interested in futurism, humanistic education, human relations, and the historical, philosophical, and Social Foundations of Education. David did his graduate study in Social Foundations of Education and Educational Administration at The University of Oklahoma, where he also was influenced by Lloyd Williams.

While a graduate student David studied Russian Area Studies at the University of Graz, Austria, traveling throughout Austria, to the Russian cities of Moscow and Petersburg (then Leningrad), to Ljubljana, Slovenia, and finally through part of Yugoslavia and southern Germany. He conducted research for his doctoral dissertation while in Prague, Czech Republic. His dissertation, "Education in Czechoslovakia in the First Republic," remains unwritten.

During his public-school teaching career, David remained involved in scholarly pursuits through membership and presentations at the Society of Philosophy and History of Education (President, 1992), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Southern History of Education Society, the International Society for Educational Biography, the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities, the Southern Futures Society, and the American Federation of Teachers. After retiring from the public schools, in addition to his adjunct faculty work at local colleges and universities, David became a consultant with the Center for Civic Education's CIVITAS project, participating in the training of teachers in emerging democracies and working with teachers in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Russia.

David has extensively presented his research at the Society of Philosophy and History of Education, the International Society for Educational Biography, the Cameron University Academic conference,

the Texas and Southwest Popular Culture Association, the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Southern Futures Society, and the Southern History of Education Society. He has published in *History of Education Quarterly*, *International Education*, *Journal of Thought*, *Vitae Scholasticae*, UCO Forum, and *The Daily Oklahoman*. David's research themes are wide-ranging, illustrative of the breadth and depth of his interests and knowledge. His work's themes range from Boethius to Dewey; from European educational history to the history of southern education; from race and class to Marxism and socialism. His impressive biographical/philosophical studies vary widely and include such subjects as Maxine Green, Václav Příhoda, John Dewey, Jan Hus and, of course, John Amos Comenius. David served as Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy and History of Education* from 1996 until 2010.

Friend and colleague Sam Stack recalls: I first met David at the South Padre Island SWPES in 1989 and was still at the time under the tutelage of Tim Bergen. David stood out at that time as a scholar in neo-Marxist theory and scholarship and as a graduate student with whom I was more than impressed. Over the years I have come to know David as a true friend and mentor in many ways. He is a gentle giant and a true intellectual who has a passion for inquiry and the pursuit of ideas—far from the narcissism that often accompanies contemporary academia. I am honored to call him a friend.

And friend and colleague Karen McKellips says: No one has done more for the Society than David. For decades, whatever needed to be done, he has always stepped forward when no one else did. He kept the journal alive for years. He has been Program Chair [for the annual meeting] too many times to count. As membership changed throughout the years, he always quickly learned new people's names and areas of interest. His breadth of knowledge of the various disciplines never ceases to amaze me. There were many years in which various difficulties arose within the Society, and we always knew David would be there to help us cope with the problem. He is kind and witty and a sort of Renaissance man, not only knowledgeable and interested in educational history and philosophy, but also languages, travel, music, and beer. If there is anyone who should be called, "Mr. SoPHE," it is David.

David and his wife, Mary, have two daughters and six grandchildren, a travel trailer, and lots of fishing equipment.

Martha May Tevis
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

2014 SoPHE Presidential Address

“Engendering” Educational History: Some Methodological Musings

Lucy E. Bailey, Oklahoma State University

The title of my collection of musings echoes the reflective spirit and gendered focus of Petra Munro Hendry’s text, *Engendering Curriculum History*,¹ in which Hendry casts her analytic gaze on the field of curriculum history to revisit and reinterpret historical events from the perspective of those outside dominant Western epistemologies and cultural practices. Hers is an ambitious task, as are most reinterpretations,² and reflects an openly ideological research stance focused on the role of historical approaches in constituting gendered subjects. Hers seems a particularly salient critique to emerge in an historical moment some claim is post-gender (meaning beyond gender) and post-racial (meaning beyond racism).³ Although Hendry and other Curriculum Studies scholars with similar allegiances embrace theory for analyzing a broad range of social and historical processes, educational historians are much less likely to mobilize and apply theory explicitly as analytic tools. Having been trained in interdisciplinary foundations, I am interested in (both lurking and overt) theories, concepts, and tools shaping educational historians’ practice, our beliefs about which approaches and sources constitute valid historical work, and, accordingly, what we see and find when we slip into the archives. I have been puzzling through such methodological matters in a project Karen Graves and I have been working on for months and months focused on the tiny, little topic of “gender and educational history.”⁴ In the current essay I use three concepts—webs of relation, interpretive frameworks, and evocative objects⁵—to consider varied questions that have arisen during this “tiny” project, and in a few of my past projects and to ponder what the answers might mean to the project of engendering educational history.

The woeful current state of U.S. educational history as an area of study proves a salient backdrop to my discussion given Goodall and

Spencer's ominous charting of the "precipitous" decline of history of education offerings across U.S. higher education and teacher education programs,⁶ and as stakeholders in organizations such as the Society of Philosophy and History of Education are well aware, the recurring skepticism in colleges of education regarding the value of Foundations courses in general. If we consider course availability as a key force in the type of knowledge we highlight, create, disseminate, and absorb, curricular declines have significant implications for student learning, teacher practice, and future faculty knowledge and scholarship. In our current age of corporatization—of the family, of education, of health care, even of the body, as our tissues become a commodity both during our life and after it—"Foundations" as a field of knowledge simply neither holds the same consumer appeal for students nor offers the same educational currency for serving and reproducing neoliberal subjects as do "skill sets" and "competencies."⁷ Occasional conversations reveal that, in fact, some perceive Social Foundations faculty's knowledge as expendable or interchangeable with that of virtually any other faculty expertise: open a classroom, insert any teaching body.⁸

No discipline, of course, is immune to becoming a fleeting or recurring target of surveillance and critique if those in power perceive its value as irrelevant to the educational regime of the moment, a point to which scholars of varied humanities disciplines, art education, ethnic studies, and gender and women's studies (and the list continues) can easily attest. Yet, for various reasons, educational history seems to have taken a particular hit in recent decades, becoming a potentially expendable topic in an era of technoscience, corporatization, and accountability. This familiar pattern of fluctuating curricular exorcism or apathy is one that, paradoxically, the very tools of educational history can help excavate and contextualize.



My advisor retired a few months ago, a scholar who has been a formidable force in my development, although as a graduate student I could never have grasped fully her influence on my thinking or the relational epistemologies I recognize now as shaping my orientation to my professional labor. We can all ask ourselves, I am certain, how conscious we are at a given moment or on a given day that *each* moment and *each* day we engage in the process of making our memories, crafting versions of our own histories we will narrate, revise, and ponder next Thursday, next year, and—if the fates are gentle with us—decades from now. I easily recall the image of my advisor's spiked hair when she strode across the classroom talking about paradigms and data analysis; the humming of familiar voices in the women's studies office as faculty chatted and laughed; the imprint of friends' and instructors' feedback on

page after page of my writing. Our collaborative endeavors—those whom we invite into our lives and work, those who welcomes us into theirs, which courses we take and teach, what we read and speak, and which resources we carry with us and share with others—are all part of the intricate webs of relations that fuel and produce particular kinds of knowledge. As Paula Salvio remarks in her provocative biography of Anne Sexton, “teaching and scholarship are inevitably decisions of the flesh.”⁹ Salvio’s textured remark reminds me that where I focus my gaze and my energy are political decisions situated within embodied webs of human relation.



Had Karen and I charged in to our overview of scholarship and trends in gender and educational history 50 or so years ago, our project’s scope would have been much tinier, because “the field” conceived of gender as synonymous with women and consisted of scattered topical articles, journal issues, and the occasional overview, such as Thomas Woody’s substantial two-volume collection, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*.¹⁰ But then came the second wave of the women’s movement during which marginalized groups demanded a clearer sense of their histories and feminist activism seeped into the pores of academe, nourishing the fields of Gender and Women’s Studies and History to produce an array of key critiques of masculinist history, women’s histories, and biographies.¹¹ In the 1980s, Barbara Solomon published her foundational work on women’s educational history, *In the Company of Educated Women*, which painstakingly scrapes from available secondary and primary sources a portrait of women’s general *access* to U.S. higher education, offering lots of counts which reveal how many women attended institutions and what they were up to while they were there.¹²

Today we still inevitably count the folks and stuff of history, its evocative objects—this curriculum, those schools, that quilt, these letters (and of gender and women’s history, if we conceptualize these as different endeavors),—but we have new conceptions of history available to us after the linguistic, narrative, and representational turns. These new conceptions offer different understandings of gender’s elasticity as a concept, its intersections with other social locations, and the possible sites and objects in which it resides. With new theoretically imbued conceptions of the historical gaze available, we are freed to consider, if we so choose, historical research not as a single window onto a Past Real, but as multiple mediated, crafted, partial and situated accounts that say something about the historian and epistemologies constituting her

context as well as her object of study. We also have broader understandings of the foundational exclusions of educational history that, as Hendry's work conveys, could produce entirely new interpretations. Contemporary research is a messy, complicated business, but I like it—I like wrestling with the methodological puzzles inherent in the doing of history. Yet sifting through hundreds of articles to get a sense of “the field” these days suggests to us that, despite the rich historiography to which historians of education have contributed, few write with a consciousness of or allegiance to these methodological, theoretical, and representational possibilities that broader research shifts make available to us today or explicitly contextualize their approaches to their historical work—whatever their preferences—in the social and philosophical foundations of research.¹³

As Karen and I, in our larger study, take stock (from our inevitably presentist location) of “where we are today” in gender and history of education, we ask a question such scholars as Linda Eisenmann, Joyce Goodman, Jane Martin, Joan Wallach Scott, and Ruth Watts¹⁴ ponder to differing degrees, which is, “how much, *really*, has feminist, women's, and gender history shaped the contours of educational history as a field of knowledge?” This central question spurs others: Many know Dewey, but do we know Elsie Ripley Clapp? ...Ella Flagg Young? ...their significance to theory? ...whether we introduce them in classrooms? Who constitutes the “we” that do so? And does knowing something about individual women historically or the historical sites of their activities—what feminists sometimes call an add-women-and-stir approach to accumulating information—constitute *gendered* knowledge? Where do we see gender? We associate science with men historically but do we know how the conceptual linkages among men, masculinity, and science became possible when women have occupied “the field” all along? To what extent has the “isolated” series of studies in women's education, which has long focused on tracing women's activities, contributions, and challenges, cumulatively transformed and constituted the field in new ways?¹⁵

I am not responding to these ambitious questions here because they resist straightforward answers and Karen and I have not yet decided which stand we want to take, but I undertake these methodological musings in part to consider them further because I think the process of taking stock of “the field” involves asking utterly conceptual and methodological questions about where the field begins and ends, the embodied webs of relation we inhabit and nurture, and the interpretive frameworks we use to make sense of it all.¹⁶ The parameters of what constitutes a “gendered topic” in educational history depend on the data

sources we legitimize and where, as embodied beings, *we see* the imprint of gender or Woman or Her activities. As an historian approaches the archive, his or her training, lived experience, historical positioning, and conception of gender/woman/field/research question inevitably shapes what she or he sees on the historical landscape *as* gendered. And, as many note, gender as a unit of analysis has primarily coagulated in educational history on the female archival subject.

I want to dive into a few questions and decisions from the broader project informing my reflections here to demonstrate some of the methodological slipperiness of conceptualizing a gendered field. In 2014, historian Donald Warren raised methodological questions related to his recent work on race, science, and intellectual history aligned with questions I have already raised in the present essay.¹⁷ In addition to considering how methods shape findings, Warren urges historians to ask such questions as, “how do *anticipated* findings shape research methods?” Feminist methodologists have asked this very question for decades in response to the long history in conventional research of constructing women as essentialized, inferior beings in advance of a given investigation or of excluding them altogether to prevent their pesky subjectivities from “polluting” research endeavors. Conceptions of woman, man, and gender inevitably shape what researchers “find” when they study us lesser-folk. For instance, if a scientist conceives of a woman as a deviant “misbegotten man,” as some were wont historically to do, he might busy himself trying an array of methods until he locates the exact origin, the exact site of that inferiority on women’s bodies, theorizing ovaries and measuring craniums and mandibles and pelvis widths to *affirm* rather than *discover* a site of difference.¹⁸ Scientists in the 1950s approached medical studies of lesbian and gay bodies with similar beliefs and goals.¹⁹ These perhaps familiar and transparent examples convey that frames matter conceptually in how we look and what we see.

One conceptual issue in “taking stock” of the place of gender in educational history is the idea the project itself shapes rather than simply reflects a field.²⁰ This idea, this interpretive framework, disrupts claims that such projects are innocent reflections onto an historical real. Research conventions cultivate a need, an impulse, even an incitement, for the good, disciplined researcher to take stock, to pin down, to get a handle on the slipperiness of it all, to make claims, and to find broad, interpretive frameworks and explanations that assist in weaving together an array of seemingly singular cases. But the task of containing and charting inevitably excludes and sorts and ranks and overlooks. The interpretive frameworks that guide us also can nourish and foreclose alternative sites of gendered data and interpretations that shape the

contours of a field even while their representations seem authoritative, persuasive, and tidy.

These thoughts lead us to pose such questions as: “How, exactly, do we conceptualize the boundaries of the ‘field’? Which distinctions, if any, should we draw among scholarship in women’s, feminist, and gender history? Are such constructed distinctions even relevant, and how do they, too, exclude and foreclose? Does a study written by a rhetorician or an historian and published in another disciplinary outlet yet focused on education *count* as part of the field? Does the author or reader need to name and recognize a project as gendered, for it to be ‘part of the gendered field? If we have to *scavenge* for it, is it part of ‘the field’? Does someone have to be aware of it, *read it*, think with it, incorporate it into their work, teach it, contradict it or extend it, for it to be part of the field? Who has to be doing the listening and the reading? ...a child? ...a K–12 teacher? ...a leading and prolific scholar? Does ‘the field’ require journals, impact factors, and recirculation through citations, or will any journal, website, or teaching context do? What, then, does the decreasing number of folks taking history of education courses and exploring content mean for the field?”²¹

In the first stages of wrestling with such productive messiness, Karen and I began from our embodied locations, conducting a bunch of searches, brainstorming a bunch of key titles, plucking things from our shelves to review, and considering key resources we use that explicitly take up gender/women in educational history. At this stage, our choices relied entirely on our individual histories as readers and webs of relation that had emerged organically over the years. Our collection came to about 40-odd texts and stacks of articles. We compiled a massive list of titles and abstracts to assist in making sense of it all. Then, in line with the project parameters, we pruned any texts from our working list published more than 10 years ago. This first-round culling left about 16 texts, including monographs and some compilations.

If we had concretized the approximately 10-year boundary of the field of gender and educational history firmly based only on this search, we would have dropped Solomon’s classic text on *access* (published in 1985, and which has informed many studies since then), an historical dictionary on women’s education (consisting of an array of short excerpts), several comprehensive volumes focused on women scientists (which did not focus exclusively on education), and Joan Scott’s *Politics of Gendered History* (published in 1988), which brings foundational poststructuralist questions to bear on enduring history. Within this brew of decade-old monographs, we initially located only one text either with a male author or focused on gendered constructions of masculinity in schooling (Clark’s *Creating the College Man*, published in 2010).²² Only two

are educational biographies. All are published in English and focus in large part on formal, Western, educational spaces. Only a handful focus on women of color. Had we stretched the parameters of publication an additional five years, or included texts within which gender or women is evident but not central, our number of texts would have tripled. The search parameters, our eclectic reading histories, and conception of topic and focus guiding any project thus shapes rather than simply reflects a sense of the field.

When we turned more systematically to exploring articles in venues focused on educational history (e.g., the *History of Education*, *History of Education Quarterly*, *History of Education Society*, *American Educational History Journal*), noting any pieces focused on women or gender issues or those historians mention as shaping women's education (e.g., mixed schooling, home economics, normal schools), we found approximately 200 pieces in these sources published post-2003. We also locate another 50 or so in *Pedagogica Historica*, an international, tri-lingual journal. We then broadened our quest outside educational history outlets to include general gender, education, and women's studies journals, tallying 10 additional historical articles from the journal *Gender and Education*, others from *Gender and History*, and a scattered few others in different historical and contemporary journals. Some journals, such as the *Journal of Legal History*, include but one article in 10 years. When we turned to searches for gender, education, and history outside of education—to English, Rhetoric, American-Indian and African-American Studies, for example—the terrain productively morphed further to include special issues and a few comprehensive articles. Work in international, gendered educational history proved far more elusive to locate. Given the slipperiness of disciplinary allegiances and engendered webs of relation, we were not surprised when several studies did not mention educational historians at all.

In sum, we stretched and scavenged to collect approximately 450 articles and dozens of books. While our increasingly focused, creative efforts produced more results, I do not present these examples to highlight search engines or key terms or pose a more “systematic,” more “accurate” approach to surveying the field. Any reviewing endeavor is riddled with conceptions that embrace and exclude. Yet the search details are instructive for considering how a field *becomes* engendered, and to that end, I wish to count just a couple of other things before I focus qualitatively on significance. The number 450 averages out to, say, 45 publications per year across 10 years. I read recently publishers produce over 4,000 journal articles each and every day. It took me weeks amidst other duties to write the present article, complete with numerous additional revisions, and this is only a small portion of our larger project. I tallied the number of articles I read last week, which came to a grand

total of seven. In the 30 minutes or so I presented this paper at the SoPHE annual conference in 2014, about 180 articles came to press. How do varied teaching loads and institutional resources contribute to this production? How many of those will any of us read? How could even the most diligent and efficient of workers contend with much material? And how much of this work focuses on gender in educational history that might offer new insights into “the field”—all while we scribble away attempting to assess it?

So a key aspect of considering how gender shapes the history of education, I think, lies not only in what is “out there”—what embodied beings have produced while hunched over their keyboards over months and years of time—and what others search for, locate, and weave into a “field” through intentional, clear positioning. How gender shapes the history of education also involves how taut or supple are the embodied webs of relations formed among scholars across fields and among students and teachers and, thus, how much embodied readers and practitioners know about any of it. As history of education offerings (perhaps temporarily) decline, the question of who is producing scholarship and who is sitting down to absorb it matters to what we know. Mine is not a minor point. Engendering a field must surely involve the availability of institutional resources, the distribution of labor within institutions, and how thoroughly gendered patterns of scholarship orient our thinking and inform our embodied practice as historians.

In addition to considering how institutional labor patterns, resources, and embodied relations shape scholars’ conceptualizations of a given field, gendered scholarship is also riddled with a range of interpretive frames that direct our analytic gaze and nudge us toward noticing particular data sources or interpreting phenomena in particular ways. Such interpretive frames signal what constitutes a “gendered issue” to explore. Such frames help the reader make sense of “what’s going on” in historical patterns, offering points of departure, or directing and ordering our thinking better to grapple with the complexity of meaning-making. Concepts such as “access,” “the achievement gap,” “the gender gap,” “at-risk,” “the cult of true womanhood,” “Republican motherhood,” “the public/private sphere,” “the home front,” and even “under-representation” each reflect familiar and seemingly sensible lenses to which to bring to bear on our analytical work. Some conceptual frames have become so familiar, in fact, we may no longer experience them as useful options among an endless stream of interpretive tools but rather as “real” patterns in history or as signals of the “right way” to explore historical phenomenon. Yet, they, too, inevitably limit, contain, and foreclose. Eisenmann’s productive critique of Solomon’s concept of “access” inspires fresh frameworks, new groupings, and questions in gender scholarship.

Revisiting and unsettling accepted gendered frameworks and expanding sites of inquiry can engender the field in new ways. This approach has been helpful in my own work. A number of years ago, I analyzed a collection of Civil War letters women wrote to an Ohio soldier, and one teacher's lament in a letter that struck me at the time has inspired new questions since then; she wrote, "I intend commencing my school next Monday. O! horror, how I hate it. I would just as soon go to my grave the first week."²³ Perhaps any teacher can empathize, at times, with this writer's epistolary sentiments, yet I remember feeling surprised this teacher's experience ran counter to the dominant discourse women's historians have narrated about the 19th-century feminization of teaching as an empowering and transformative shift for literate U.S. women and an avenue by which some might grasp a smidgen of status and independence.²⁴ At the time, I had not considered other analytic frameworks for interpreting 19th-century teachers' lives.

Yet, the young woman who wrote these words with such flair did not seem interested at that moment in the potential transformative power of teaching for her own life, or for women as a group, and seems, in fact, insensitive to the gendered corporeal realities of a soldier whose view from the front lines of the Civil War might have offered a profoundly different sense of horror and of graves than that offered by her rural Ohio classroom.²⁵ We do not know why she wrote these lines, what it meant to her correspondent, and what possible relevance it might have for the history of teaching. How we experience our labor need not map onto dominant accounts, and other of the collection's letter writers certainly celebrate their teaching in ways that map tidily onto feminist frameworks. But my surprise as a reader signals how thoroughly, at the time, I had absorbed as expressions of agency and progress feminists' interpretations of women's entry into teaching in the 19th-century landscape. While I now recognize the limited meaning of any one epistolary comment and the broader, gendered political forces at work in the transformative, 19th-century shift to a female teaching force, the experience reminds me we must remain aware how even productive metaphors and frameworks for analyzing phenomenon can signal, direct, and contain gendered analysis and perhaps limit us from other ways of looking.

Passing lines in a letter like this, from one teacher, from a gendered data source,²⁶ can provide compelling fissures in dominant accounts from which to forge additional gendered questions that might ultimately inform "the field." Such contradictory traces haunt the archives, but we need time and labor to surface them. I am interested in what it means to develop our research questions from fragments, hauntings, and traces,

from the relations and scraps which move us emotionally, and from different kinds of educational subjects who await historians' recognition as gendered entities. ...from a disgruntled teacher. ...from a "sneaky kid" who leaves school.²⁷ ...from the historical figure of the prostitute, who might be an object of the policy imagination that informs the development of U.S. sex education.²⁸ ...from evocative objects such as an apple tree, shards of pottery, the remnants of a stone foundation.²⁹ ...from educators such as Anne Sexton who defy normative standards of the "proper woman" and "good teacher."

Paula Salvio's biography of Sexton provides a rich example of contemporary, theoretical, and methodological developments that have potential to engender educational history in new and compelling ways if "seen" from this perspective. Salvio uses Sexton as a site through which to examine discourses of the appropriate teacher and the appropriate biographical subject during the years she taught and wrote. A controversial poet who struggled with depression and alcohol, and whose life and behavior did not conform to gendered scripts, Sexton was simply too unruly of a subject to incorporate comfortably into conventional historical accounts of women teachers. In Salvio's rendering, Sexton's unruliness, in fact, is the very site of her analytic productivity as a biographical subject. Salvio's use of Sexton as a touchstone to revisit and analyze elements of her own life history also blur and confound traditional biographical forms and researcher/subject relations. Rather than crafting a sterilized version of Sexton's life that disciplines her into a proper woman subject, Salvio takes up the tensions in her positionality, poetry, and pedagogy to consider what they mean for theorizing teaching and for educational biography. It is an evocative text, saturated with theory, and riddled with psychoanalytic questions, functioning as a multidimensional site for analyzing gendered educational issues.³⁰

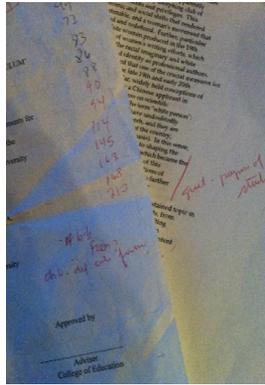
Just as Salvio's analysis of Sexton's unconventional life raises productive questions to explore in gendered educational history, so, too, can unconventional data sources offer promising tools for researchers with which to stretch the contours and directions of the field. If we turn to analyzing evocative objects³¹ not yet saturated with gendered meanings, or to historical hauntings, the "visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing,"³² how might the field of gender history expand in new directions?



Not too long ago, when I was sorting and thinning file drawers in my little house, a de-cluttering ritual one must repeat often when one has a penchant for book buying, and more painfully, as one weathers the inevitable losses of living, I came across some of my well-worn dissertation drafts that had somehow survived the wear of varied moves

and the carrying, sifting, sorting, stapling, revising, tossing about, thumbing through, and mulling over that occurred during the long nights I worked on that project. I loved moments of my work at the time, I remember: savoring and chasing words, sifting through old stacks of books, hunching over a cheap pressed-wood desk I picked up for 40 dollars sometime, somewhere, that was just wide enough to fit my knees, but not deep enough to stretch out my legs. My desk sat in a tiny upstairs bedroom of a 1920s townhouse rented in Columbus, Ohio, where some soul had long ago painstakingly painted the old wood floors a rusty-colored hue to match the circa 1960s flowered tan, rust, and mustard wallpaper that still clung to the walls. Over time, the rust-colored paint had begun to flake and chip. The walls and windows were so thin in the western corner that during the winter months I wore a huge, greyish-taupe wool cardigan my sister had given me while my cat, Isabel, usually covered up the floor's heating vent with her fuzzy little body. Such as it was at that time in my life, this was *A Room of My Own*, and I finished my dissertation there, page by page.

When I encountered these drafts recently, I noticed they were all bordered in light-red ink, in my advisor's writing, a color choice she often used but which feminist pedagogues such as Jyl Lyn Feldman refer to as a form of bloodshed—preferring, instead, a soothing purple shade, or, perhaps, a salubrious green, to soften the blow of the teacher's critique.¹ My advisor would not have given a damn about Feldman's thoughts about ink color, or about discourses of nurturing female teachers, or about protecting students from hard, intellectual work, and she occasionally reminded us, lest anyone dared to think otherwise, "I am not your mother." Sifting through these pages once again from the vantage point of the present, the artifacts of that space and time became evocative objects: objects of memory, transition, passage, meditation, and central to the web of relations within which we are constituted. James writes, "the whole universe of concrete objects, as we know them, swims...for all of us, in a wider and higher universe of abstract ideas, that lend its significance. ...we can never look directly at them, for they are bodiless and featureless and footless, but we grasp all other things by their means."³⁴ Recognizing that familiar handwriting again when emptying my files—writing I have not seen in years, since our correspondence resides now solely on email, or in person when I travel east—took me back to those days sitting next to the swimming pool while she floated and I scribbled notes, and to that light corner office on that busy, busy street, sifting through her feedback, trying to interpret the next steps I should take from such comments as, "hmmmm," "really?," or "what do you mean by this?"



I am in some ways indulging in a moment of nostalgia rooted in one narrative version of my own history but my point is a critical one aligned with pondering what it means to consider interpretive frameworks, embodied webs of relation, and evocative objects in the process of engendering educational history. In Naomi Norquay's historical work on Ned Patterson, an early settler and African-Canadian preacher who once owned the 50-acre plot of land on which Naomi currently resides, she blends documentary fragments with oral family narratives from area neighbors to sketch out a sense of what Ned did and where he lived. The few traditional sources she found—census records, land records, farm records, and directories—offered only basic, and often contradictory, information that gave her little sense of Ned as a man. So Norquay turned instead to what she and Ned share—the land—to provide “glimpses of the early settler” and reads the landscape for traces of his life—examining the remnants of foundation walls, their mortar and limestone, shards of broken crockery he may once have used, an apple tree that sits outside her window that seems to have blossomed there for years. I see these evocative objects for Norquay as part of a web of material and emotional relations connecting her to the traces of Ned's life, to glimmers of who Ned might have been. She suggests, “as traces of a life, [such objects] open up spaces of interrogation that are often overlooked when we rely on the same regimes of documentation and standard research tools.”³⁵

These reflections bring me back to a final point about relations, conceptual frames and evocative objects in the work of engendering educational history. A mentor shared something with me years ago that has stayed with me as the years have passed. “Really, Lu,” she said, “the work of faculty is training people to replace you....” While many of us may not consider our daily work in this way, it is a framework that highlights our embodied searching, scribbling, and speaking as political

commitments to preserving and creating particular kinds of knowledge. So, in this sense, part of any teacher's embodied labor is nudging students along who can absorb, work against, discard and revise, move beyond her ideas, and add those from other thinkers, threading them into texts and talks and passing them along.

The image with which I want to close is a picture of a mug a student gave me a few years ago, an evocative object fueled by visceral forces that remains something with which I think. The mug I fill with coffee on chilly days displays a picture of piles of her readings and dissertation drafts that are, in turn, covered in my scribbles in the margins—one object imbricated in a web of historical relations, hers and mine, students and teachers, words on a page, traces of our gendered, embodied, partial, situated lives.³⁶



Endnotes

- 1 Petra Munro Hendry, *Engendering Curriculum History* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
- 2 See, for example, Diane Vaughn, "Theorizing Disaster: Analogy, Historical Ethnography, and the Challenger Accident," *Ethnography* 5, no. 3 (2004): 313–345.
- 3 Many have rejected this claim, even as it persists in the wake of Michael Brown's 2014 death in Ferguson, Missouri and other African-American men's recent deaths that have captured national attention and underscore the profound ways racial and gendered dynamics shape lived experience.

- 4 Lucy E. Bailey and Karen Graves, "Gendering History," in John Rury and Eileen Tamura, Eds., *History of Education* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, in review). Graves is the author of *And They Were Wonderful Teachers: Florida's Purge of Gay and Lesbian Teachers* (Champaign-Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), and *Girls' Schooling during the Progressive Era: From Female Scholar to Domesticated Citizen* (New York: Garland Press, 1998). Thank you, Karen for your contributions to this essay.
- 5 Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
- 6 Lester Goodchild and John Spencer, "Teaching the History of Education in the U.S.A.: A National Report on Its Decline in the 50 States and How We Can Revive It" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the History of Education Society, Nashville, TN, November 1, 2013).
- 7 Joel Spring discusses such commodification in, "The Economization of Education: What Business Wants from Schools, 1890–2014" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of Educational Historians, Chicago, IL, September 26–27, 2014).
- 8 Anthropologist Emily Martin analyzes "flexibility" in medicine and immunity discourses with implications for corporations championing ever-adaptable, commodifiable bodies in the service of transnational capitalism, analysis increasingly salient to higher-education practices. See *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).
- 9 Paula Salvio, *Anne Sexton: Teacher of Weird Abundance* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).
- 10 Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York: Science Press, 1929).
- 11 Various scholars and activists contribute to our knowledge base about women's history during these active decades. For an overview on writing on women's lives, see Linda Wagner Martin, *Telling Women's Lives: The New Biography* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994).
- 12 Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).
- 13 This critique remains salient even to openly ideological research approaches that foreground the politics of knowledge production but sometimes trace insufficiently the complexity and shifts in core concepts. See Lucy E. Bailey and Mary Margaret Fonow, "Foundational Commitments, Intergenerational Knowledge

- Production, and New Trajectories: Feminist Methodologies,” In Gaile S. Cannella, Michelle Perez, and Penny Pasque (Eds.), *Critical Qualitative Methodology: Foundations and Futures* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2015): 51–76.
- ¹⁴ Among them: Linda Eisenmann, “Creating a Framework for Interpreting U.S. Women’s Educational History: Lessons from Historical Lexicography,” *History of Education* 30, no. 4 (2001): 453–470; Joyce Goodman, “Troubling Histories and Theories: Gender and the History of Education,” *History of Education* 32, no. 2: 157–174; Jane Martin, “Thinking Education Histories Differently: Biographical Approaches to Class Politics and Women’s Movements in London, 1900s to 1960s,” *History of Education* 36, no. 4 (2007): 515–533; Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); and Ruth Watts, “Gendering the Story: Change in the History of Education,” *History of Education* 34, no. 3 (2005): 225–241.
- ¹⁵ Eisenmann poses this very question in, “Creating a Framework...,” (2001), and Graves and I explore it.
- ¹⁶ Eisenmann describes new interpretive frameworks productive for women’s history; I use the phrase more broadly here to convey any theories that govern the researcher’s gaze or given project.
- ¹⁷ Donald Warren, “Education Questions that Can No Longer Be Ignored: Race, Science, and Intellectual History” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of Educational Historians, Chicago, IL, September 26–27, 2014).
- ¹⁸ Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman’s Nature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993). Tuana’s text traces foundational beliefs of women’s inferiority historically from the classical period to the 19th century.
- ¹⁹ See Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- ²⁰ Patti Lather suggests scholarly reviews, and perhaps by extension overviews, have this function. See “To Be of Use: The Work of Reviewing,” *Review of Educational Research* 69, no. 1 (Spring, 1999): 2–7. Also see Bailey and Fonow, “Foundational Commitments,” and Bailey and Graves, “Gendering History” for this same theoretical point.
- ²¹ See Bailey and Graves, “Gendering History.”
- ²² Daniel Clark, *Creating the College Man: American Mass Magazines and Middle-Class Manhood, 1890–1915* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

- ²³ Nancy L. Rhoades and Lucy E. Bailey, *Wanted—Correspondence: Women’s Letters to a Union Soldier* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009).
- ²⁴ Marjorie Theobald’s critique of such discourses is instrumental to my thinking here. See Rhoades and Bailey, *Wanted*; and Marjorie Theobald, “Teachers, Memory and Oral History,” in K. Weiler and Sue Middleton, Eds., *Telling Women’s Lives: Narrative Inquiries in the History of Education* (Buckingham, U.K.: Open University Press, 1999).
- ²⁵ See Rhoades and Bailey, *Wanted*.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ This term refers to Harry F. Wolcott’s well-known *Sneaky Kid* trilogy; See *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).
- ²⁸ For analysis of the function of “the prostitute” in sex-education discourse historically, see Caitlin Howlett, “Exploring New Possibilities: The Relationship Between Sex Education and Sex Work” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of Educational Historians, Chicago, IL, September 26–27, 2014).
- ²⁹ Naomi Norquay, “Finding Ned Patterson,” *Northern Terminus: The African Canadian History Journal* 8 (2011): 13–23; and Naomi Norquay, “Remembering in a Context of Forgetting: Hauntings and the Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Settlement,” *Canadian Social Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014): 127–139.
- ³⁰ I consider Salvio’s text, *Weird Abundance*, a rich contribution to educational biography and discuss these points elsewhere; as one example, see Lucy E. Bailey, “Auto/Biography in Educational Contexts: Reflections and Possibilities,” *Vitae Scholasticae* 30, no. 2 (2013): 5–15.
- ³¹ Turkle, *Evocative*.
- ³² Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (Eds.), *Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.
- ³³ Jyl Lynn Felman, *Never A Dull Moment: Teaching and the Art of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- ³⁴ Quoted in Turkle, *Evocative*, 127.
- ³⁵ Norquay, “Remembering.”
- ³⁶ Thank you, Stephoni.

The 2014 Drake Lecture

**“We Ain’t Dead Yet!”
Sustaining Hope and Vitality in Teacher
Education**

Neil O. Houser, University of Oklahoma

Introduction

I am honored to have been asked to give the 2014 William E. Drake Lecture.¹ The Society of Philosophy and History of Education has meant a lot to me. It has been a place to meet wonderful people, explore new ideas, take intellectual risks, and receive thoughtful feedback without fear of ridicule. SoPHE has also been a place to present with my graduate advisees and to collaborate with colleagues not only from Oklahoma, but from across the country.

At SoPHE I have become part of an authentic intellectual community. I have been welcomed even though I am not formally trained as an educational philosopher, historian, or sociologist. Prior to entering the teacher profession, I worked as a group counselor—essentially a guard—in a large juvenile hall in central California. Before that I worked on a youth ward in a psychiatric hospital. My formal academic background is in the visual arts and in curriculum and instruction, and I am always a little nervous combining traditional scholarship with personal teaching experiences, student artwork, fictional literature, and references to popular culture in an effort to develop a coherent argument.

I will admit I was greatly reassured during one of my first SoPHE presentations when David Snelgrove provided personal insight on the art of public speaking. Prior to my session I privately—somewhat urgently—confided, “I don’t think I’m ready,” to which David replied, “My philosophy is that *something* will happen.” Although tongue-in-cheek, his words helped me relax and allowed me to not take myself quite so seriously. Experiences like these have helped immensely in my ability to present my work before my peers.

In today's talk I want to focus on the need for hope and vitality in teacher education in order to continue coping with the challenges we encounter in schools and society. I argue we can generate hope and vitality by managing self-expectations, negotiating the relationship between critique and possibility, and acknowledging critical epistemological factors underlying our most fundamental challenges. However, this will require habits of mind that resist absolute and binary thinking, utilization of our capacity for humor, continued activity and celebration of hard-won accomplishments, and ongoing creation and maintenance of authentic educational communities for our students and ourselves.

New Challenges

Most of us are aware of the traditional challenges in our profession. However, I want to begin by talking about new challenges that have only become evident to me during the last couple of years. At a college faculty meeting we were divided into breakout sessions roughly consisting of "new" faculty, "more advanced" faculty, and "seasoned veterans." For the first time, I found myself sitting in the "seasoned veterans" group. This designation was disconcertingly consistent with the fact I had recently been referred to as an "elder statesman" and that I had even begun to hear rumors of my impending retirement. I had never seen myself as "elder" or "seasoned," I had never considered retiring, and I was not quite sure how or when all of this had happened!

During our breakout session, a number of issues were identified, including the challenges of staying motivated, being valued by younger faculty, and coping with misunderstandings of our motives and actions. Some of the strongest concerns involved loss of institutional memory and historical understanding, lack of critical distance, faculty assimilation for personal and professional gain, and loss of understanding of the relationship between information and wisdom. Some of these concerns reminded me of an exchange in Michael Crichton's (1990) novel, *Jurassic Park*, in which an exasperated mathematician, Ian Malcolm, explains to the impatient InGen owner, John Hammond:

Scientific power is like inherited wealth: attained without discipline. You read what others have done, and you take the next step. You can do it very young. You can make progress very fast. There is no discipline lasting many decades. There is no mastery: old scientists are ignored. There is no humility before nature. There is only a get-rich-quick, make-a-name-for-yourself-fast philosophy. ...[However,] no one will criticize you. ... They are all trying to do the same thing. (p. 306)



Figure 1. Logo based on Michael Crichton's (1990) novel, *Jurassic Park*.

The breakout session experience was disconcerting. I had never seen myself as “seasoned” (in my mind’s eye, I have always been somewhere between 19 and 35, in spite of what the mirror tells me), and I had seldom considered factors such as striving to remain valued by younger faculty or justifying my continued presence in the college or the profession. The thought occurred to me that about the time we begin to realize some of our highest professional aspirations, others may begin to see us as obsolete. I endorsed the seasoned veterans’ decision to entitle our breakout group’s report “We ain’t dead yet!”

Old Challenges

Of course, realizing new challenges exist does not negate the fact that there are still plenty of old problems in need of attention, including powerful, institutionalized structures that disproportionately affect students and untenured faculty. Other concerns include the ongoing (and accelerating) corporatization of education (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 2012; McNeil, 2000; Molnar, 2005); continued denials of structural inequities (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1972, 1977; Freire, 1970/1999; McIntosh, 1989; Nieto, 2000); devastation of indigenous populations as well as the environment (Houser, 2014; Quinn, 1992; Shepard, 1982); persistent belief in educational panaceas (such as the use of behavioral objectives, high-stakes testing, online teaching, and some pretty bizarre combinations therein) (Lagemann, 1989; McNeil, 2000; Postman, 1992); seemingly perpetual cultures of educational “reform” and “accountability” (Au, 2013; Houser, Krutka, Province, Coerver, & Pennington, 2013); surveillance and hegemony in public education (Foucault, 1977; Gramsci, 1990); and relentless efforts to “define the situation,” shape the narrative, and naturalize the results (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006).

If simply *listing* these concerns is distressing, attempting to resolve them can be overwhelming! In 1939 Virginia Woolf described the work of women, traditionally expected to manage an infinity of time-consuming domestic obligations, as “clawing through the cotton wool of daily life” (1939/1976, p. 72). Although the profession currently consists of women and men, both the minutiae and the gravity of working in a caregiving profession such as teacher education can be daunting. As Ruth Behar (1996) notes, we are living in an age of “compassion fatigue” (p. 86).

Here I am reminded of a brief conversation with Lucy Bailey a few years ago. It began something like this:

“How’s everything going?”

“Ugh! I feel like curling up into a fetal position.”

The following year we resumed our discussion:

“How’s everything going?”

“About the same as last year!”

Among all the problems we face currently, I am perhaps most concerned with how we, as teachers, students, and society in general, can keep ourselves going without succumbing to debilitating cynicism or despair on the one hand, or equally debilitating shallowness on the other hand (Ayers, Mitchie, & Rome, 2004). How can we avoid acquiescing to the fatalistic sense of inevitability of which Maxine Greene (1988) warned nearly 30 years ago, wherein human-created problems are perceived as being “hopelessly there” (p. 22)?

Paradoxically, it may be our “best and our brightest,” our most critical, caring, and reflective practitioners, who are least likely professionally to survive. This is not because they do not wish to teach, but because they keenly perceive what currently passes for “teaching” is but a pale reflection of what is necessary and possible. It is they who are most susceptible to developing empathy fatigue and ultimately dropping out of the profession, while those who fail to recognize anything is amiss, who live what Milan Kundera (1984) calls an “unbearable lightness of being,” may still proceed relatively unscathed in an increasingly suffocating educational milieu.

Hope and Vitality in Teacher Education

What can be done to address these issues? How can we, in teacher education, generate the hope and vitality needed to continue asking these questions? Based on my own experience as well as the literature with which most of us are familiar, I believe several things can be done. Among other things, we need to: (1) manage our self-expectations; (2) negotiate the relationships between critique and possibility; (3)

acknowledge the sources of our most fundamental problems; (4) utilize our capacity for humor; (5) continue to move, and to celebrate our accomplishments; and (6) support community and other spaces of growth for our students and ourselves.

Managing Self-Expectations

One thing we can do to sustain our vitality is to manage better our self-expectations. Tremendous weight is felt by educators at all levels. I strongly agree with the adage: “We cannot do everything, but we must do something.” Yet, failure to come to terms with the fact we cannot do everything undermines our ability to care for ourselves *or* others. Here, selfish as it may seem, I am reminded of the international flight attendant’s injunction, in case of an emergency, to place the oxygen mask on oneself before attempting to assist others. My own preference is to identify a few areas within which I believe I can make a difference, strive to do them exceptionally well, and let go of as much as possible of the rest of it without placing undue responsibility upon my peers.

I also think it important to preserve some of our energy for investment in the future. Many of us are deeply committed to our lifework and wish to “keep it up” and “pass it on.” I think in terms of preserving roughly 5–10% of my time and energy for investment in the future. However, such investments cannot occur if there is nothing left at the end of the day. It is difficult to know how many of those whose lives have ended prematurely expected more of themselves than they could reasonably have been expected to give.

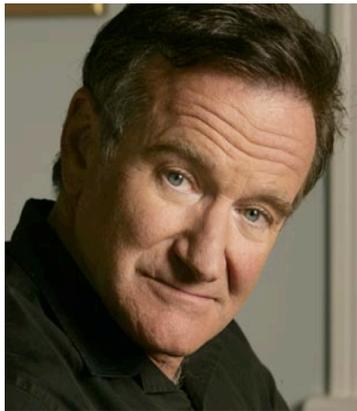


Figure 2. Robin Williams (1951–2014).

Negotiating Critique and Possibility

Another way to maintain hope and vitality is to negotiate the relationship between critique and possibility (Freire, 1970/1999, 1992; Giroux, 1985; Greene, 1988). Concerned educators have long advocated

a critical orientation. In 1960, James Baldwin (1960/1988) wrote the following in *A Talk to Teachers*:

The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. (p. 4)



Figure 3. James Baldwin (1924–1987).

A decade later, Paulo Freire (1970/1999) published his classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, calling for the development of critical consciousness. Many educators, consistent with the aims of scholars like Baldwin (1960/1988) and Freire (1970/1999), have sought to promote a sense of critical consciousness in and through their teaching. In my case, I have pursued these goals through my classes in social studies and integrated arts education.

A regular assignment in my integrated arts education class for elementary pre-service teachers involves using art to engage in social critique and critical reflection. Essentially, I ask students to identify and represent (via various artistic media) a problematic social norm or institution they believe ought to be carefully examined. Over the years students have identified various norms and institutions including gender stereotyping (Figure 4) (Butler, 1990; Kilbourne, 2010), racial discrimination (Banks, 1989; Nieto, 2000), social indoctrination (Foucault, 1977; Gramsci, 1990), hidden curricula and secret education (Anyon, 1979; Christenson, 1994), manipulative media marketing

(McChesney, 2013), international exploitation via colonization and neocolonialism (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1987, 1995), and various challenges involving social media.



Figure 4. Project depicting the silencing and judging of women and girls.

Many elementary-education majors choose to explore ways women and girls are represented in the media. In Figure 4, a child's doll is covered with eyes, indicating surveillance and judgment, her mouth is taped shut, suggesting silencing, she is strapped to her chair, indicating she must mind her place, and a tag has been pinned to her foot stating, "Lie about your age."

Others explore issues of control and conformity. The student in Figure 5 draws from the Tetris computer game to critique external pressures to conform. Her captions include: Where do you invest your WORTH? What is your STANDARD? Determine your future, BUT make sure that it makes you look "perfect."



Figure 5. Art project critiquing external pressures to conform.

Similar views are communicated by another student who adds financial success, domesticity, and child-rearing to her list of external expectations (Figure 6). Set in a living room with exquisite wallpaper but shattered windows, an expectant “Barbie Doll mother” reclines on a pile of pink and blue books labeled with dollar signs. The book in her hand is entitled *My Baby the Successful*.



Figure 6. Pressures to marry, raise children, and become financially successful.

In addition to the imposition of external expectations, students also explore issues of racism, religious domination and intolerance, and colonial and neocolonial relationships. In Figure 7 an international doctoral student depicts her island home, labeled with names such as Taiwan, Taipei, Ila Formosa (“Beautiful Island”), and ROC (Republic of China). According to the student, her island, displayed behind dark vertical bars, has been officially named and renamed at least 22 times during its 400 year colonial history, not once by its indigenous inhabitants.



Figure 7. Art project on the history of colonization in Taiwan.

Another doctoral student, whose father is Jordanian and mother is a U.S. citizen, uses various color combinations, symbolic devices, and organic and geometric designs to represent aspects of her personal, social, and professional identity (Figure 8). This student was born and raised in Jordan until she was eleven, moved to the U.S. where she attended middle and high school, eventually married a Jordanian citizen and, at the time of the class, had begun raising a family in the heart of the southern Midwestern U.S. Some of the tensions she experienced are represented in a powerful poem addressing the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (immediately following Figure 8).



Figure 8. Constructing identity and equity in a colonized world.

A Tear

With a tear, I glance to the West.
 I see our neighbors standing with you,
 Working at training their young,
 Maneuvering through the motions of caring for their own,
 And teaching their disinterested sons to always look for more.
 My gaze slowly shifts.
 I see your eyes focused on me.
 I cannot deny the fires that ruined your home.
 I will not refute the injustice in the flames that ripped through your
 sanctuary.
 But when you jumped to escape the blaze, your body fell on mine.

You broke my legs and leaped forward unaware,
Only concerned with finding new hope.
When I showed you my pain, you dismissed my cries.
When I cried some more, you asked me to be silent.
When I would not be silent, you smashed my arm.
When I still would not be silent, you crushed the other.
And then they came, our neighbors from the West,
Ready to help you rebuild, but dismissing my surging hurt.
And now their children ask why.
Why do I hold a match at your door?
And I wonder what you tell them as a victim of wrong.
Can you give reason for the new flame at your gate?
Do you feel the fire you lit in my hand?

Finally, in recent years, strong concerns have emerged regarding the uses, abuses, and effects of various forms of social media. Students have identified tendencies for users to exaggerate their status, manipulate their appearance, and enhance their personal accomplishments through interactive media such as Facebook. They have also discussed the excoriation of strangers simply because it could be done anonymously, fear to engage in face-to-face conversation due to lack of practice, and reluctance to communicate even with loved ones due simply to a desire not to be bothered.



Figure 9. *Coping with emotional disconnection via social media.*

Figure 9 depicts two family members, physically present but emotionally disconnected. Both are plugged into personal communication devices, unsuccessfully attempting to bridge their differences via social media. One figure's thought-bubble includes words and phrases such as, "Lonely. Replaced. How does this look to our

children? Would he still love me without the alcohol? When will he spend time with me sober? I wish he would get help.” The other figure’s thought-bubble states, “Anger. Abandonment. I wish he’d come visit. I wish he cared more. I wish I didn’t have to win his approval. Am I not good enough? Is money more important to him than I am?”

As important as it is to critique society, it is imperative to engage in critical reflection, to reflect on *our* thoughts and actions, to interrogate our *own* beliefs and assumptions. For Dewey (1938), reflection was the most elevated form of inquiry, involving “active, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions toward which it tends” (p. 87). Following Dewey, scholars like Freire (1970/1999), Noddings (2004), and McIntosh (1989) place a premium on *critical* reflection, utilizing reflection to interrogate personal beliefs and activities, weighing them against ethical standards of justice and equality.

Since social critique and critical reflection are both vitally important, I ask my students (and expect myself) not merely to interrogate problematic societal norms, but to consider ways in which we may also, albeit perhaps unintentionally, contribute to their perpetuation. Moreover, since the point is not simply to expose our students to the value of critique and reflection, but to nurture these habits and pass them along, I also urge them to envision ways to foster critique and reflection among *their* students, and essentially to keep it up and pass it on *ad infinitum*.



Figure 10. Art project expressing social critique and critical reflection.

The student in Figure 10 demonstrates both social critique and critical reflection regarding the problem of scapegoating (The poem appears as Appendix A).

As opposition to social criticism mounted during the 1970s, and as social activists and concerned educators grew increasingly fatigued, it became clear that critique alone was insufficient. What was needed, according to some, was a way to continue addressing problematic social conditions without ultimately devolving into cynicism, despair, or exhaustion. In 1970, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* answered the call, combining a hard-hitting language of critique with a more nurturing language of community, relationship, hope, love, and possibility.

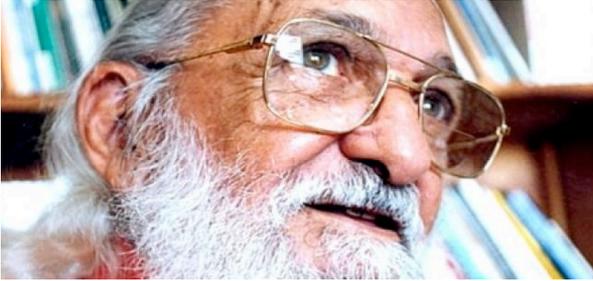


Figure 11. Paulo Freire (1921–1997).

Others followed Freire's lead. In 1985, Henry Giroux called for both a language of critique and a language of possibility to help teachers become "transformative intellectuals" (p. 376), and in 1988 Maxine Greene combined social critique and the power of imagination in a dialectical quest for the "achievement of freedom by people in search of themselves" (p. xi).



Figure 12. Maxine Greene (1917–2014).

Inspired by these works, I spent considerable time negotiating the relationship between critique and possibility in my teaching, my personal life, and my philosophical worldview. Yet, leery of succumbing to false consciousness, it has been difficult for me to see possibilities rather than limitations in many social and educational situations.

Turning to the arts, I began to play with the idea of foregrounding possibility while backgrounding (but not eliminating) critique. In the arts, some information inevitably is emphasized while other information is subordinated; nonetheless, all information is important to the larger composition. Experienced artists are as attentive to the background as they are the foreground, even though the foreground may be the primary focal point. Perhaps, I reasoned, I could begin to change the equation by shifting my primary focus to a dialectical search for new possibilities while using critique as a means of informing the search.

About this time a critical young English teacher, enrolled in one of my graduate courses, gave a compelling presentation on how he thought classroom practitioners should respond to the current crisis in public education. Time and again he returned to a simple idea: “We need to tell them what we need.” The message resonated. Of course; we need to tell them what we need. We need to *tell* them, in ways they can hear, what we *need*—for the good of their children, our citizens, our society and world. Here was a concrete example of what I sought: positive action informed by critical understanding in search of better alternatives.

I recalled Maxine Greene’s (1988) discussion of the idea that imagining what is possible is a necessary precursor to recognizing an obstacle *as* an obstacle. Until there is a perceived possibility things could be otherwise, an “obstacle,” by definition, does not exist. Conversely, as we begin to imagine possibilities, obstacles materialize and must be addressed. Here was a new place for social critique and critical reflection. Having begun to change my own orientation, I was finally in a position to share these ideas with others. With a primary emphasis on imagining and enacting better alternatives, critical insight could be gained *en route* to students’ implementation of their own evolving ideas.



Figure 13. Art project on the importance of accepting ourselves as we are.

Figure 13 shows a student's thoughts on learning to accept ourselves as we are rather than striving to be someone else. Hers was a positive effort actually to *address* previously stated concerns involving external pressures to conform. Although the project did not identify deeper social or psychological sources of the problem (e.g., desires for control), it did represent a legitimate response to a tangible situation, and it opened a way to further discussion of the nature of the problem and viable solutions.

Another effort to imagine and enact viable alternatives focuses on the need for connectedness (Figure 14). Based on the idea "no man is an island," a lone woman stands on an island, supported by an elaborate but invisible community. The student argues maybe it is time to emphasize greater societal *dependence* rather than *independence*. Here, again, the primary emphasis is on what can be *done*, while a secondary emphasis addresses what is wrong.



Figure 14. Art project on the need for community and connectedness.

Finally, students in Figures 15 and 16 address self-expectations and ways to organize our lives. The student in Figure 15 explains she has always striven to do everything perfectly, as exemplified by the perfect white box, and that she willingly sought and accepted the praise she received for her various accomplishments. However, in spite of her achievements she was not happy living to fulfill others' expectations. Resolved to begin living more for herself, her newfound freedom is expressed with bright swatches of paint freely distributed throughout the inside of her box. Along similar lines, the student in Figure 16 addresses personal challenges of living by the clock. Like the student in Figure 15, she seriously reconsidered her self-expectations regarding how to organize her life.



Figure 15. Art project critiquing striving for perfection.



Figure 16. Art project critiquing being ruled by the clock.

Acknowledging the Sources of Our Problems

Beyond monitoring self-expectations and negotiating critique and possibility, another source of hope and vitality involves understanding and acknowledging the sources of our most fundamental problems. I realize this assertion may seem paradoxical. Our problems are substantial, and understanding their magnitude can be truly disheartening. Yet, failure to be honest with ourselves can lead to an unsettling but accurate feeling we are not privy to all we need to know. Like a patient avoiding news of a critical condition, false consciousness may delay, but cannot eliminate, the ultimate need to reckon with reality.

A fundamental source of our current condition involves the ways we think about the world. While it seems natural to many to attempt to isolate precise causes and solutions, others believe the challenges we face and their long-term solutions are complex and interconnected (Capra, 1996; Devall & Sessions, 1985; McIntosh, 1989; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1987, 1995; Spretnak, 1997; Merchant, 1994; Naess, 1973). According to Fritjof Capra (1996), there are profound inconsistencies between our perceptions of the world and the nature of the world:

The more we study the major problems of our time, the more we come to realize that they cannot be understood in isolation. They are systemic problems, which means that they are interconnected and interdependent. For example, stabilizing world population will be possible only when poverty is reduced worldwide. The extinction of animal and plant species on a massive scale will continue as long as the Southern Hemisphere is burdened by massive debts. Scarcities of resources and environmental degradation combine with rapidly expanding populations to lead to the breakdown of local communities and to the ethnic and tribal violence that has become the main characteristic of the post-cold war era. Ultimately these problems must be seen as just different facets of one single crisis, which is largely a *crisis of perception*. It derives from the fact that most of us, and especially our large social institutions, subscribe to the concepts of an outdated worldview, a perception of reality inadequate for dealing with our overpopulated, globally interconnected world. (pp. 3–4, emphasis added)

For Capra, our modern mechanistic and hierarchical view of an organic world constitutes a serious “crisis of perception.” He suggests the world can more accurately be understood as a vast web of organic systems based on horizontal rather than hierarchical interconnections and interdependencies. Of course, the mere existence of analysis and hierarchy is not the problem. The problem is not with their existence, but with their prevalence. However, because many of our current imbalances have developed slowly over a period of centuries, there is a lack of awareness both of their presence and their destructiveness. Reliance on absolute and dualistic forms of thinking has emphasized isolation and competition at the expense of connectedness and community. Unfortunately, there is but a short distance between dualistic thinking and hierarchical thinking, and hierarchical thinking has provided an intellectual foundation for domination and control (Fleener, 2002).

Among other things, the modern worldview is characterized by a relentless quest for certainty (Dewey, 1929; Dewey & Bentley, 1949) and

is grounded in both absolute universalism and the dualistic logic of structuralism. While the former is perpetuated by grand theorizing, positivist science, and single vision, the latter limits our ability to think beyond either/or, all-or-nothing categories such as good/bad, black/white, up/down, inside/outside, male/female, normal/abnormal. These perspectives work in concert, reinforcing an absolute and universal notion of reality.

Although a few educational theorists began seriously to question the merits of universalism during the latter half of the 20th century (following two world wars and a devastating depression), critiques of absolutism may be as old as the history of thought itself. For example, Taoist wisdom, practiced for centuries by peasants in China before compilation in Lao Tsu's classic, *Tao Te Ching*, emphasizes principles of moderation, compassion, humility, unfinished potential, uncertainty, irreducibility, and harmony with nature as means of following the way or path of life. Related principles can be found among indigenous philosophies from Sub-Saharan Africa (Nyerere, 1968) to North America (Deloria, 1999; McLuhan, 1971), and the debate between absolute and relative ontological perspectives practically defines the history of Western philosophy (Roochnik, 2004).

Others, too, challenge absolute universalism. Nineteenth-century artist and poet William Blake (Figures 17 & 18) spent his adult life denouncing single vision and embracing a much greater degree of interconnectedness and ambiguity than that embodied in the prevalent worldview of his time. In this poem, part of a letter to Thomas Butt (dated November 22, 1802), Blake objects to the literalism of the Newtonian mindset:



Figure 17 (left). William Blake (1757–1827).

Figure 18 (right). William Blake, *Ancient of Days*.

Single Vision and Newton's Sleep

Now I a fourfold vision see,
 And a fourfold vision is given to me,
 'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
 And three fold in soft Beulah's night,
 And twofold Always.

May God us keep From Single vision & Newton's sleep.

Rather than reducing meaning to single vision, Blake sees complexity and connection in virtually everything. Nowhere is this more evident than in the first few lines of perhaps his most famous poem:

Auguries of Innocence

To see a world in a grain of sand,
 And a heaven in a wild flower,
 Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
 And eternity in an hour...

Powerful deconstructions can sometimes be found in the most improbable places. In James Clavell's (1975) *Shogun*, set near the end of the Elizabethan era, an English pilot and Dutch crew are stranded off the coast of the forbidden Japanese islands. Taken into captivity, Blackthorn, the pilot, is confronted with a worldview entirely unlike his own. Embedded in a tumultuous tale of violence and intrigue, a tragic romance slowly develops between Blackthorn and Mariko, a samurai woman duty-bound to another. Blackthorn, accustomed to possessing what he desires, gradually begins to lose his center. Realizing the impossibility of his circumstances, including his love for Mariko and his plans for the future, he desperately casts about for solutions. Mariko assures him:

Look at this sunset, it's beautiful, neh? This sunset exists. Tomorrow does not exist. There is only *now*. Please look.... [I]t will never happen ever again, never, not *this* sunset, never in all infinity. Lose yourself in it, make yourself one with nature and do not worry about karma. (p. 452)

Recognizing liabilities in questing for certainty and perceiving possibilities inherent in irreducible complexity, contemporary scholars have begun to address similar issues. Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) *Borderlands* explores profound physical, geographical, social, psychological, religious, sexual, and linguistic tensions and ambiguities that can exist for those who have been displaced within their homes and homelands. Anzaldúa

raises grave questions about the modernist proclivity to isolate, dichotomize, reduce, and control. How is it decided, for example, that the very land upon which a people are born should no longer be available for use either by them or their descendants? Who is entitled to determine who “owns” the land, the water, the sky?

In the end, Anzaldua defiantly claims her right—as *Chicana*, as *tejana*, as a “*new mestiza*”—to construct her *own* identity, never yielding to the reductions of others. Paradoxically, it is not in *spite* of the borderlands that Anzaldua can claim this right, but *because* of the borderlands that such an act is possible at all:

[O]nce again I recognize that the internal tension of oppositions can propel (if it doesn't tear apart) the *mestiza* writer....an agent of transformation, able to modify and shape primordial energy and therefore able to change herself and others. (pp. 96–97)

Others also eschew dreams of certainty, searching instead for meaning and possibility beyond conventional boundaries. Edward Said, Palestinian-American author of *Orientalism* (1978), explores the tenuous issue of how to position oneself within an academic organization. Unwilling either to become a fully enfranchised insider (beholden to the institution) or a disenfranchised outsider (relegated to the margins of society), Said takes the position of an “organic border intellectual” (Giroux, cited in Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 184), standing always one foot in the institution and the other with the people he serves. Scholars like Gloria Anzaldua and Edward Said resist subjective reduction, embracing instead the irreducible possibility that resides within the borderlands.



Figure 19 (left). Gloria Anzaldua (1942–2004).

Figure 20 (right). Edward Said (1935–2003).

How does modern mechanistic and hierarchical thought relate to maintaining hope and vitality in teacher education? In my view there may be no more debilitating factor in the struggle for meaningful social, environmental, or educational change than our continual default to modernist thought. All-or-nothing thinking tells us, in essence, if we cannot do everything, we may as well do nothing. Although we often apply such thinking to large-scale problems involving others, would we ever find this an acceptable standard applied to ourselves or to those *we* love? Would it be acceptable for our physician to say, “I can’t save everyone, so I may as well not save you” (or your son or daughter, or mother or father)? Or for one of our teachers to conclude, “I can’t educate everyone, so I may as well not educate your child?”

I have never endured the magnitude of displacement and alienation described by Anzaldua, but I can appreciate the relief she must have felt in refusing to submit to others’ constructions. In my own experience it is exhausting to presume that for every question there must exist an answer, that these truths can and should be known, and that, as an agent of truth, I must know them and defend them against all challengers. It has been a tremendous relief to relinquish such assumptions, to consider that many truths may exist (cf., Kierkegaard’s notion of truth as subjectivity), or that no truths may exist (e.g., metaphysical nihilism), and that I need not articulate and defend my own views of reality. By relinquishing my need to “know” with certainty, I have been able to consider more information, from more sources, than would ever have been possible before.

While modernist thought has been highly problematic, novelist/provocateur Daniel Quinn (1992, 1996) suggests our challenges may be even greater than many have imagined. Among other things, Quinn explores the processes by which ancient agriculturists, once a tiny fraction of the human community, gradually expanded and imposed their ways of life upon others. Initial efforts to accommodate a growing population—the inevitable consequence of the need for an expanding food supply—led to increasingly aggressive attempts to acquire additional land and resources. In turn, these additional resources supported the growing population. The inexorable need for additional resources eventually led to the development of totalitarian agricultural practices. Like other totalitarian entities, this new and growing “culture” utilized specialized mechanisms to eliminate its competition, including the annihilation of opposing perspectives and lifestyles. What began as a novel way of life gradually evolved into a dominant worldview based on principles of acquisition, expansion, consumption, and control.

After thousands of years of expansion, this acquisitive agricultural worldview has finally prevailed on every continent—north, south, east,

and west. While other cultural distinctions may persist, few remaining members of the human community have been able to resist adopting the basic premises of totalitarian agriculture. With time and repetition, an orientation anathema to human sustainability has become not merely the *prevalent* way of life, but the *only* way of life acceptable to its proponents. Totalitarian agriculture continues to expand, passing from generation to generation through mechanisms of social transmission and cultural invasion. The supreme irony, for Quinn (1992), is that the destruction of alternative cultural perspectives has left us with only “one right way to live” (p. 205)—and such uniformity is the single greatest threat to the community of life.

The sheer historical expanse of the evolutionary process offers further insight as to how it may be possible for current problems to be so recognizable yet so difficult to understand and accept. Many contemporary perspectives are based on institutionalized assumptions invisible to their adherents. Further complicating matters, humans often construct explanations of reality that legitimize their own perspectives while discrediting others’ (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). With the passage of time, these explanations come to be seen as objective facts rather than social constructions.² Once subjective beliefs are construed as “objective reality—as simply “the way things are”—further examination is considered pointless. As long as no serious threat challenges the perception existing beliefs are objectively real, it is possible to act confidently and unreflectively on the basis of these assumptions.

Thus, although some problems are certainly the result of conscious indiscretion, others involve genuine lack of awareness (Anyon, 1979; Baldwin, 1988; Freire, 1970/1999; McIntosh, 1989). Unfortunately, today’s institutionalized mechanisms of social and environmental destruction are among the factors about which many remain unaware. For this reason, Quinn (1992) argues we are “captives of a civilizational system that more or less compels [us] to go on destroying the world in order to live.” We cannot escape because we are “unable to find the bars of the cage” (p. 25).

It is natural to feel frustrated as conditions become increasingly grim. However, our students possess varying degrees of experience and concern, and we must continue to identify and utilize their prior understandings. Returning to the artwork detailed earlier, issues of domination and assimilation are addressed in student projects on societal and familial pressure, and problematic gender constructions are addressed in at least two of the projects. Principles of ecological thought are presented in the project based on the theme “no man is an island,” and the idea of living within our means is introduced by the student who suggests learning to accept ourselves as we are. Problems of false

consciousness are presented in the “scapegoating” poem, and even the management of self-expectations is addressed in works such as the perfect white box and the challenges of being ruled by time.

Exercising Humor

Another means of sustaining hope and vitality in teacher education involves the use of humor. I cannot think of a single member of the SoPHE community who does not take his or her work seriously; nor can I think of a member who does not find humor in work and life! Humor is essential because it provides much-needed relief from tension (Mead, 1934). It can also serve as a form of criticism that garners less attention than “serious” social critique. In the recent anarchist drama *V for Vendetta*, popular comedian Gordon Deitrich gets away with considerable political lampooning before ultimately succumbing to governmental tyranny. Similarly, contemporary comedians like Jon Stewart, Dennis Miller, Stephen Colbert, and Bill Maher, who also engage in scathing political satire, receive less scrutiny than do their more prosaic counterparts precisely because their medium is “comedy.”

According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), humor has historically had a grounding, renewing, and democratizing effect on society. Bakhtin traces the history of laughter in European society, particularly vulgar, bawdy, “lower stratum” humor, epitomized by 16th-century humorist and philosopher Francois Rabelais and associated with Medieval carnival, travesty, puppetry, street festivals, and sideshow barkers. Bakhtin argues lower-stratum folk humor, originating with and perpetuated by the masses, has historically had a cumulative effect of undermining social hierarchies, deflating stodgy, self-important officialdom. Recent parallels include 20th-century Theater of the Absurd (Houser, 2006), certain venues of standup comedy, and irreverent, tongue-in-cheek, carnivalesque television programs like *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, *The Daily Show*, and *The Colbert Report*.

To understand Bakhtin’s claim humor can help democratize society by undermining social hierarchies and deflating officialdom, consider a common educational parallel. What teacher has not at one time or another observed a student furtively smile and catch a classmate’s eye? We instinctively understand these exchanges are not intended for us. Indeed, they often occur at our expense! Similarly, principals, superintendents, department chairs, and deans realize they are not the intended audience for the suppressed smiles and stealthy glances of faculty and staff. Bakhtin’s theory suggests these are mild instantiations of the age-old impulse for human beings to preserve dignity and authorship over their lives. The cumulative effect is to check institutionalized hierarchies, continually returning social authority to its base.

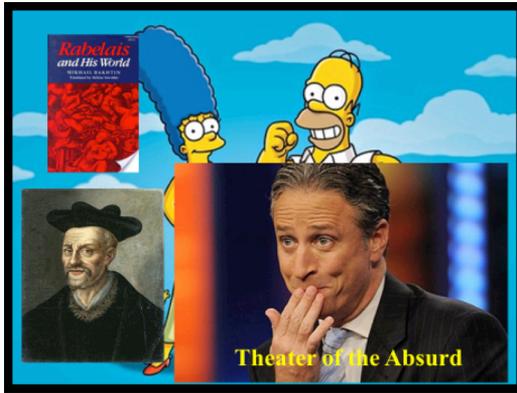


Figure 21. François Rabelais (left); Jon Stewart (right).

Moving and Celebrating

Yet another way to preserve hope and vitality in teacher education is to continue to move, and to celebrate hard-won efforts and accomplishments. Contemporary scholars associate various forms of action and hope. Maxine Greene (1988, 1995), for example, explores complex relationships between the creation of physical, social, psychological, and dialectical spaces and the imagining and enacting of new possibilities. Cornell West (1997), on the other hand, explains many African Americans whose ancestors arrived on the continent in chains have historically associated movement with hope. A small action (of mind or body) can be a prelude to a larger action, which can lead to greater action still. The critical moment, the vital line of demarcation, is between moving and not moving. Without the initial impulse and tentative first step, no subsequent action can follow. This basic realization, essential in the continued struggle for freedom, challenges the paralyzing logic we must either do everything at once or nothing at all.

In John Steinbeck's (1939) classic *The Grapes of Wrath*, young Tom Joad, recently released from prison, has managed to survive through keen observation, keeping his nose out of other people's business, and simply "puttin' one foot in front a the other" (p. 223). Joining his family in the move to California, Tom notes the searching reflection of the strange Reverend Casy. Unable to deny the results of Casy's relentless "figgerin'," Joad gradually perceives the mechanisms, powerful and subtle, by which the "Okies" are kept subservient first in Oklahoma, and finally in California.

Confronted by Casy with the need to expand the scope of his concern, Tom acknowledges a philosophy of personal survival,

“I’m jus’ puttin’ one foot in front a the other. I done it at Mac for four years, jus’ marchin’ in cell an’ out cell an’ in mess an’ out mess.... Couldn’t think a nothin’ in there, else you go stir happy.... An’ by Christ that goes for the rest of it! I ain’t gonna worry....”

“They’s gonna come somepin outa all these folks goin’ wes’—outa all their farms lef’ lonely. They’s gonna’ come a thing that’s gonna change the whole country.”

Tom said, “I’m still layin’ my dogs down one at a time.”

“Yeah, but when a fence comes up at ya, ya gonna climb that fence.”

“I climb fences when I got fences to climb,” said Tom.

Casy sighed, “It’s the bes’ way. I gotta agree. But they’s different kinda fences. They’s folks like me that climbs fences that ain’t strang up yet—an’ can’t he’p it.” (pp. 223, 224)

During the cordoning off of the west, then and now, climbing fences when there are “fences to climb” and anticipating fences that “ain’t strang up yet” are essential to survival. However, at the most basic level, these greater possibilities are dependent on the fundamental capacity simply to keep “puttin’ one foot in front a the other.”

Returning to teaching and teacher education, sometimes even just moving can feel remarkably basic. Get up. Get coffee. Get started. Do *something*. Do something else. Put one foot in front of the other. If an obstacle arises, find a way to deal with it. If an obstacle *likely* to arise has not yet done so, anticipate it, and respond accordingly. How could things be made better? What would need to occur, what would *we* need to do, and whom could we get to help? How can we tell them what we need, in ways they will hear? How can we address the inevitable obstacles encountered along the way?

Supporting Community and Other Spaces for Growth

Finally, generating hope and vitality to address our ongoing challenges will require the continued development and maintenance of supportive communities and other spaces of growth for our students and ourselves. Maxine Greene (1988) writes:

The aim is find (or create) an authentic public space...in which diverse human beings can appear before one another as, to quote Hannah Arendt, “the best they know how to be.” Such a space requires the provision of opportunities for the articulation of multiple perspectives in multiple idioms, out of which something common can be brought into being. It requires...a consciousness of the normative as well as the

possible: of what *ought* to be, from a moral and ethical point of view, and what is in the making, what *might* be in an always open world. (p. xi, emphasis in original)

This is what SoPHE has been for me: authentic public spaces that are not merely physical, but social, psychological, and emotional as well. They are also critical, caring, and highly collaborative, but most of all they are *inclusive*. They are places in which all willing participants are made to feel welcome and wanted. I believe spaces like these ultimately can be spiritual, in Palmer's (2007) sense of the word, offering a means of connecting "with the largeness of life" (p. 5).

There has been much talk about the value of community—communities of learners, communities of scholars, communities of congruence. I buy it. For me, community is not merely a want; it is a fundamental need. Community, as the name implies, involves a coming together to create a greater unity, and such a unity cannot be forced. Rather, it must be invited, encouraged, nurtured, and supported. We can do our part by continuing to create and maintain the necessary spaces for future generations of students and educators to explore the depth and range of their *own* experiences, and to imagine how they, too, might keep it up and pass it on. As Palmer aptly observes, by remaining in "life-giving communion with the young," we serve not only the future but ourselves as well (p. 49).

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Endnotes

- ¹ This lecture was initially developed as a presentation and later formatted as a paper.
- ² This is the process of reification, which “implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 89).

Appendix A

Scapegoat

So many problems
Not enough time
These problems are yours
While these problems are mine

I wish I could blame you
Believe me I've tried
Instead I should bring out
The demon inside

A beautiful garden
That festers with lies
The promises wilting
As the sun slowly dies

We're so quick to fire
Bullets laced with the blame
But we're all going to lose
This unending game

We won't face our problems
We can't face our fear
We're so far away
While the problem's right here

Determination is gone
And replaced with desire
Our prayers in the flames
Of this treacherous fire

It's not you, it's not me
It's all those in between
Once our scapegoat is found
Then we wipe our hands clean

Who knows where to look?
We shall search far and wide
But it's the demon inside us
The one we call pride

I don't want to look
I choose to be blind
If I open my eyes
Who knows what I'll find?

I will never admit
That it's my fault as well
I'll ride this train down
To our synthesized hell

No one will stop this
We'll all look away
'Til there's nowhere to look
'Cause it's dark every day

We're as much the problem
As we are the solution
So let's break our own rules
In our cold institution

When our hope barely shines
And our faith's nearly done
Our first inclination
Is to tuck tail and run

But now we shall fight
As the storm rages on
But the lightning still strikes
When the rain clouds have gone

It all has two sides
Which on will you choose?
But resistance is futile
We're all gonna lose

You ask who's to blame?
The answer's quite clear
Just look out in front
And stare straight in the mirror.

Plato's Educational Foundations and the Future of College Teaching

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Introduction

Given the degree of change higher education is experiencing today, some academic forecasters predict colleges and universities of the future will bear little resemblance to the physical and conceptual structures currently in place.¹ While these changes may not yield the erasure of the traditional classroom lecture, at least not those classrooms of “superstar faculty,”² current trends and the suasiveness of neo-liberal calls for educational reform signal the early stages of a revolution that will alter the shape of our learning institutions and challenge time-tested educational foundations. The implications of these developments are not merely the further proliferation of online teaching and massive open online courses (MOOCs), or the use of software like Google maps to teach literature and Skype or Periscope to connect the classroom with experts and students from around the globe. Rather, we are heading toward a radical change to the way education is packaged and experienced, therefore reconceiving the way the university has been structured for nearly a thousand years.

The beginnings of this higher education transformation are already trickling down into the redesign of our courses: technology is redefining the nature of the classroom and creating new tools for delivering content and generating learning experiences; *scientific* assessments of teaching are measuring our progress toward reaching new learning outcomes; economic incentives are driving increased class sizes and eliminating under-enrolled courses; external constituents and forces beyond the control of the instructor—businesses that hire our students, government agencies which offer them funding, and private and public partners who increasingly support our research and teaching activities—are influencing our teaching agendas;³ and competency-based education is in many places replacing the abstract model of learning typical of the 14-week semester. Pressure to adapt to these changes penetrates all levels of the academy, and all faculty are experiencing at least one, if not more, of these disruptions to traditional classroom practices.

Whereas some faculty embrace these changes and adapt courses accordingly, recent studies suggest a majority of faculty are resisting them out of either trepidation or sincere skepticism.⁴ Naturally, faculty are often discouraged and their sense of optimism extinguished when it appears forces beyond their control are mitigating their authority over curriculum. Rarely do faculty have any input into the development or use of quantitative assessments that measure their teaching effectiveness, and they reasonably reject attempts by private donors and public legislatures who want to dictate academic agendas.⁵ Troublingly, as a result of recent academic reforms, faculty have seen important areas of study (e.g. Classical Studies) eliminated when programs fail to meet new enrollment quotas. Equally disconcerting is when faculty are cajoled into contemporizing esoteric research so it appears more relevant to students and funding agencies.⁶ Most alarming is when students and their parents encourage faculty to teach more to a career than to produce well-rounded human beings.⁷ Certainly, these experiences are jarring to traditional academic sensibilities, so it is understandable many faculty may initially be resistant to or skeptical of new approaches to teaching and learning, especially when they are perceived as driven by the sorts of academic reforms I have noted.

Unfortunately, negative consequences associated with these academic reforms often outweigh and overshadow the benefits that can emerge from the curricular redesigns change engenders. While several recent studies identify major changes occurring in higher education and the mainly negative perception faculty have of these changes,⁸ few take a qualitative and philosophical approach to gauging how these changes may provide opportunities for curricular innovation that allow faculty better to achieve educational goals. To be able to make informed decisions regarding new approaches to teaching, faculty need to be able to assess benefits and deficits with clear standards for assessment. In this paper I respond to the call to establish such standards by arguing for establishment of a Platonic benchmark for measuring the merits of new developments in teaching on the basis of an approach's ability to constitute personalized, interactive, and holistic learning experiences.⁹ For over 2,000 years, three criteria inherited from Plato's philosophy of education have served as guiding principles in teaching. I suggest these principles remain relevant as a benchmark for evaluating new pedagogical approaches and tools and identifying those most likely to enhance faculty's mission. Under the belief productive transformations will occur only if we retain a clear vision for our true mission, I rely upon Plato's time-tested educational foundations to elucidate some of the ways college teaching is being transformed by innovations in science, economics, and technology—

three areas recent reports indicate are most likely to affect the future of higher education.¹⁰

In advancing my claim, I use the first part of this essay to summarize Plato's philosophy of education and identify the pedagogical principles embedded within it. In the next three sections I use these Platonic principles to uncover the merits of recent pedagogical reforms stemming from innovations in science, economics, and technology respectively. Lastly, I conclude by suggesting Plato's model for personalized, interactive, and holistic learning experiences provides a clear and easy-to-use framework for either exploiting or rejecting academic reforms on the basis of their ability best to meet our mission as educators.

Why Plato's Philosophy?

For over 2,000 years, Plato's dialogues and Socrates' questions have informed instructional practice inside and outside the classroom. Plato teaches us education should promote critical thinking, and the ideal context for this to occur is through the present, give-and-take, intellectual exchange of ideas characteristic of the philosophical method he names dialectic. In many ways, rhetoric, the art of persuasion, so heavily popularized in ancient Greek democracy, is opposed to dialectic in that it caters to the masses and seeks as its end persuasion rather than intellectual enlightenment. Rhetoric, according to Plato, exists in the world of beliefs and opinions and cares little about the nature of Truth or the true souls of its interlocutors. Philosophy, on the other hand, leads souls toward intellectual enlightenment and fulfillment, and dialectic is a personalized vehicle through which teacher and pupil engage in a unique, interactive, and holistic educational journey. With a philosopher as his guide, a student may discover through a Socratic method of questioning that Truth is within him waiting to be elicited; knowledge is not conveyed but rather revealed.

The art of writing, however, the emerging technology of Plato's day, called the nature of education into question as the technology became widespread and the Sophists introduced it for instructional purposes. In dialogues like *Sophist*, *Gorgias*, and *Phaedrus*, Plato mocks the rhetorical and speech-writing practices of the Sophists as imitative, representational, uninformed, insincere, and existing in the world of appearances and beliefs, rather than in the realm of authenticity and truth. Plato says in *Phaedrus* through the famous myth of Thamus and Theuth writing does not produce knowledge but rather fosters forgetfulness in the minds of users as they begin to rely on external aids to memory rather than on their own mental agility and memory. One of writing's greatest faults is it is an impersonal form of communication, directed to no one person in particular, capable of being distributed

broadly, and, once written, its writer cannot discriminate among its readers. Furthermore, as written texts become disconnected from their authors in time and space, they stand indefensible when questioned. Plato refers to such written discourse as disembodied and dead *logoi* (words/arguments). As Socrates explains in *Phaedrus*:

Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very much like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.¹¹

On the basis of this critique of writing, why does Plato write dialogues when writing is in clear violation of his philosophy of education and its emphasis on the interactive, dialectical pursuit of truth? Despite Plato's critique of writing, one must conclude, on the basis of the quantity of texts he leaves behind, Plato discovers a way to exploit the benefits of writing, to circumvent its limitations, along with his own critique of it, while remaining committed to his pedagogical principles. Indeed, the dialogue form is key to unlocking the philosophy behind Plato's use of writing to produce personalized, interactive, and holistic learning experiences. As argued previously,¹² Plato's dialogues promote critical inquiry and moral investigation by engaging readers in an open-ended process of philosophical inquiry. Although the dialogues are representational in their depiction of oral discourse, they neither contain nor impart philosophical principles. Rather, philosophical principles emerge in a specific reader as he or she engages in critical thinking about the dialogue and with others who might also be struggling to discover the nature of the discussions and the interlocutors depicted in them. As such, Plato finds a way to generate an interactive and philosophical relationship between these texts and their readers.

Effectively, Plato's written conception of philosophy does not lie in the mere representation of dialogical exchanges between philosopher and interlocutor, but rather on the dramatic effects these exchanges may have on readers, thus provoking them into a philosophical experience. In this way, the text transforms from a mere technology of representation to a tool for promoting interactive and personalized learning. Whereas Plato deplores the representational nature of

writing—we can assume he would feel similarly about more contemporary technologies, too—he insists technology can be more than a tool for copying and conveying knowledge.

Thus, Plato offers, through his critique of writing and the example he sets for the more effective use of it, core principles that have served ever since as a guide to teaching. Faculty must not think of education as the delivery of content to students. Instead, the *techné* (science/art) of teaching rests on generating personalized and interactive relationships with students that encourage learning to become a holistic process. While initially Plato is skeptical writing can produce such experiences, he discovers a way of ensuring it can, and leaves behind a corpus of texts that continues to influence readers generations later. Drawing on principles inherited from Plato, in the next three sections of this essay I show how Plato's philosophy of education can be applied in the assessment and anticipated adoption of new pedagogical practices emerging from scientific, economic, and technological advancements.

The Science of Teaching

In the same way Plato contends with new academic technologies that threaten to jeopardize his educational principles, we are facing no-less-revolutionary forces from science that inevitably will transform college teaching. Even though teaching is arguably more art than science, today researchers are discovering ways science can make teachers better artists in the classroom. For example, James Zull and more recent educational neuroscientists working in programs like the Neuro Education Initiative at Johns Hopkins University are exploring the intersection of cognitive neuroscience, educational psychology, educational technology, and education theory in an attempt to understand the biology of learning.¹³ On the basis of their data, they are uncovering how the brain acquires, synthesizes, records, and retrieves information, and how assignments and assessments can be developed in ways that capitalize on research findings. As educational neuroscience continues to advance, and as researchers learn more about the biology of learning, the art of teaching, including fundamental practices like engaging students with probing questions, moving them from lower- to higher-order levels of thinking, may ultimately become more precise.

The science of teaching extends, too, to innovations in computer science, particularly in the growth of educational gaming. Computer programs can now be coded to adapt to user input and feedback, so educational games can observe neuroeducational principles by targeting neuronal networks in the brain in an attempt to build new synapses that connect to them. Already commodified by companies like Lumosity, the self-proclaimed “human cognition project,” their website offers personalized brain training through games that promise to use neuroscience to improve memory, attention, speed, flexibility, and

problem-solving abilities.¹⁴ Lumosity is far from original, though, in using games for teaching purposes. In fact, at least since the Roman Empire, armed forces have used games to prepare recruits for the realities of battle.¹⁵ Some even argue military gaming is over 5,000 years old as military models using colored stones and grids on a board have evolved into cutting-edge computer applications that offer virtual, yet realistic, warfare experiences.¹⁶ However, Emma Blakey, a researcher in developmental psychology at the U.K.'s University of Sheffield, in a recent *Scientific American* article cautions very few studies actually examine the efficacy of games to improve academic performance.¹⁷

If the science of gaming represents the next frontier in teaching, then we must make certain its level of verisimilitude makes gaming a viable tool for engaging students on a personal level and getting them to interact in ways that draw on and develop a variety of senses. In her recent book, Sara de Freitas explores how technologies like online gaming transform relationships between teacher and student, learning and knowledge, classroom and community.¹⁸ Computer-generated games invite users into virtual worlds where wars are won or lost, businesses are bought or sold, and morals are maintained or misplaced. These games prove good training grounds for any situation students encounter in the world outside the classroom, and every subject, from Spanish language to political science can be taught through them. Should entire courses be offered and taught through a video game, or should they be relegated to homework assignments and ancillary course materials?—the verdict is still out, but the practices are already in place. I posit in the face of their inevitability, Plato's philosophy of education can help us to design and incorporate gaming technologies in effective ways.

Like the readers of Plato's dialogues, the players of educational games similarly can be positioned as subjects at the center of an intellectual journey. While Emma Blakey insists more evidence is needed to measure the effectiveness of video games as educational tools,¹⁹ Plato gives us qualitative measures through which we can assess their contributions to teaching. Specifically, video games do raise many questions and concerns from the point of view of a Platonic benchmark. On the one hand, in what capacity can a mentor participate in guiding students through virtual spaces? Even when Plato's dialogues are read in isolation, the morally superior and intellectually dominant characters rise to the fore, emerging from the pages to offer sound counsel to readers. In what ways might educational games be developed similarly to guide players through virtual spaces? On the other hand, the hope is that educational games—like Plato's dialogue—can engage players on a variety of levels, from the emotional to the intellectual, so the potential for personalizing virtual experiences and creating interactive and

engaging learning environments comes close to Plato's ideal of holistic education. Let college faculty remain optimistic and open-minded about the potential of video games to reach students through a dimension and medium not afforded by traditional classroom practices. Whether they may be good supplements to, if not replacements for, more traditional instructional practices, will depend on their ability to make learning an holistic and active, rather than atomistic and passive, process.

The Business of Teaching

At the same time the science of teaching is being commodified, with large amounts of money invested into developing educational games, the business of teaching is also influencing college classes, as public grants, corporate sponsors, and private donors fund and influence many curricular initiatives. Blame it on a lack of commitment to higher education by taxpayers, or the catastrophic reductions in state appropriations to higher education levied on public colleges and universities by state legislatures, but many academic institutions are becoming self-sufficient businesses, relying largely or solely on tuition dollars and external funding to stay afloat. Accordingly, teaching institutions are acting more like corporations than non-profit institutions: hiring data analysts, business managers, fundraisers, and superstar faculty who can attract tuition dollars and large grants to replenish academic coffers.

As colleges adopt corporate practices, business interests drive many of the curricular changes. Stripling and Mueller report that, "Fifty-three percent of trustees at private colleges and forty-one percent of those at public colleges are employed in business, according to the most recent analysis by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges."²⁰ More than pumping dollars into colleges (as important as that may be), business leaders offer a brand of strategic guidance foreign to most academic enterprises. So while there may be no conspiracy here, only real pragmatics, the group University Watch is drawing attention to serious concerns regarding corporate influences on public research agendas.²¹ As they argue, if colleges become beholden to funding from sources that have their own agendas to advance, then they risk being made to teach and research about topics that align more with the interests of sponsors than with the needs of students or even the greater good.²²

Although higher education may be slower than the private sector to adapt to market trends, as universities begin to adopt a corporate model, they are engaging in business practices historically uncharacteristic for higher education institutions. A prime example, Andy Thomason reports, the State of Georgia is consolidating its programs and campuses to become leaner, more efficient, and cost effective.²³ If Georgia's recent

news is any indication of the economic climate in higher education, faculty should expect more corporate behavior from colleges in future, including mergers, acquisitions, and even bankruptcies. The competitive nature of today's educational marketplace means colleges and universities have strong incentives to balance their budgets, reduce and streamline expenses, and strategically expand on revenue-generating programs, online certificates, professional master's degrees, and skill- and competency-based training. Interestingly, the traditional four-year degree is not the most profitable or economically feasible product to deliver, unless it can be redesigned to decrease staffing of face-to-face classes, increase use of professional placements and experiential learning opportunities, and develop some, if not all, curriculum online.

But perhaps the traditional, four-year degree is not the most effective means to achieve an education? Certainly, there is reasonable fear among the public that the price tag for four-year degrees will continue to balloon out of control, making physical access to faculty and classrooms more of a premium experience for the wealthy few than a universal right for the many. One benefit to the future model of higher education is that it will support a heterogeneous mix of educational providers who will confer certificates of competency and skill-based trainings drastically different and less expensive than the traditional degrees granted at December and May graduations. As such, the evolution of the business model in teaching may increase access to education for those to whom it historically has been unattainable. In the same way Plato's dialogues reach an audience far greater than he could amass through one-on-one dialectical exchanges, so too can colleges expand the reach of higher education's mission to educate more students than could ever be taught before.

The business model of education also highlights the need for internships specifically and experiential learning generally.²⁴ To the extent experiential learning casts students into real-world scenarios that require them to develop and use a variety of skills, they satisfy the Platonic emphasis on a holistic education. Moreover, these experiences often are guided by a mentor who establishes a learning relationship with a student by interacting and engaging with him or her over the course of an extended project. From the business student who interns at IBM, to the Communication Studies student who works on a social media campaign for Planned Parenthood, these experiences are crucial components to contemporary academic programs, and they offer great value not just in career preparedness, but also in fostering critical-thinking skills. The closer the connections become between universities and corporations, the more opportunities are likely to become available for students to practice and test skills they develop inside and outside the classroom.

The Technologies of Teaching

This corporate approach to higher education is part of the reason the marketplace for academic technologies is currently booming. A plethora of companies are vying to develop instructional media that offer either to enhance or replace traditional learning experiences. As the last frontier for the IT industry, Silicon Valley is turning its attention to the educational arena, resulting in venture and equity financing for education technology companies rising to \$1.87 billion in 2014, representing a 55% increase from the year before.²⁵

In spite of the plethora of educational technologies and distance learning programs, faculty should not expect our current classrooms to go away anytime soon. In fact, online programs, courses, and schools have abominably low matriculation rates, and for the past few years, enrollment at online universities has followed a downward trend. For instance, University of Phoenix experienced a devastatingly large drop in enrollment in 2013,²⁶ and in June of 2014 *The Wall Street Journal* reported new enrollments continued to plunge another 13% from the year before to total 241,900 from a high just a few years before of 400,000. Consequently, plans are in place for the University of Phoenix to eliminate more jobs and close many of its facilities.²⁷ While distance learning is appealing, particularly to non-traditional students for whom it offers the flexibility many of them need, evidence suggests students do better in courses where they experience human contact with an instructor.²⁸ In fact, even in online classes, studies indicate students prefer to use traditional, printed books over modern, digital texts.²⁹ College students are not as digitally native or as comfortable in purely online environments as we often think they are—at least not when it comes to education.

All signs are pointing in the direction of a “brick-and-click” model for higher education, a hybrid structure where face-to-face and online instruction are blended together into the curriculum.³⁰ As Singer and Bonvillian suggest, “If all goes well, the nation will embrace a system in which online education does what it is good at (providing content and information, enhancing data visualization, and improving critical assessment), and face-to-face education does what it is good at (fostering discourse and argumentation, mentoring, training students for research, and making conceptual leaps).”³¹ As the new hybrid structure becomes widespread, brick-and-mortar colleges try to catch up to online universities, offering distance learning options, while purely online schools move in the opposite direction, buying up physical space and creating regional sites for instruction and advising. The taboo associated with online universities may also slowly be disappearing, especially as for-profit universities sap the talent pool of the traditional academy. Coursera, for example, recently hired a former Yale president as its chief

executive, and the University of Phoenix did similarly by hiring University of Michigan's CFO to become its next president.³²

Is the former president of Yale a sellout, or does he sincerely believe in the power of technology to transform the educational system? The guess is that he understands, as did Plato, technology itself is neither the enemy nor the solution; technology is not inherently bad, but technology used poorly and in the wrong hands—e.g., the speeches of the Sophists—poses obstacles to the establishment of truth and the nurturing of holistic learning experiences. Let this be a call to action for faculty to become digitally fluent so those tools at our disposal may be utilized in the most effective ways possible to deepen the learning experience for our students and to engage them in ways traditional classroom practices may fall short. Faculty also must contend with ethical issues that arise from the use of technology, like the fair use of content online, and the ethics of using third-party educational apps that mine student data for research and marketing purposes. Many questions remain. Can students be required to post to publicly accessible social media sites for class? Who can record and post lectures? Who owns the content our students produce? Becoming digitally fluent will allow faculty to answer these questions as they arise and engage students with tools we hope will further our goal of creating personalized, interactive, and holistic learning experiences.

Looking Toward the Future

Before uncritically embracing or rejecting new developments in teaching, I encourage the use of a Platonic benchmark for evaluating pedagogical possibilities that emerge from innovations in science, economics, and technology. While change can be frightening, if faculty approach change with open, inquisitive, yet critical, minds, and a standard through which to evaluate the merits of such changes, then these developments may offer opportunities for faculty to do better at what we think we already do best. Specifically, as I argue here, neuroscientific research and the science of teaching may help faculty become more precise in their practices, allowing personalization of instructional methods to engage students and their particular learning styles. Likewise, the corporate university system raises many questions and concerns, but it also supports greater access to higher education, providing alternative platforms for learning that are more affordable to many more students than the traditional model yielding a 4-year degree. Lastly, as I show, technology is not the enemy of pedagogical practices, but rather the ineffective use of technology and the lack of digital fluency among college professors is the real problem, coupled with issues of fair use and the mining of student data through third-party educational apps and technologies.

As we confront change in higher education, Plato can continue to inform our educational practices, as his principles for teaching endure as standards for judging the efficacy of our teaching approaches and tools. Plato also reminds faculty we must never lose sight of the human element in teaching, neither in online nor face-to-face formats. The bottom line is universities are not just portals students use to access knowledge; they are places where students begin to develop as social beings, where they learn and live with others, where good teachers, mentors, and advisors model the kind of learning behavior they would like to replicate in their students. Our institutions of higher education should always be places where passion gets transmitted, where desires for lifelong learning are inculcated, where students become self-educable human beings. All the practices of institutions of higher education should be productive and supportive of these ends. As faculty navigate new and shiny terrain in higher education, we can do so with the comfort of knowing Plato provides us with a lasting, guiding framework for remaining committed to time-tested educational foundations while exploring the potential of new modes of learning. Productive transformations will occur when they are evaluated on the basis of our core mission as educators.

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The Teacher Leadership Effectiveness (TLE) Evaluation Tool for Oklahoma Teachers: A Foucauldian Analysis

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Introduction

In 2011, Tulsa Public Schools, working with the Gates Foundation, developed the Teacher Leader Effectiveness program to improve teaching. After a year of piloting the system at select school sites, the evaluation tool became official district policy. During the 2012–2013 school year, 90 percent of all Oklahoma public school districts adopted the TLE as their teacher evaluation tool. Other districts have adopted other evaluation methods and the requirement is all public-school teachers must be evaluated to maintain employment. The lead administrator for each school, always the evaluator, observes the teacher in two, informal observations (i.e. the administrator may do an informal walk-through as an observation). Conferences are held after each observation. Subsequently, a formal evaluation—a third observation—is completed, discussed, and the administrator assigns a score. Each interaction is documented on the TLE and signed by the teacher. A non-tenured teacher is observed and evaluated twice as many times and has more attempts to earn a three (3) or “Effective” score. The score ranges from one to five; a five represents the rating “Highly Effective.” Presently, district officials are including student survey scores and student test scores as part of the teacher evaluation process; however, in this paper I focus on the evaluation process completed by the evaluator on a teacher’s teaching performance.

Now retired, Lynn Stockley was the former Tulsa Teacher Classroom Association President during the creation of the aforementioned teacher evaluation tool (personal communication, April 20, 2014). She states despite the combined efforts of administrators, teachers, and association representatives, difficulties with the evaluation tool exist. Namely, the inconsistency that may exist between a teacher’s informal observation and the final evaluation score, which decides employment may be problematic. Secondly, some teachers believe they perform at a higher level than their scores reflect; this potentially results in termination when a final evaluation score falls below a three. When a

teacher falls below a three on any of the 20 indicators, he or she is placed on a Professional Development Plan (PDP), increasing the possibility of not being rehired (L. Stockley, personal communication, April 20, 2014).

In this paper I analyze the summary, “Overview to the Teacher Leadership Effectiveness Evaluation,” presented as a preface to the Oklahoma TLE program, through the Foucauldian lens of correct training. My purpose is to illuminate power and pitfalls of teacher evaluation and to suggest educators and administrators begin to shift perceptions of evaluation in order to use discussion, understanding, and dialogue between the evaluator and the teacher as a method to determine evaluation scores rather than to privilege only the evaluator’s reality. Now I turn to defining Foucault’s (1977) notion of Correct Training.

Hierarchical Observation

Foucault (1977) posits that discipline is exacted through hierarchical observation using an apparatus, techniques to observe the effects of power, and visible coercion (p. 170). The purpose of hierarchized observation is beyond surveillance; its purpose is to control, transform, implement conformity, and create accountability (p. 177). The perfect apparatus is a tool in which a single look will identify and judge every offense and activity. This observation supervises the worker, the work, and all places of work. Hierarchical observation is enacted from the top through to the bottom of the organization and is laterally interdependent, “functioning like a piece of machinery” (p. 177); it determines what does not measure up, departs from the norm, or is pathology in need of remedy.

Normative Judgment

Normative judgment lies within the power structure (Foucault, 1977), and one can be punished when he or she departs from the norm. When one conforms, gaps are reduced and corrective measures are designed to reduce gaps between subjects as “intensive forms of training,” normalizing the individual (p. 179). The purpose of correction is to regulate individual behavior and correct any nonconformity, which is seen as a defect. Any defect is then eliminated by the exercise of discipline, enforced by use of “the fear of punishment” (p. 180). Foucault explains normative judgment allows individuals to be known, ranked, and graded (p. 181), allowing power to become an integrated, machine-like system: “organized, automatic and anonymous” that makes control more efficient (p. 176).

The Examination

The examination (Foucault, 1977), comprised of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment, is highly ritualized, formatted,

and administrated method through which individuals are judged, categorized, and potentially pathologized. The examination is a form of the experiment; it establishes truth about the individual. It embodies a whole corpus of knowledge and powers that Foucault calls *operational schema*, which creates power relations that make up the body of knowledge.

Written documents of each individual's rank (e.g. numbered evaluation score) position the subject within a stationary framework. In addition, the examination documents the results of normative judgment, the effectiveness of treatments, and the change of disease. The examination homogenizes individual features through norms that control subjects. The exam makes the individual a "case" to be examined; the individual becomes a subject whose identity is determined by the exam. In this way, the examination, through hierarchical observation and normative judgment, "fabricate(s) the cellular, organic, genetic, and combinatory individuality" (p. 192), labeling the individual.

Normative Judgment as the End of Evaluation Minimizes the Possibility of Teacher Growth

Hierarchical observation is manifest within the informal observation of every teacher utilized by any school district. In the case of the TLE, the observation occurs and is performed when the administrator inspects each teacher against the 20 dimensions of the rubric, previously set by administrators, teachers, and others. The observation is documented and allows the individual teacher to be seen and identified and is considered a necessary step to identify the work of each teacher. Foucault (1977) refers to this as the functionalism of power. Therefore, it becomes impossible for a teacher to go unnoticed or remain unobserved, as TLE expectations require administrators to observe and plot each teacher's performance on TLE rubrics. The TLE process is an integrated system of structures that includes planned and unplanned (walkthrough) observations, as well as electronically tracking teacher scores on 20 dimensions of the TLE rubric that will result in a final evaluation score defining each teacher. Observation is necessary and vital to begin conversations about what was observed, however, the process of assessment should not end there. The growth mindset should be a main focus of observation so as not to result in permanent asymmetrical relational power, which is top heavy and oppressive (Foucault paraphrased from Bess, 1980).

After an observation, the administrator measures a teacher against the 20 rubric dimensions often using normative judgment alone. The language of the rubric potentially creates commonality in the meaning and interpretation of the rubric words and vocabulary through which both evaluator and teacher communicate shared reality through the

post-observation discussion. The observations are the evaluator's "intentional study and analysis of the teacher's performance" (TLE, Handbook for Tulsa Model Evaluators, 2012–13). The Handbook states the observation and conference process is a "critical opportunity for teachers to receive meaningful feedback from evaluators on the improvement in their instructional practice" (p. 12). Glaringly absent is the mention of the leveraging conversation that *teachers* should have with their evaluator. This fact supports my argument for shared knowledge between the evaluator and teacher to reach a shared understanding and score that reflect this understanding. Next, I discuss Foucault's notion of multi-directional power as essential for integration necessary for the paradigm that fosters conversation and sharing.

Foucault (1978) posits the rules of variations indicate power-knowledge is not static, but are "matrices of transformations" and thus power does not have to be one way (p. 99). For example, the teacher may then be prescribed additional professional development if the observation scores are not at the norm, but rather fall below the norm of three or the designation "Effective." The teacher can dialogue with the evaluator after the third evaluation, which will lead to the final evaluation score. Stockley states some teachers are not prepared for this discussion and are unable to leverage their input, resulting in a lower TLE score (personal communication, April 20, 2014). The lowered score punishes the teacher and immobilizes him or her within the narrow frame of top-down teacher evaluation. In most cases, the teacher is known as a poor teacher if his or her score falls below a 3. The TLE is perfectly aligned to Foucault's correct training and focuses educators on the score as the desired end of evaluation. However, the inclusion of teacher input is the acknowledgement of reality constructed through dialogue and mutual understanding, potentially changing the present perception of evaluation as top-down surveillance held by most involved in public education. Might such a practice begin to shift methods and perceptions of evaluation by recognizing constructive feedback and improvement as the ultimate goal of instruction and not the evaluation score itself? I first analyze the role of hierarchical observation and normative judgment in teacher evaluation.

Foucault (in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) states normalizing paradigms, similar to the strict use of rubrics, can have damaging effects when a narrow, objective view is used to view society as a whole. Hubert and Rabinow (1982) ask, "How is one to analyze the power relationship?" (p. 222). Foucault (Hubert & Rabinow, 1982) argues pre-ordaining, or diverging on a reality should be sublimated to the idea of nonnormalizing reality through an interpretive dimension.

The Subject and Power, Power and Communications Rationale for Educational Discussion Teacher Evaluation

Humans are made into subjects within our culture through power (e.g. Fascism and Stalinism were pathological forms of power and society largely compares all power relations to these forms) (Foucault, 1982). Foucault suggests a “new economy of power relations,” that represents a relationship between rationalization and political power and is therefore historically situated and appears differently in various contexts. Historically, pastoral power through Christianity spread a code of group ethics throughout the ancient and new world. However, in the 1800s the concept of a “modern state” came to the fore. It brought with it a “matrix of individualization, or a new form of pastoral power” (p. 215). Within this new construct, individual “salvation” became important and meant an improvement to one’s life here on earth. The number of officials increased and they implemented plans through a growing complex state apparatus (e.g. municipal police departments). To illustrate, 1800s police work not only encompassed a watch against crime, but also included social services. This more complex role of the police insured people received supplies, obtained standard health care, and had access to goods and services. This emphasis on equal access and a means equally to distribute goods and services helped usher in the ideals of the modern state and the new ideas of equity. In addition, this new knowledge or way of using power benefitted the general population and improved individual lives through a “series of powers as seen in the family, medicine, psychiatry, education and employers” (p. 215). This use of power promised positive consequences as well as introduced a capacity for great harm (e.g. goods and services may not be distributed fairly, marginalizing some people and causing debilitating inequity). Foucault (1980) demonstrates the new use of power citing the educational institution. Space and regulations govern the internal activities and people within the institution and each uses a capacity called communication power. Communication (i.e., lessons, questions, and answers, orders, coded signs of obedience, grades) ensures behavior within, learning or acquiring, and apprenticeship.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), employing Foucauldian theory, explain state power is not restricted, but can be direct or multidirectional, operating top-down but also from the bottom up. Foucault (1982) states power exists only when it is exercised and exists from multiple directions rather than only in a hierarchical manner. Power relationships exist between free subjects and involves communication, therefore, the power relationship is not dualistic, as it was in the violent relationship of slave to master.

Communication is the key, but the exchange of information must benefit each involved entity. At present, the TLE functions as *Panopticism*. For instance, the Lessons Learned portion of TLE is used to leverage teacher and administrator input, however, the system relies on an administrator who will allow input. Untenured teachers are observed twice in a semester and evaluated twice per year, whereas tenured teachers (ones who have 3 years of successful employment) are observed and evaluated at half that amount. The final observation tool is a composite of scores from the first two observations for any semester, but a teacher is not required to give input for an evaluator to score. The idea assumes leveraging will occur, but does it?

Adding the Interpretive Dimension to Teacher Evaluation

Kuhn (as quoted in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) states the interpretive dimension can neither be general moralizing nor personal preference. This dimension must be absent of judgment. Teacher and evaluator must use reasonable sense to determine the socially shared sense of language that explains good teaching as defined by the rubric. Evaluation is not based on personal emotion or fondness for a teacher. This is to say conversation utilizing the rubric language anchors the dialogue between teacher and evaluator, but does not limit it. Secondly, the evaluator must commit to open up the conversation around a teacher's performance. For example, the evaluator can open the conversation so the teacher must be willing and able to defend his or her performance with evidence. The evidence may be of the teacher's written original lessons, tape recorded or filmed lessons, student work products, and narrations of what was learned through teaching. This shared sense is determined through the rubric language itself and our socially accepted inherent meanings of words. Then there exists tension between what is socially accepted meaning and how the teacher's performance is being judged. In other words, what is being seen, and at what rubric level? Foucault (1990) states this interpretation is constructed. The investigator (i.e. teacher or evaluator) engages the other player with answers to the reasons that defend a position statement.

Conversation and dialogue are vital to shared knowledge and understanding paradigms, especially when a teacher receives an unsatisfactory score. A 2.8 score, in *any* indicator area, may result in a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Additional professional development and more administrative observations are issued to "assist" the teacher in correcting his or her behavior to meet the perceived meaning of the rubric. The teacher can enter the non-evaluative Quality Experiences Supporting Teaching (QUEST) program that offers teachers supportive mentors who offer suggestions and classroom assistance. This results in additional observation and more judgment for

the teacher who does not receive a score of 3 or Effective. A performance that differs from what is the most common type may be seen as undesirable. For instance, perhaps in a specific district the most common way of writing lesson plans is on a desired template sent by the principal to all teachers. A teacher coach observes the teacher for pathology that digresses from the norm since the overall weighted score must be at a 2.8 overall score on the evaluation or the teacher can be removed from employment in the district. Foucault states that power is an “open, more or less coordinated cluster of relations...” (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p.184). Power is not subject to one theory or origin, but is an analytic of relations of power. Foucault (1980) states power analytics must be employed to begin to conceive of its complexity (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). One possibility is through discursive practice to “isolate, identify, and analyze the web of unequal relationships” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 185). Therefore, teacher evaluation is not simply to inform the evaluator as presently recommended in the TLE training. Based on the example of teacher lesson plans, the style of communicating lessons may not fit the required format, but be very creatively written and implemented. However, at present the evaluator’s view can label a teacher’s lessons as inadequate because it does not fit within the evaluator’s personal preference. This type of narrow view often resulting in punishment is what I argue is in need of remedy, and remedy begun by our shifting to view evaluation as a dynamic work in progress.

Dreyfus & Rabinow (1982) expound on Foucault’s (1980) notion of enunciative modalities and discursive practice by referring to archeology as ideas historically situated. Enunciative modalities are the speech uttered when speaking about the principles concerning the formal discourse between, for instance, evaluator and teacher. Historically this speech has been hierarchical with the administrator situated above the teacher. Foucault (as quoted in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) states this type of discourse can be decompressed through rarefaction. Rarefaction means the opposite of compression however, Foucault (1980) uses this term to discuss the density of language (speech act) operated within and around discourse that limits or constrains who can speak and what concepts can be used in the speaking. Foucault states points of choice can “reanimate already existing themes, which opens the formation to make room for possible options” (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 72). For example, the teacher may introduce another point or classroom example and create an additional reality, one not readily seen by the evaluator. Power through discourse will exist as it is exercised through language and ideas through conversation while discussing TLE evaluations, therefore, the teacher must exercise to integrate paradigms

and to modify the use of the other person's power to change permanent structures (i.e. one person's reality) into possibilities of others (Foucault, 1982).

In my work as a Tulsa Public School District New Teacher Mentor, I attempt to empower new teachers to discuss their performance with their evaluator. I suggest evaluation can assist the teacher in becoming an increasingly better instructor, one capable of relating to students and parents and observations and evaluation that critique and give feedback to "grow" the teacher. Yet, the opposite seems more of an occurrence; that being teachers experience the anxiety and pain of judgment. Foucault (1980) states the new pastoral power constantly questions, "Who are we?" (p. 212). Individuals struggle against this government of individualization especially when the TLE scores fall below an Effective rating. Teachers find the exposure humiliating when they receive TLE scores below what they think the scores should be. Many oppose the secrecy, deformation, and mystifying (Foucault, 1980) associated with scores. Why mystifying? Many teachers receive a score from their administrator without input on the score. Even if the composite score concludes with an Effective rating, the lack of teacher input results in a one-sided, top-down reality. A perfect composite score of 5 without input from both parties will still result in a sense of mysticism.

Evaluation scores on the TLE identify a teacher as superior, good, poor, or mediocre, labeling one's competence and making known this competence to teacher, administrators, and other teachers. The teacher who does not receive an Effective rating is punished. According to the Foucauldian theory of discipline, a person must be judged after attempts to norm his or her behavior (Foucault, 1977, p.183). This is clearly seen in the multiple attempts to norm teacher behavior in this high-stakes process that are the PDP and QUEST remedial programs. Teacher behavior is normed through further observation and scoring, and if the evaluator sees the teacher's performance as ineffective, the teacher will be dismissed from employment.

One of the *TLE Impacts*, a section within the TLE overview, states *its purpose* is to "exit ineffective teachers and evaluators." Although evaluators must qualify yearly in order to score, teachers do not know their evaluator's score, the level of mastery achieved by that evaluator, or evaluator inter-rater reliability and accuracy. The administrator exercises power to begin the exiting of teachers who might erroneously be labeled ineffective based on a single evaluation score or the teacher's noncompliance with recommended professional development. The teacher is known to the administration, but the administrator remains hidden to the teacher: the panoptic condition.

Foucault theorizes these dialogues (e.g. the conversation between teacher and evaluator) are not just “antiauthority struggles” (Foucault, 1982, p. 211), rather they are “transversal” and not limited to a country, or political or economic forms of government, and have wide application to societal institutions like education (Foucault, 1990). He sees these “struggles” as dialogical attempts between the teacher and administrator to affect the use of power that have personal consequence, especially since the teacher’s job is the one at risk. These struggles question the status of both individual and governmental individuation (i.e. labeling of the individual by the institution). In other words, this type of questioning critically challenges the imposed reality of labeling and evaluation to create another reality in which power is shared through mutual exercises. However, our present historical circumstance of audit culture in education is a serious obstacle to the antiauthority struggle.

Recently, an experienced, well respected teacher I know, told me, through tears, her concern over what she considered low evaluation numbers. She had been recruited by her present principal and was concerned that he would think poorly of her if her scores were “average” (3). I asked her if she had provided documentation of her accomplishments. For example, did she include in her conversation with the principal (evaluator) the interesting and ingenious project she was presently engaged in with her classes? Perplexed, she said she had never thought of doing so. Evaluation is a high-stakes test for teachers, but I suggest it is possible for teachers and evaluators to think and therefore act differently through the use of dialogue about evidence presented during the evaluation meeting.

A Method to Mutually Exercised Power

Asymmetrical power is visible when the evaluator assigns a numerical score to a teacher’s performance, thereby labeling the teacher Foucault (1983). As discussed previously, I suggest rubric language be used as a calibration of ideas for both teacher and evaluator. Both parties must learn the rubric language and what the descriptive words mean and look like in a school. Then, with common understandings both parties can enter into discussion over how the teacher’s performance is judged and the teacher can provide evidence of a performance that matches a level on the rubric. Teachers must recognize their lack of exercised-power contributes to their own punishment and feeds the helplessness of asymmetrical power. In the age of audit culture, and over-emphasis on accountability through testing and blaming (Taubman, 2011) we must make the effort to influence our own culture through listening to one another with regard to teacher evaluation rather than multiply its already detrimental effect.

Presently teacher evaluation operates as panopticism (Foucault, 1977) and mysticism (Foucault, 1983), much like the distant control and nebulous fear of audit culture. Healthy “push-back” empowers teachers and helps them to master curricula. Broadly defined, curriculum is the path of learning and being; it is one’s planned and unplanned experience. Curriculum is cultivation of the mind, self-reflexivity and an interdisciplinary “currere” (Pinar’s term for the infinite form of “curriculum”) (Pinar, 2012, p. 34) or life path. I suggest teacher evaluation must exist within this prodigious notion of currere, contributing to open and divergent educational processes in which teachers take risks, employing curricular methods to improve student learning outcomes.

School Reform and Teacher Professionalism and Identity

The TLE is considered an improvement over the older form of evaluation in Tulsa’s school district because it involves a rubric process and not the checklist method of the older evaluation system, however unless we adopt the understanding of the growth made possible by feedback and discussion through the evaluation process, little real improvement or growth may be actualized, rather what becomes inevitable is a reinforcement of the older evaluation system of top-down judgment. Similar to Oklahoma’s state agenda to improve student outcomes by having all students meet a cut score, teacher evaluation requires all teachers meet a certain numerical measure on the TLE rubric. Day (2003) states teaching has entered a post-professional historical period in which government challenges teachers’ agency and curriculum content. Present reforms have created a sea change, radically restructuring what it means to be a teacher. For example, changes to teacher identity have shifted to corporate goals, managing a range of students, and documentation for accountability. Day (2003) suggests several ideas positively to promote teacher identity, most notably increasing teachers’ opportunity to exercise judgment over their own teaching and of their care of students and a collaborative culture built to deal with problems. Such an attitude shift can promote improved practice. Day (2003) also argues teachers should be encouraged to undertake self-directed study and be recognized for high-level task complexity in order to enrich their teacher identity and practice.

Nias (paraphrased in Day, 2003) states teacher identity results from personal experience and the cultural and institutional environment in which they function. The architecture of teachers’ professional lives is not stable, but subject to tension and difficulties. Day (2003) reminds us excellence can only be motivated, not coerced, and that, once a teacher’s identity exhibits commitment and job satisfaction, he or she becomes

better able to build relationships with students and make effective adjustments to his or her practice. As a result, both pedagogy and teacher efficaciousness are improved, also the goal of the TLE. Evaluation triggers teachers' fear of judgment and a static identity over which they have no control. How would teacher dialogue as a method to an evaluation score affect teacher identity?

Shifting Teacher Paradigms

Initially, I supported the TLE because I maintain it is superior to the checklist that previously defined my teaching. Under the old system, with very little knowledge or effort, an administrator could check off that my teaching had been viewed and evaluated. Very little of my improvement was noted or ever documented and the previous method of evaluation did nothing to build my capacity, or attempts at improvement. Because the new TLE is a complex rubric with measureable levels of performance (1–5 rating), and boasts dialogue as a method to a score, I assumed all teachers would receive constructive feedback, accurate scores, and an opportunity to defend their desired scores. Unfortunately, my hopes run contrary to the testimony of many classroom teachers within the district (L. Stockley, personal communication, April 20, 2014). According to the *TLE Board of Education Mandate* (2013) there were 202 teachers on PDPs, an increase of 66 to the 136 teachers listed from the 2010–11 school year. Thirty-six teachers are in the QUEST program, compared to seven from the 2010–11 school year. Clearly, hierarchical observation has identified more teachers who are perceived as operating below the norm. Administrators likely characterize this as success of the apparatus because the TLE rubric makes this observation possible. However, normative judgment and the examination increases teacher stress and causes some prematurely to exit the teaching field (Perryman, 2007; L. Stockley, personal communication, April 20, 2014).

The overview introductory page to the TLE states this system allows districts to identify levels of professional performance, support less-effective teachers, and exit the ineffective. According to Foucault, this discipline of correct training is negative especially if the evaluator is only looking for the norm and the evaluator punishes behaviors that fail to conform to what is listed as normed teacher behavior (Foucault, 1977). The punishment increases if the evaluator is ill-trained or does not welcome the teacher to “leverage “teacher input as stated in the “Overview to the Teacher Leadership Effectiveness Evaluation.”

Conclusion

We should ask ourselves, “What truth about a teacher is established?” through the TLE. Why do we as teachers fail critically to

examine the power in programs that examine our teaching? Has the teacher been given knowledge to exercise appropriate power in creating the truth that identifies his or her teaching? What or who ensures that a bullying administrator will not create his or her own untethered, unaided truth about the interpretation of the rubric, making the attainment of the norm impossible? Given my analysis of this teacher evaluation tool and its processes, I conclude the relationship between evaluator and teacher must change, affording a culture of collegial adult development. It is the paradigm of shared power that builds inclusiveness and respect for others. Within this culture are creativity, collaborative listening, and sharing that results in a reality created by both evaluator and teacher (Blase & Blase, 1999). Therefore, teachers should be taught and encouraged to take risks by discussing their own inquiry questions especially at the observation phase. Teachers can demonstrate their educational process to discover or create sound solutions that buttress their classroom performance. They should document their work with students and learn to defend that performance with evidence that aligns to the levels of use on the TLE rubric. Principals, usually the TLE evaluator for each school, must shift their paradigm to one of inclusion and collegiality concerning not only child, but also adult learning (Drago-Severson, 2012).

Seasoned evaluators and other administrators should realize the implicit, negative effects of evaluation, and promote openness to teacher dialogue and the consideration of teaching evidence within the TLE system. The importance of the score, essentially a high-stakes exam, threatens the teacher's continued employment and livelihood. Judgment is felt, regardless of the teacher's aptitude or of past scores. Therefore, teacher documentation should be taught and expected as a means to show mastery. Initially, the evaluator should be supportive by getting to know the teacher he or she evaluates and by practicing dialogical methods to counter the negative possibilities of evaluation. In this age of testing accountability and blaming of teachers and school personal, we should practice evaluation that does not mirror this type of ridicule. We can, however, practice shared power in educational practice and embrace mutual understanding, and consideration through dialogue in teacher evaluation.

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The Neo-Conservatives' John Dewey: An Analysis of Online Discourse

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Introduction

The slender young man with dark hair and earnest expression arrived the first day of class in a white tee-shirt that read in large print, “I ♥ Israel.”¹ He approached me after class to ask whether he would be penalized for a planned absence. He had been invited to a talk with the Israeli ambassador later in the semester, he explained, and it was very important for him to attend. He was always polite and respectful, but his conservative evangelical views became clear early on. The course was Foundations of Education for undergraduate, secondary-education minors (pre-service teachers major in their subject area). I tell my students the disparate topics we discuss are tied together by our big questions, “What kind of education, for whom, and why?” The young man never proselytized. When we discussed issues of equity and diversity, he made it clear he disapproved of homosexuality, but believed in treating everyone with decency despite such disagreements: Hate the sin; love the sinner.

In addressing our big questions, “What kind of education, for whom, and why?” we read and discuss what prominent educators and educational theorists have contributed to the discourse on these topics. We read short passages from the works of Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Rush, W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and George Counts, as well as contemporary writers including Nel Noddings, Linda Darling-Hammond, Jonathan Kozol, and Angela Valenzuela. Not surprisingly, John Dewey is featured through multiple sources and media. He is mentioned in discussions of educational philosophies and in a series of videos on the history of U.S. public schools. We usually read only one passage by Dewey, a selection from *Democracy and Education*, in which Dewey decries the top-down administration of schools and calls for teacher autonomy and creativity, warning that if teachers are not allowed to use their native intelligence, the field will soon attract only those with little of it.² In an era of standards and accountability and in a classroom full of young Texans who have grown up with and largely resent frequent, standardized testing, the text is

relevant, even if students often struggle to understand Dewey's dense prose. Based on this reading and what our other sources say about Dewey, class discussions often touch upon issues of who controls the curriculum, the extent to which lessons should involve student interests, whether Dewey believed in making students learn that for which they do not see an immediate need, and whether or not some subjects could be taught better than by rote methods. This semester, however, as I began our discussion, the young evangelical raised his hand and, when called on, asked, "Was Dewey an atheist?"

I was not well-prepared to answer the question. The passage we had been reading did not address the issue of religion or belief. I fumbled to express what I suddenly realized was limited knowledge of Dewey's religious views—noting this was a matter of debate among scholars and the answer likely depended on how one defined religious belief. Later in the conversation and equally apropos of nothing mentioned in class, the young man asked, "Was Dewey a social Darwinist?"

When I probed later, the young man was evasive about where he had picked up these questions. "Just something he wondered," he said. I did not believe him. In preparation for each session's readings, I have students work in small groups to do background research on the authors and passages we are scheduled to discuss in class. Each student has a role and is required to post to the discussion board of our online learning system materials they find meant to help with understanding the writings and the writers' context and with performing a close reading of the text. Nearly without exception students seek out and find such additional information online. The young evangelical's queries raised a question likely relevant by many educators: "When we send students to find information online, what do they find?" For this study, I set out further to investigate from where this student's ideas about Dewey may have come and to address two questions of particular interest to instructors of courses in Foundations of Education: "What are students likely to read about John Dewey if they get their information from neo-conservative, Christian, evangelical websites? And, what does this mean for teacher educators?" In this paper I present an analysis of neo-conservative discourse regarding John Dewey, his ideas, and his work. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings for teacher educators, particularly those who refer to Dewey within their teaching.

Unambiguously defining the borders of neo-conservatism and its discourse proved impossible. However, Michael Apple's definitions of neo-conservative and what he terms "authoritarian populist religious conservative" are helpful in conceptualizing the terrain. According to Apple, neo-conservatives (a category that overlaps with neo-liberal) seek cultural restoration by means of a return to what they understand to be

the traditional values of the West. The authoritarian populist conservatives also seek a return to traditional values, but are, according to Apple, “Christian fundamentalists who want a return to what they believe is *the* Biblical tradition as the basis of knowledge.”³ According to Apple, this group is “very mistrustful of multiculturalism,” and wants a “return to a pedagogy that is based on traditional relations of authority in which the teacher and adults are always in control.”⁴ In my argument, I use the term “neo-conservative” to encompass both groups in order to create a broader survey of the information available on the internet. None of the authors whose work I survey make a clear distinction between the two, and none refer to themselves as “authoritarian populists.” Furthermore, given these particular search terms, I had no difficulty identifying articles with highly conservative views, and it was easy to exclude articles that, for example, claimed Dewey was an atheist in order to support atheism.

I identified content to be analyzed using Google searches with the search terms suggested by my student’s questions: Dewey and atheist/atheism, Dewey and Darwinist/Darwinism, and “Dewey and social Darwinist/social Darwinism.” From the sites resulting from my searches, I used a snowball approach to compile a list of search terms. While my search term list eventually grew quite long, for the purposes of the present analysis, I use just those materials located using the original search terms, plus Dewey and communist/communism, which produced a substantial body of material. I reviewed multiple sites resulting from Google searches and continued reviewing until my search returned results indicating saturation: that is, until no new points or arguments resulted from viewing additional sites, or until search results no longer related significantly to search terms.⁵ The resulting analysis is not, and is not intended to be, a comprehensive overview of the contemporary reception of Dewey’s work and influence, but rather represents an analysis of a sample of neo-conservative discourse regarding Dewey and his work directly related to my student’s in-class queries.

Discussion

In total, my analysis draws from 31 items, mainly online articles and blog posts, totaling several hundred pages of text. I address these pieces as elements of neo-conservative discourse in the sense that discourses are “ways of structuring areas of knowledge and practice” that “do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, [but] construct or constitute them.”⁶ Across these texts, I identify a number of common and significant rhetorical practices and claims [re]constructing the figure John Dewey and his work. The texts’ rhetorical practices encompass commonly used text elements, including epithets, descriptors, and

associations. In addition, fairly consistent themes, claims, and arguments regarding Dewey appear across multiple sources.

Epithets, Descriptors, and Associations

The epithets and descriptors used across websites portray an overarching sense of how John Dewey is constituted within the neo-conservative discourse. Many epithets used to introduce Dewey to readers are apparently neutral. They identify Dewey with respect to his work within education, portraying him as a “famed pragmatist” and “progressive educator.” A range of epithets constitute Dewey as a patriarch. He is called, for example, “the father of American education,”⁷ “the father of modern education,”⁸ the “father of modern public education,”⁹ the “father of American ‘progressive’ education”¹⁰ and “the patron saint of public education.”¹¹ These are stock descriptors of Dewey’s role, neither notably different than one would find in a college textbook nor particularly indicative of neo-conservative reactions to his work. However, a number of characterizations become clear from a closer review within the context of the neo-conservative discourse on Dewey.

As the use of quotation marks around the term “progressive” in one example suggests, these authors express skepticism regarding Dewey’s “progressivism,” and reject most of the tenets of the Progressive movement Dewey supported. Thus seemingly neutral terms connected with Dewey become derogatory terms among those who explicitly reject modernism, pragmatism, and progressivism. Neo-conservative disdain for Dewey and his projects becomes clearer in some overtly negative epithets. One site, for example, refers to Dewey as not just the father, but “the Godfather of public education.”¹² Similarly, Dewey is called the “the arch creator of modern educational theory,”¹³ an epithet that, by use of the word “arch,” denotes “principal” but also connotes an archenemy giving weight to the idea Dewey is the mastermind of a grand conspiracy, the nature of which becomes clearer the farther one follows this trail of evidence. Additional examples include “the architect of modern education” and “dominant figure and most influential man in American education.”¹⁴ The perceived threat inherent in Dewey’s ideas is made clearer in the epithet used to entitle one site: “Bosom Serpent of American Education.”¹⁵ Such epithets generally imply Dewey’s direct influence and control over public schooling was substantial. Despite the fact Dewey’s amount of influence on U.S. schooling is highly debated, the John Dewey depicted within neo-conservative discourse is, as the architect or “arch creator,” singularly, or at least principally, responsible for the policies and practices of public schools. As such, he is to blame for a broad range of alleged 20th- and 21st-century social ills.

Adjectives used to describe Dewey within neo-conservative discourse require less interpretation than the seemingly neutral epithets, as many are negative on their face, and all would be considered negative within the neo-conservative discourse. Table 1 lists negative descriptors.

Atheist ¹⁶	Communist ¹⁷	Subversive/covert ¹⁸	Evil ¹⁹
Militant ²⁰	Socialist ²¹	Selfist ²²	Poison ²³
Militant Atheist ²⁴	Totalitarian socialist ²⁵	Collectivist ²⁶	Pompous ²⁷
Humanist ²⁸	Bolshevist ²⁹	Statist ³⁰	Wicked ³¹

Table 1: Descriptors

In general, these descriptors portray Dewey in the most negative terms possible: as someone who has rejected faith and traditional values and seeks to further an agenda both selfish and pompous.

Within the neo-conservative discourse and in keeping with those highly negative descriptors, Dewey is associated with many prominent, 20th-century, totalitarian leaders and revolutionaries, including Hitler, Stalin and Trotsky,³² Marx,³³ and the Bolsheviks.³⁴ While many sites make only a passing comparison of Dewey to one of these figures, the conservative periodical *Human Events* places Dewey's *Democracy and Education* at number five on its list of the "10 Most Harmful Books of the 19th and 20th Centuries."³⁵ Other books on the list include *The Communist Manifesto*, *Mein Kampf*, and *Quotations from Chairman Mao* at numbers one, two, and three respectively, as well as Marx's *Das Kapital*, *The Kinsey Report*, and *The Feminine Mystique*. Compton, Nietzsche, and Keynes round out the list with works promoting positivism, challenging conventional morality, and promoting government intervention in the economy, respectively.³⁶ Other associations include Darwin, Rockefeller, and Hegel, and commonly mentioned associations include the National Education Association (NEA), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the United Nations, and UNESCO (the significance of which I address shortly). The epithets, descriptors, and associations attributed to Dewey give a sense of how his work is situated within the neo-conservative discourse's map of the intellectual and political world. His character and influence are consistently portrayed as entirely negative and highly dangerous. Dewey's work is associated with some of his century's most deadly ideas and regimes, and his politics are portrayed as in-line with the most extreme and totalitarian people of his time.

Themes, Claims, and Arguments

The themes, claims, and arguments made regarding Dewey generally develop the accusations and assertions suggested by associations, descriptors, and epithets outlined previously. Within neo-conservative discourse, Dewey's ideas prove responsible for most modern cultural and political ills. Their general argument proceeds as follows: Dewey's progressive ideas about education lead to a dumbing down of public schools, creating a generation of ignorant delinquents. Dewey is therefore to blame for the election of incompetent or corrupt leaders (Democrats, particularly Presidents Clinton and Obama) who could only have been elected by uninformed voters kept ignorant through left-wing conspiracy. Further, Dewey, through his project of social democratization, has brought about moral collapse. Among the social "evils" attributed to Dewey and his ideas are same-sex marriage and the feminization of boys,³⁷ high taxes, welfare, abortion, drugging children and gun control,³⁸ "teaching Americans to hate their country,"³⁹ and the public, vaginal inspection of girls.⁴⁰

Specific arguments regarding Dewey's "dumbing down" of students reference both his pragmatism and his conception of child-centered learning. One site critiquing Dewey's naturalism claims, "Dewey's cosmos is the most spiritually and intellectually shrunken cosmos imaginable. Pragmatism and instrumentalism are inherently simplistic and anti-intellectual."⁴¹ The pragmatic mind:

...is suitable only for "practical tasks" and is "incapable of entertaining complex ideas." Such folks are only capable of conceiving of political ideology on the level of a cartoon, a symbol, or a slogan. They are amenable to group-think, so many of them are captured by the left, which specializes in group-think, slogans, and sound bites.⁴²

At times "Dewey" is constituted in this discourse as a figure onto which all the ills of the modern and postmodern periods are projected. For example, one site notes, "Dewey's demented deconstruction of great classic literature and reinterpretation of them as archaic conspiracy theories follows the cues of Dewey's historicism" likely confusing Dewey with Derrida.⁴³ Typically no examples of Dewey's writing or claims are cited to support this argument. Another site flips the familiar metaphor of children as empty vessels being filled with knowledge in the traditional, teacher-centered classroom to which Dewey objects, using it to describe indoctrination and perversion in a Deweyan classroom:

Dewey and his cohorts have at the center of their theories the denial of absolutes whose obvious fruits are "relativism" and thus the total chaos and confusion within American and Western education. It is a cynical, wicked programme of

deliberately “dumbing down” children and moulding their minds into unthinking, uncritical, near empty vessels into which their perversions are poured.⁴⁴

This piece and others like it argue Dewey’s educational practices are designed to “destroy the moral and spiritual well-being of children to make them more amenable to the moral outrages” and more easily controlled by some powerful group (in this case, corporate interests, in others, socialists and totalitarians).⁴⁵

Across multiple sites, a direct chain of influence from Dewey to more recent leaders, in particular President Obama, is drawn. The first link in this chain is touted to be Dewey’s post at Columbia where he, “with Rockefeller money, helped found Teacher’s College.”⁴⁶ Through this institution, Dewey produced other educational leaders: “Under Dewey’s guidance, fully 20% of all teacher college heads received advanced degrees from Columbia.” These leaders are necessarily incompetent because “obtaining advanced degrees under Dewey’s methods was relatively easy and required little real knowledge.”⁴⁷ A generation of corrupt and ill-prepared leaders then produced generations of ignorant, illiterate communists and socialists. One site notes, “John Dewey’s secret scams are the reason why we have 50 million functional illiterates, why high school graduates can’t multiply seven times eight, why most American kids can’t find Japan on a map....”⁴⁸ Another site, produced shortly after Obama won his first presidential election, claims, “It is now December 7, 2008, and the result of the communist takeover of our educational system is a deliberately undereducated, brainwashed youth—who managed, without any pretense of common sense, to elect our first blatantly neo-communist President.”⁴⁹ A third warns,

Make no mistake, this was a secret conspiracy. Dewey and a tiny group of pals (supported by Rockefeller’s guilty millions) engaged in a furtive plot to transform the United States into a secular and Socialist [sic] country. To make this happen, they determined that the young must be made less literate, less informed, than the parents.⁵⁰

Across multiple sites neo-conservative discourse portrays educators using public schools not only to produce a generation of ignorant socialists, but also to target Christians and their beliefs. One site claims “John Dewey wrote an amerikanized [sic] version of the Communist Manifesto.”⁵¹ Another suggests socialist, atheist purges of Christians: “The president of the NEA, the teacher’s union, sees things the way Mann and Dewey saw things. Christians need to be eliminated.”⁵²

Dewey as Social Darwinist

Some of the more sophisticated critiques of Dewey arise from discourse regarding the influence of Darwin on his philosophy. Within

neo-conservative discourse, Dewey is considered a social Darwinist by means of a definition of social Darwinism that focuses on Dewey's acceptance of Darwin's claims that organisms must adapt to constantly changing environments. An article on The Heritage Foundation's website states, "Dewey brought pragmatism and social Darwinism together as a compact of political ideas while showing their mutually reinforcing character."⁵³ Dewey's application of this idea, as well as his rejection of absolute truths, are enough for neo-conservatives to categorize Dewey as a "social Darwinist," despite the fact Dewey rejected key conclusions most often attributed to social Darwinism: natural selection and the natural order justify the existing social order and its attendant inequities. In fact, across several definitions of social Darwinism within neo-conservative discourse, no mention is made of justification of inequality as a defining element of social Darwinism. The focus, rather, remains on Dewey's seeking to explain events based on natural grounds: "One of the themes of Social Darwinism is an insistence that human life and the life of human communities are natural processes that can be studied like any other."⁵⁴ Thus social Darwinism is constructed within this discourse as "the intellectual engine of modern progressivism."⁵⁵ As such, social Darwinism drives a shift toward socialism and totalitarianism:

It is in Dewey that we can see how social Darwinism and pragmatism together become an intellectual and political force to be reckoned with: a modern liberalism whose goal is to help history along its democratic path, relying on the intellectual impetus of an elite vanguard that need not directly consult the people or ask for their consent.⁵⁶

Across multiple sites, claims regarding Dewey by those familiar with his work are recited by those who have likely read little of his work first-hand, but who, nevertheless, react to and repeat claims of social Darwinism. One site, for example, says of Dewey, "Much of his changes to schools was [sic] made possible by the theory of evolution being so strongly accepted after the writings of Charles Darwin. John Dewey wrote a theory of education and democracy that was based on evolution."⁵⁷ And, like Dewey's rejection of faith, according to neo-conservatives, his rejection of absolute values led to persecution of those holding traditional values: "After John Dewey and Langdell got through with their prestigious campaign in the eyes of power and money and glory from men....[ellipses in original] any teacher who still held for absolute values was mocked and driven out of position to teach."⁵⁸ No examples are provided to support this claim.

Intertextuality

The practice of intertextuality, a concept introduced by Kristeva,⁵⁹ is invoking meaning in a text by means of referring to another text, and is an important element of discourse. Websites used in my analysis employ a basic level of intertextuality throughout. By this, I mean they often echo claims about Dewey, so consistent influence across authors seems clear—either these texts are influencing one another or other sources are influencing many of these texts. Furthermore, as I discuss in the next section, many sites explicitly reference, or less-explicitly invoke, elements of conspiracy theories, as in examples claiming Dewey, Horace Mann, teachers' unions, evolutionists, and socialists seek to destroy Christians, traditional values, and American youth.⁶⁰ A more subtle form of intertextuality, however, is demonstrated through the ways in which claims about Dewey, an early 20th-century progressive, echo 21st-century, right-wing objections to President Obama. These instances of intertextuality are subtle but recognizable references to contemporary right-wing discourse. Take the following, for example: “John Dewey was a social engineer—one might even say a community organizer. He believed that socialism is [sic] the future. His self-appointed mission was to transition to this brave new world.”⁶¹ The reference to a brave new world, invokes, of course, Orwell's dystopic novel, but as well the new world order that dominates the words of conservative conspiracy theorists. Even more subtle, perhaps, is the reference to a “community organizer,” a thinly veiled reference to President Obama, who, in the eyes of the far right, represents a stealth socialist ushering in the new world order.⁶² Similarly, accusations Dewey ignored law and overstepped his authority echo right-wing concerns about the Obama presidency: “Dewey basically had to ignore law, precedent, tradition, legislatures, voters, elections, expectations of families, and the needs of society. He attempted an end-run, and thus a conspiracy. His project is best called Socialism-on-the-sly.”⁶³ This diatribe seems to have less to do with Dewey's work or thought, and more to do with conservative reactions to Obama's actions as president.

The New World Order

An unexpected finding of my analysis is the inference of the far-right connecting John Dewey and his work not just to small-scale conspiracy, but to conspiracy theory that reads as a foundational narrative—that of the New World Order as described by the infamous, powerfully anti-Semitic text *The Protocols of the Wise/Learned Elders of Zion*. Here a brief history of this narrative is in order. According to Boym, this conspiracy narrative traces back to an 1864 fictional pamphlet published by Maurice Joly entitled, “Dialogues in Hell.”⁶⁴ The pamphlet was “directed against Napoleon III and written in the form of a dialogue between Machiavelli and Montesquieu.”⁶⁵

In 1905 a religious writer in Russia, Sergius Nilus, plagiarized the pamphlet giving Machiavelli's part to the "wise men of Zion." Nilus published his narrative as "the supposed revelation of an Anti-Christ and a secret plan for Jewish world domination."⁶⁶ In the early 20th century, *The Protocols* was published and widely read and discussed in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Syria, Egypt, Persia, Palestine, Poland, Denmark, and Sweden. It inspired pogroms against Jews in Russia. In the U.S. it was published with Henry Ford's assistance. In that iteration, the conspiracy morphed into a Judeo-Masonic plot, thus expanding the group of villains from a Jewish cabal to a more generalized global elite. Boym notes since 1935, *The Protocols* has been "a best-seller within right-wing popular culture."⁶⁷ In 1988, it was featured as key element of semiotician Umberto Eco's novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*. *The Protocols* also forms the basis of Pat Robertson's book, *New World Order*, which explicitly implicates Dewey, and appears to be the source of much far-right-wing reaction to Dewey. Boym argues,

The protocols brings together a mass of seemingly unrelated material united by a single interpretation. There are many inconsistencies; both capitalism and socialism are blamed on the Jews. Among the agents are...European bankers...social democrats, the adepts of Darwinism, Marxism, and Nietzscheanism.⁶⁸

When Robertson adopted the theory, he explicitly included Dewey. However, concerns about the indoctrination of children by the state through educational means trace to Joly's original. In that work, the character Machiavelli states, "The instruments of thought will become the instruments of power."⁶⁹ In the *Protocols* the statement, now attributed to the Zionist, becomes, "The instrument of thought will become an educative means in the hands of our government."⁷⁰ The influence of *The Protocols* explains its reference on multiple right-wing sites that tie Dewey to a New World Order. Dewey's work becomes exemplary of the goals of The Order: "We can deduce The Order's objectives for education from evidence already presented and by examining the work and influence of John Dewey."⁷¹ Dewey's atheism makes government into a god, with Jews at its head:

In this, New World Order, the children of Israel will furnish all the leaders without encountering opposition...Dewey believed...that every child should be taught to worship the state government as "god" and that they are ruthlessly schooled to obey it. ...all the goings on in the classroom that defy logic, common sense and decency will begin to make sense. The Great Conspiracy, the five thousand year old Luciferian Conspiracy for World Government is truly evil in nature.⁷²

The influence of *The Protocols* also helps explain multiple references to the Rockefellers, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Columbia University evidenced across multiple websites. Rockefeller, a Mason according to multiple conspiracy theorists,⁷³ also represents the New World Order. Thus a statement about Dewey, such as, “He believed children needed to be reeducated away from the traditional values of the parent. He felt this would make them better citizens for the new world order,” on a site that also mentions the Rockefellers clearly references the conspiracy put forth in *The Protocols* as well as in Pat Robertson’s writings.⁷⁴

To be clear, not all anti-Dewey, right-wing websites consistently and comprehensively reflect views of New World Order conspiracy theorists. Some echo language of New World-ers, but seem to have read the texts they reference only slightly more carefully than they have read Dewey.⁷⁵ In other words, they do not seem to have any understanding of the sources of or connections to the claims they make. Many cite concerns about Christian values, absolute truths, and creeping socialism without mention of a ruling cabal. Other sites focus on Dewey’s rejection of natural law, predicting dire consequences as a result of his pragmatic ontology and his epistemological focus on the inevitability of change and the need to adapt to it. For these writers, the conspiracy appears to be limited to secular humanist socialism and does not include an organized Illuminati/elite.

Of the 31 sites analyzed herein, just two present reasonable attempts at interpreting and fairly representing Dewey’s work. Notably, one clearly identified conservative site neither misrepresents nor villainizes Dewey: *Conservapedia*.⁷⁶ A conservative version of the better-known *Wikipedia*, this site includes posts written by volunteer editors. The entry on Dewey focuses on Dewey’s ideas perceived to align with conservative values. This site presents a reasonably accurate, though not comprehensive, representation of Dewey’s views, and includes citations. The conservatives’ Dewey, in this case, is one who favors such conservative causes as local control over education. Finally, I located one article written from an evangelical point of view that critiques distortions of Dewey’s beliefs among other evangelicals. In “John Dewey and his Religious Critics,” Alan Phillips, Jr. argues against unscholarly and shallow interpretations of Dewey and other scholars: “One may wonder how public Christian apologetics can retain its validity if it is content with shallow depiction, undisguised hostility, and minimal engagement with scholarly work.”⁷⁷ Both the *Conservapedia* entry and Phillips’ article suggest the potential for arguing against particular interpretive practices without undermining or attacking students’ religious beliefs.

Implications for Teacher Educators

What are the implications of my analysis of neo-conservative discourse for teacher educators, especially for teachers of Foundations of Education courses in which interpretation of complex works is critical? First, we must recognize students who seek information about Dewey or other prominent thinkers on the internet may read representations of these theorists' work and ideas that distort, sometimes beyond recognition, their positions. This seems especially to be the case with Dewey, the only major educational thinker whose work appears on the "most dangerous" list. Teacher educators need to be aware of and ready to respond to the kinds of claims made on right-wing sites noted here.

Secondly, as is evidenced by many sites' lack of scholarly engagement with Dewey's ideas, teacher educators should recognize the notion of "engagement with serious scholarly work" as Phillips phrases it, may be unfamiliar to students and modeled neither by what they may be reading online nor within their communities. Preemptively, courses in Foundations of Education likely will need to become courses that teach high-level literacy skills, since instructors cannot assume students understand or accept scholarly means of approaching a text or an argument, including logical coherence and interpretation within context, among other aspects. Depending on the skills of one's students, these issues may need explicitly to be addressed in class discussion. Some suggestions include challenging students who approach Dewey with absolutist labels (atheist, social Darwinist) to define what they mean by their own terms and confront the complexity and ambiguity inherent in such categorizations. A well-prepared instructor can prompt students to define terms they use, but may not have thought deeply about or questioned: What do you mean by "atheist"? "What does a social Darwinist believe?" "What evidence do you see to support or refute these claims in our passage?" Of course, given Dewey's immense body of work, analysis of a passage or two, even an entire work will hardly suffice to address such broad claims.

Instructors of undergraduate students are likely aware of the need for developing such skills. My analysis, however, demonstrates what is at stake in failing to do so given the nature and frequency of neo-conservative claims made against Dewey. Pre-service teachers may enter classrooms with entirely distorted understandings of the key thinkers in the field and even of the core practices of scholarship. Whether rational discussion can affect the views of those with a preset, conspiratorial worldview remains to be seen. Some evidence suggests attendance at

secular institutions of higher education strengthens evangelicals' worldviews.⁷⁸ Researchers theorize that, perceiving they are under attack, evangelical students gird themselves even more tightly with their beliefs. However, one cannot conflate Evangelicalism with conspiracy beliefs. None of the research I located on evangelical students mentions *The Protocols* or conspiracy theories, even though the ideas appear to be influential, if not ubiquitous, throughout the internet.

Finally, I suggest there are potential places of common ground between scholars and evangelical students. In my experience, highly religious students are very much interested in and receptive to discussions of moral and ethical responsibilities. Living an ethical life, as defined by Biblical principles, is crucial to these students. Moral absolutism, including the view that "it is 'always wrong' to tell a lie" is a foundational element of an evangelical worldview.⁷⁹ This concern for moral behavior opens the door for instructors to address the interpretation of other's works and ideas as an ethical issue. If misrepresentation is a form of bearing false witness, readers have a moral obligation to make an attempt toward honest interpretations of someone's words.⁸⁰ In this way, the evangelical concern for fair and ethical interpretation can open the door to productive conversations about interpretive practices. While this content may not be included explicitly in standards or goals for courses in Foundations of Education, it may align with college- and career-readiness standards. Michael Apple notes areas of concern and what he calls "good sense" are common to progressive educators and authoritarian populist conservatives, including resisting elements of an existing power structure. Referencing Freire, Apple writes, "education must begin with dialogue."⁸¹ In the case of evangelical teacher education students, understanding elements of neo-conservative discourse around education, and John Dewey in particular, will help instructors better ask questions and understand answers. This level of in-depth study and discussion requires time and expertise. It requires teacher preparation programs offer courses that promote in-depth study of works foundational to the field and support faculty who have expertise in the history and philosophy of education. In an era devoted to managerialism and market values, this level of attention to philosophy may be hard to garner.

Endnotes

- ¹ In response to a presentation of this paper at a conference, a colleague from Palestine objected to my description of this student's shirt, which she found offensive. I include the description here because the

shirt represents firmly held political beliefs tied to Christian Evangelicalism. I understand the shirt to be the student's public statement of belief and identity and relevant to this account. See Phillip E. Hammond and James Davison Hunter, "On Maintaining Plausibility: the Worldview of Evangelical College Students," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 23, no. 3 (2001): 221–238; and Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014).

- 2 John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1916).
- 3 Michael W. Apple, "Educational and Curricular Restructuring and the Neo-Liberal and Neo-Conservative Agendas: Interview with Michael Apple," *Currículo sem Fronteiras* 1, no. 1 (2001): i–xxvi.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 The data for this study was collected in the fall of 2014 and the website content was printed out for analysis at that time. I include the URLs of sites referenced in the endnotes. However, due to the unstable nature of internet discourse, as this paper goes to print, a number of sites are now inaccessible.
- 6 Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 3.
- 7 Bruce Deitrick Price, "John Dewey Is a Fraud," *American Thinker*, October 1, 2012, http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2012/10/john_dewey_is_a_fraud.html
- 8 Ian Welsh, "New World Order," *Overlords of Chaos*, <http://overlordsofchaos.com/html/1925-29.html>; Cynthia A. Janak, "Socialism Is Alive and Well in America," *Renew America*, February 20, 2005, <http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/janak/050220>; James A. Watkins, "National Education Association," <http://james-a-watkins.hubpages.com/hub/National-Education-Association>; and Larry A. Rice, "John Dewey, Father of Modern Education," *Christian Parents Information Network*, <http://www.christianparents.com/jdewey.htm>
- 9 Rice, "Dewey, Father of Modern Education."
- 10 Charles A. Morse, "How Communist Is Public Education?," *Enter Stage Right*, March 25, 2002, <http://www.enterstageright.com/archive/articles/0302/0302publiced.htm>
- 11 Kelly O'Connell, "John Dewey: Bosom Serpent of American Education," *Canada Free Press*, February 27, 2013, <http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/53339>
- 12 Paul Kengor, "The ACLU's Not-So-Holy Trinity," *The American*

- Spectator*, December 12, 2010, <http://spectator.org/articles/38417/aclus-not-so-holy-trinity>
- ¹³ Gene Zimmer, "Skull & Bones Society: How the Order Controls Education," *Foundation for Truth in Reality*, http://www.sntp.net/education/sutton_dewey.htm. One difficulty with internet-based research is constant change. All websites used for this research were accessed and printed in September and October of 2014 and were active as of January 2015. As of August 2015, this URL is no longer accessible.
- ¹⁴ See respectively: Tom Hughes, "Children and Education," *Wake Up America!*, <http://togreaterheights.com/educate-yourself/education-censored/children-education/>; and Lew Paxton Price, "Education: The Systematic Subversion of our Youth," <http://www.softcom.net/users/greebo/education.htm>
- ¹⁵ O'Connell, "Bosom Serpent of American Education."
- ¹⁶ Welsh, "New World Order;" Ken Emilio, "Madrasas—Agents of Change—A Model," *Remnant Report*, http://remnantreport.com/cgi-bin/imcart/read.cgi?article_id=393&sub=14; James A. Watkins, "National Education Association," <http://james-a-watkins.hubpages.com/hub/National-Education-Association>
- ¹⁷ L. Price, "Education;" Watkins, "National Education Association."
- ¹⁸ B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud."
- ¹⁹ Welsh, "New World Order."
- ²⁰ John Tertullian, "Humanist Militants," *Contra Celsum*, April 26, 2014, <http://jtcontracelsum.blogspot.com/2014/04/humanist-militants.html>
- ²¹ Welsh, "New World Order;" *Save Alpine School District*, "John Goodlad vs. Bill Ayers," <http://www.saveasd.com/john-goodlad-bill-ayers/>; Janak, "Socialism Is Alive and Well;" Morse, "How Communist is Public Education?;" Ellis Washington, "John Dewey's Dunces," *WND Commentary*, January 25, 2013, <http://www.wnd.com/2013/01/john-deweys-dunces/>
- ²² Tertullian, "Humanist Militants."
- ²³ Welsh, "New World Order."
- ²⁴ R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "America's Educational Crisis—How Did it Happen?," *Albertmohler.com*, August 16, 2004, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/08/16/americas-educational-crisis-how-did-it-happen/>
- ²⁵ Janak, "Socialism Is Alive and Well."

- ²⁶ Bruce Deitrick Price, “Phooey on John Dewey—The Dewey Deception,” <http://www.improve-education.org/id42.html>
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ O’Connell, “Bosom Serpent of American Education;” Mohler, Jr., “America’s Educational Crisis;” Emilio, “Madrassas;” Watkins, “National Education Association;” Rice, “Dewey, Father of Modern Education.”
- ²⁹ L. Price. “Education.”
- ³⁰ Fred Hutchison, “Faith and Atheism in Politics: The Great Divide,” *Renew America*, June 28, 2012, <http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/hutchison/120628>
- ³¹ Welsh, “New World Order;” Morse, “How Communist Is Public Education?”
- ³² Morse, “How Communist Is Public Education?”
- ³³ Matt Rawlings, “Dear New Atheists, Would You Like to Live in North Korea?,” *Pastor Matt, Christian Worldview and Apologetics*, February 2014, <http://pastormattblog.com/2014/02/24/dear-new-atheists-would-you-like-to-live-in-north-korea/>
- ³⁴ Zimmer, “Skull & Bones Society;” Morse, “How Communist Is Public Education?”
- ³⁵ “Ten Most Harmful Books of the 19th and 20th Centuries,” *Human Events*, May 31, 2005, <http://humanevents.com/2005/05/31/ten-most-harmful-books-of-the-19th-and-20th-centuries/>
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Watkins, “National Education Association;” Bradley C. S. Watson, “Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence,” *The Heritage Foundation*, February 24, 2009, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/02/progressivism-and-the-new-science-of-jurisprudence>
- ³⁸ Morse, “How Communist Is Public Education?;” Washington, “John Dewey’s Dunces.”
- ³⁹ Rice, “Dewey, Father of Modern Education.”
- ⁴⁰ For claims linking Dewey by way of the NEA to sexual violation of children see: Rice, “Dewey, Father of Modern Education.”
- ⁴¹ Hutchison, “Faith and Atheism in Politics.”
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ibid.

- 44 Welsh, "New World Order."
- 45 Janak, "Socialism."
- 46 L. Price, "Education;" Janak, "Socialism Is Alive and Well;" B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud."
- 47 L. Price, "Education."
- 48 B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud."
- 49 L. Price, "Education."
- 50 Malcom A. Kline, "John Dewey & Soviet Progressives," Accuracy in Academia, October 28, 2010, <http://www.academia.org/john-dewey-soviet-progressives/>
- 51 Larry A. Rice, "John Dewey, Father of Modern Education," Christian Parents Information Network, <http://www.christianparents.com/jdewey.htm>
- 52 "Horace Mann, John Dewey, and the NEA," Seekfind.net, <http://www.Seekfind.net/horacemannjohndeweyandthenea.html>
- 53 Watson, "Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence." See also: Wishing, "Charles Darwin."
- 54 Natural Law, Natural Rights, and American Constitutionalism, "Social Darwinism Educational Materials," *Critics of the National Law Tradition*, <http://www.nlnrac.org/critics/social-darwinism/educational-materials>; see also: Bruce Gordon, "Darwinism, Secularism, and the Decline of the West, Part 3: The Impact of Darwinism," School of Christian Thought, Houston Baptist University, February 11, 2014; Clarence Carson, "A Collectivist Curvature of the Mind," *The Moral Liberal*, <http://www.themoralliberal.com/2014/12/16/a-collectivist-curvature-of-the-mind/>; Washington, "John Dewey's Dunces;" and Watson, "Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence."
- 55 Wishing, "Charles Darwin."
- 56 Watson, "Progressivism and the New Science of Jurisprudence."
- 57 Rice, "Dewey, Father of Modern Education."
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
- 60 Rice, "Dewey, Father of Modern Education."
- 61 B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud."
- 62 See Sutton, *American Apocalypse*, 373. Sutton documents neo-conservative, evangelical opposition to Barack Obama by Billy Graham and others.
- 63 B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud."

- ⁶⁴ Svetlana Boym, "Conspiracy Theories and Literary Ethics: Umberto Eco, Danilo Kiš and The Protocols of Zion," *Comparative Literature* 51, no. 2 (1999): 97–122.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 105–106.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ Zimmer, "Skull & Bones Society."
- ⁷² Welsh, "New World Order."
- ⁷³ See B. Price, "Dewey Is a Fraud." A Google search for "Rockefeller and the Masons" produced over 400,000 hits. The top three sites resulting from this search indict the Rockefellers as tools of the Rothschilds, one of 13 satanic bloodlines, and a threat to Christianity, respectively. *John D. Rockefeller, Free-Masonry, and The McKinley Assassination*, <http://www.federaljack.com/john-d-rockefeller-free-masonry-and-the-mckinley-assassination/>; *The Rockefeller Bloodline*, <http://www.thewatcherfiles.com/bloodlines/rockefeller.htm>; and *Rockefeller & Obama New World Order 2 of 4 (Illuminati, Masons) Oprah & Jesuit Pope*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS3hLappxQg>
- ⁷⁴ Janak, "Socialism Is Alive and Well."
- ⁷⁵ See, for example, Zimmerman, "Evolutionary Legal Theories."
- ⁷⁶ "John Dewey," *Conservapedia*, http://www.conservapedia.com/John_Dewey
- ⁷⁷ Alan G. Phillips, Jr., "John Dewey and His Religious Critics," *Religion and Education* 29, no. 1 (2002): 38.
- ⁷⁸ Hammond and Hunter, "On Maintaining Plausibility."
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.
- ⁸⁰ Literary criticism and cultural studies shifts away from attention to the author's intention with the rise of the New Critics and forms of structuralist and post-structuralist criticism of the mid-20th century (see for example: W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1954). However, some recent attention is paid to the intention of the author, as in Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida* (3rd ed.) (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). The ethical

obligation a reader or critic has not to misrepresent is discussed in Kalle Puolakka, "Literature, Ethics, and Richard Rorty's Pragmatist Theory of Interpretation," *Philosophica* 36, (2008): 29–41, doi 10.1007/s11406-007-9091-7. Interestingly, Puolakka argues against Rorty's theory of interpretation, which he bases on Deweyan pragmatism.

- ⁸¹ Michael W. Apple, *Educating the Right Way: Markets, Standards, God and Inequality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 247.

Taking Religion Seriously in the Public Square

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Introduction

Religion both unites and divides the U.S. public, contributing to the making of more involved, more generous citizens, but also contributing to citizens less tolerant of differences and less amenable to the sort of compromises essential to democratic life.¹ One pervasive civic disagreement is over the question of the proper role of religion in public life—or if there is one.

On the one hand there are those who argue the First Amendment erects a “high and impregnable” (*Everson v Board of Education*) “wall of separation” (Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Danbury Baptists*) between church and state.² At the other end of this continuum are those who argue the U.S. is “a Christian nation” in which the Bible is the proper source of civil law. I note here the distinction between religious and secular worldviews as an example of incommensurable visions of a good life, and my argument is a consideration of a particular form of a serious problem our democratic experiment faces: our political system was designed by men who agreed on basic principles but differed on interests. The system they gave us was designed so citizens might compromise on interests, giving something here, getting something else there. Such a system reflects the normal course of politics as described by James Madison in *The Federalist No. 10* by which one alliance of factions forms around one issue, but this alliance will not be permanent. On a different issue, interests align differently. This constant shifting of alliances prevents permanent blocks from forming and taking over the machinery of government, and will therefore preserve democratic government. Today, however, our deepest divisions are not over matters of interest, but of principle. This is why many “values voters” vote against their own best interest (in practical terms) in order to support candidates and movements that fit (or are made to appear to fit) their moral commitments.³

This incommensurability on matters of fundamental principle puts our political system under stress. Without compromise, the work of a diverse and complex public cannot get done. Without intentional education for citizenship, including but not limited to the institution of

school, citizens are unlikely to get better at self-governance than they are today: a sad state of affairs.

In this paper I argue there is some truth within both points of view, but neither is fully accurate, nor is either, taken at face value, useful for meeting the demands of democratic life. I first briefly frame the question of the relationship between religious belief and political advocacy, then consider the role of the First Amendment in considering this issue, after which I briefly consider the nature of a public and public speech, and raise the question of the limits of democratic inclusion. Finally, I briefly offer a few educational responses to the problem of accommodating religious belief in public discourse.

Religion and Politics

The claim there should be a complete separation between church and state is heuristically useful and worth consideration. It is important we distinguish between matters of private and sectarian religious belief and practice on the one hand and public policy on the other. However, the seemingly, rhetorically simple distinction between church and state is more complex than it appears once one understands one's religious beliefs often are foundational in the formation of one's political commitments.

Furthermore, the common claim that morality cannot be legislated is patently untrue. Since most legislation has to do with the way people live together and treat one another, it might be more accurate to say rarely is anything legislated *but* morality. To the extent, then, that at least some significant portion of citizens base their moral preferences about the social order on their religious beliefs, the notion religion can be kept out of politics is preposterous. This is not to say civil institutions and religious institutions cannot be distinguished, but it is to recognize this distinction may be little more than heuristic.

When the Mormon Church organizes to support the passage of California's anti-gay Proposition 8, when a letter supporting passage is read at all congregations, when Mormons are directed to contribute to the referendum campaign, and when Mormons are then motivated to volunteer for the campaign (producing, in effect, an in-kind contribution from the church), two things become immediately clear: (1) religion and politics are closely linked, and (2) nothing even remotely in violation of the Constitution has occurred. Nor was the Mormon Church alone in the California example: Several other religious groups similarly were involved. The Knights of Columbus of the Roman Catholic Church, for example, were the largest single financial supporters of Proposition 8.⁴ I want to suggest this sort of entanglement between religion and politics is both inevitable and increasingly the norm rather than the exception.

Nor is the civil status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people the only such issue. The U.S. Catholic bishops and their respective state conferences have consistently supported use of public money to fund voucher programs so more families can afford to send their children to private (mostly Catholic) schools. This support has come not only from the actions of state and national councils of Roman Catholic bishops, but has shaped both preaching from the pulpit and exhortations of parishioners. Catholics and evangelicals have for decades organized and led the opposition to abortion rights. Evangelicals, for reasons that have to do with beliefs about prerequisites for the Second Coming, are strong supporters of Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories. These are clear examples that a group's or individual's public policy commitments are also expressions of, or at least likely shaped by, religious beliefs and teachings.

Not all instances are quite so clear. The civil rights movement of the '60s and '70s was largely a movement led by ordained clergy, largely but not exclusively from Black churches. Similarly, the leaders of the anti-Vietnam War movement were largely ordained clergy (e.g., Harvey Cox, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dan and Phil Berrigan all preached a biblical pacifism), as were many spokespersons *for* the war (e.g., Joseph Cardinal Spellman, Billy Graham, and Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen all of whom preached the need to oppose "godless Communism"). Whether one was for the war or against it, one wanted it known that God was on one's side.

But there are even more general connections; What is to be said of political and economic liberals who think fidelity to the Gospels requires public policies with a "preferential option for the poor" and a commitment to social justice, broadly construed, according to biblical principles? Is their support for a strong social safety net, universal health care, and a progressive tax code somehow suspect because it is rooted in their reading of the Bible? The concept of responsible citizenship surely cannot be divorced from one's basic and fundamental ideas about what people owe one another, ourselves, and, if people believe they exist, their gods.

This situation is most sharply delineated for those members of the polity who are also members of communities defined by what I call Covenant Christianity. For these citizens, their religious beliefs present them with a world shaped by a covenant with God that dates back to God's covenant with Abraham. In this view, the covenant has remained intact over the millennia, though it has shifted from one community to another. Part of the story the early Christian community told itself was that God had shifted allegiance from the Jewish people to those who became followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The early pilgrim settlers in New England in turn thought the land they settled was a new "city on a hill,"

given them by God as their new promised land, and that the people who settled there had God's protection and support *so long as they lived under and by the covenant*.⁵

The key to understanding this worldview is to understand that those who hold it see their well-being linked inextricably to the morality of the community. According to the Bible, if the community holds to the covenant, it will continue to receive God's blessing and protection; if it does not do so, it will suffer consequences.⁶ Pat Robertson's and Jerry Falwell's otherwise incomprehensible claim the attack on the World Trade Center happened because New York City tolerates homosexuality⁷ falls within this tradition. Many found their claim either laughable or offensive (or both), yet many of those offended by it are nevertheless moved by Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address," in which Lincoln uses the same sort of reasoning (albeit much more eloquently than Robertson) to express the thought that the Civil War was God's judgment on the nation, the "woe due to those by whom the offense [of slavery] came."⁸

While the number of U.S. citizens who are biblical literalists and conscious members of the Covenant Community are no majority of the citizenry, they are a significant and dedicated minority, motivated by their devotion to their God and their fear of his wrath. Their number is also augmented by those members of the polity who hold a softer, more amorphous sense that the U.S. is an exceptional nation, in large part because it is the beneficiary of divine protection.

Many of these citizens feel disrespected by what they view as a radical secularism of the public square; they also feel threatened by the possibility of God's wrath. It is this commitment and this fear that are at the heart of much of the political activism of the religious right, as they insist on being heard and accepted on their own terms in civic discourse. This, of course, is exactly the point of contention between the members of the Covenant Community and those secularists who insist any appeal to faith-based reasoning in determining public policy is a breach in the wall between church and state they see as partly defining the U.S. polity.

One problem with this restriction on expression of faith-based policy-thinking is that it essentially gives people of faith who wish to engage in public discourse a choice between being disingenuous and being ignored. For example, I might believe we should have a progressive tax system because it would bring public policy more closely in line with my commitments to biblical imperatives to make society just by providing adequate resources to the weak and marginalized (widows, orphans, and sojourners, in the biblical formulations). However, if my arguments are to have weight in the public square, they must be couched in a language of "public rationality."⁹ In short, I cannot give *my* reasons

for wanting to see progressivity in the tax code; I must give *your* reasons (or perhaps *nobody's* reasons). For example, I might argue such policies will increase the gross national product by increasing aggregate demand, or such policies will allow us to fund social security. These claims may even be true, *but it remains democratically significant they are not my reasons for thinking the tax code should be steeply progressive.*

Notwithstanding my example, the idea the U.S. is a uniquely “Christian nation,” while perhaps true in some statistical sense, is deeply and seriously misstated if taken to entail our laws should be a reflection of biblical teaching, notwithstanding instances where the civil order is served.¹⁰ It may be true that the founding fathers, living in the time they did, were more focused on the importance of religion and religious belief. It may also be the case they might have been comfortable with what today might be considered a sort of soft establishment in the form of general approval of religiosity similar to George Washington’s observation that, “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.... *And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion,*”¹¹ or President Eisenhower’s more recent declaration that “our form of government has no sense unless it is grounded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don’t care what it is.”¹²

The First Amendment

The precise meaning of *establishment* as used in the First Amendment is argued endlessly today. Some argue the prohibition of establishment would still allow support for “religion in general,” while others argue the prohibition is very broad, preventing the government from supporting even religion in general. I hope to show shortly this argument is both pointless and fruitless for at least two reasons: (1) this is a far more complex and religiously diverse society than the one under which the nation was founded, and (2) the First Amendment, though argued over and endlessly dissected, is specifically designed *not* to resolve the sorts of issues faced today.

As to the first point, it is not an unreasonable interpretation of the words of at least some of the founding fathers to claim they saw religion as something they and their fellows held broadly in common, and that they did not see harm in a government policy that supported, in a broad and general sense, religious belief of some kind, most generally Christianity. It is quite something else to argue from that to the belief they would have endorsed a similar claim in the much more religiously diverse nation that is the United States today. The founding fathers were clearly politicians well versed in the art of compromise, a fact those who today call themselves “originalists” largely ignore.

More importantly, the language of the First Amendment, whatever its meaning at the time of its adoption, is a poor instrument for making decisions about religion in the public square. The First Amendment is not a statement about human rights or religious liberty (or speech, or the press, or any of the other freedoms mentioned in the amendment). The wording of the amendment (“Congress shall make no law...”) makes clear it does not protect the rights of citizens but the right of states to do as they will in these arenas. That is, the First Amendment is a statement of federalism, not of civil rights. It protects the power of states against the federal government, but offers absolutely no protection to citizens against the actions of states.

The current application of the First Amendment is established by interpreting the Fourteenth Amendment so the limits placed on the power of the federal government are henceforth applied against the power of states—the doctrine of *incorporation*. While that theory is easily converted to practice with the other amendments that make up the Bill of Rights (“the right of the people to keep and bear arms”; “No soldier shall...be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner”; “the right of the people to be secure in their persons...”; and so on), it does not obviously apply to the First Amendment. That is, the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Amendments clearly stipulate civil rights for individual citizens; there is no such right asserted in the text of the First Amendment. For this reason, it is difficult to discern exactly how the principle of incorporation applies.

But, to repeat, all this is theoretical. Whatever the First Amendment means, people will use their consciences when deciding matters of civil morality, and that is as it should be. That democratic government required citizens both politically informed and morally formed was the civic purpose that led to the experiment in U.S. universal public education. The office of citizen requires that, at least some of the time, members will put the common good ahead of their individual advantage. Without such citizens, democracy cannot function. It will collapse under the weight of unconstrained pursuit of self-advantage. This is not to suggest that only religious citizens can be moral, but rather to stipulate that democratic ones must be.

Public Speech

One fundamental way of conceiving of democratic space is to think of the public as that entity constituted by a common space defined by speech. In this way of thinking, one becomes a member of a public not by speaking but by being heard, *and heard in a certain way*. Specifically, citizens are obligated to hear one another, so their point of view is taken into account, that citizens, as Tom Green¹³ put it, hear the other’s speech as candidate for our own. This means that one can, but must not,

effectively remove others from democratic life by the simple expedient of refusing to hear their point of view.

It is in this arena that public education in the midst of incommensurable visions of civic life offers democratic possibility. Those of us strongly influenced by Dewey (and many of us who are not, or at least not directly) see democratic life as finding common ground for the solution of common problems. There are alternatives, but citizens may need to face the fact that there are times at and issues on which compromise is not possible, nor even in some cases desirable if it were so. An example of this would be *marriage equality* or *gay marriage*.¹⁴ Most U.S. citizens today have come to accept the right to marriage equality, feeling, at the very least, that even if they do not approve, it is none of their business. This is a major shift in public opinion in a very short time, but that is not my point here.

Here, I want to point out that this is not acceptable, cannot be acceptable, to those citizens who hold, as a seriously considered and deeply held core belief, that marriage is ordained by God and defined by God's law. The additional piece, that God will punish those nations that do not obey his law, makes acceptance of marriage equality impossible for them. No compromise is possible with Covenant Christians on this issue or similar ones precisely because there is no common ground on which all can stand. For society to accept marriage equality is not just to disagree with members of this community on one specific issue. It is wholly to reject their worldview and moral universe. The democratic problem is to do so respectfully; the educational problem is to teach future citizens how to do so.

Limits of Democratic Inclusion

So, then, I turn to the question of what it means to take religion in the public square seriously. I want to put forth at least three answers to that question. First of all, it means taking into account the profound influence religious belief has on the commitments of those who hold them, especially certain sorts of religious belief I call Covenant Christianity.¹⁵ Second (and as a corollary to the first), it means considering the possibility there may be limits to the degree of diversity a democratic polity can contain and still function.¹⁶ In this regard, it is worth recalling the constitutional system bequeathed to citizens is designed to allow and encourage government by compromise on interests between citizens who agree (mostly) on principles. It may be poorly designed to serve our current need to find common ground when the disagreements are more about fundamental principles than personal or group interests. And third, at the very least it requires engaging in serious discussion of matters of religious belief when they inform preferences on public policy.¹⁷ That means giving special consideration to the concerns of our fellow citizens whose beliefs about salvation and

public policy are closely wound together. At the same time and somewhat paradoxically, the difficult truth is that public policy at times does and must contradict the religious beliefs of some citizens: It means avoiding the condescending and false nostrum that public policies are “neutral” with respect to religious belief when they clearly are not, as the discussion of marriage equality above reveals. Briefly, I now consider each of these requirements.

Taking Religious Belief Seriously

One of the most difficult demands of democratic life is that citizens listen to one another in the sympathetic and thoughtful manner that allows us to hear what the other person is trying to tell us as she or he intends it to be heard. This does not entail, of course, any obligation to agree. But it strongly entails an obligation to listen generously.¹⁸ Because speech only becomes *public* speech when it is *heard* in a certain way,¹⁹ minority voices can be effectively excluded from public discourse simply by one’s refusal to give any weight to the speech of our fellow citizens.

Across the political spectrum one can hear clear examples of how this is done by turning on the likes of Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin, and so many others who make their living sowing distrust of various bogeymen, including Muslims (“Islamofascists”), women (“Feminazis”), people of color (“race hustlers”), and social activists (“socialists), while demonizing those who disagree as people who hate “America.” On the other side of the political divide is the work of comedians like Bill Maher and George Carlin, both of whom consistently portray religious belief and religious believers as stupid and not to be taken seriously when advocating for their preferences in the public square. Scholarly examples include the work of such as Christopher Hitchens,²⁰ Sam Harris,²¹ and Richard Dawkins,²² each of whom claims to offer definitive evidence for the lack of a divinity (conceptually as incoherent as proving that the Christian God does exist) and the evil of religion. Finally, there is the everyday level of arguing one should not, for example, credit arguments against marriage equality for the simple reason they are grounded in religious belief and therefore inappropriate bases for making public policy.²³

Citizens need to be more nuanced in addressing this kind of issue. It is certainly true that some religious communities might condemn abortion. It might follow that orthodox members of such communities would therefore themselves condemn abortion. It would certainly not follow that this would be a reason for civil law to conform to this religious belief so long as any significant degree of disagreement existed in the polity. However, the polity should perhaps pause especially carefully in this and similar arenas, not because of shared belief in the religious views expressed, *but out of respect for citizens who hold such views*. In

other words, where no public interest is directly or strongly affected (and abortion is *not* such a case) perhaps the proper course of public policy is to accommodate when possible the strongly and sincerely held beliefs of fellow citizens. Secular fundamentalists often talk of such accommodation as a state *endorsement* of sectarian beliefs, but I wonder if it might be possible to reconceive it as an act of respect for citizens who hold those beliefs. Again, this would only be possible in cases where such accommodation does not harm the public square.

Note also in this regard such an approach would allow religious citizens to be honest in their public discourse. Consider again a person who supports food stamps, food lunch programs, and other elements of the social safety net because she takes seriously the repeated biblical exhortations to social justice in general and care for children in particular. Under the ideals of public rationality currently employed, she could argue in support of such public policies, but only on secular grounds of rationality all could endorse: increasing students' test scores, preparing students for future economic productivity, or other such reasons.²⁴ It is at least conceivable that we can do better, that there can be ways for us to hear religious reasons—honest reasons—for policy preferences without committing to granting them special weight.

Taking religion seriously and considering the proper relationship between religion and democratic governance may illustrate the boundaries of democratic tolerance and accommodation. That is to say, there may be a point at which commitments to religious (or other forms of belief) disqualify one from playing according to the rules of democratic life. If democratic life requires compromise, then people who come into the public square with uncompromisable commitments are ill-suited for democratic life. If Dewey is correct and the rules of the game define the game,²⁵ then people with uncompromisable principles on matters where there is serious and deep division in the body politic are not playing democracy, but some other game.

This does not mean the polity should declare members of particular communities excluded, but should recognize that, by refusing to play by the rules of democratic life, members of the Covenant Community effectively place themselves outside the democratic polity. Members of Covenant Communities are owed serious attention, consideration, and regard. They are owed the liberty to practice their own religion. They and we *ourselves* are owed serious engagement with questions of what democratic discourse entails when a self-identified group of citizens have chosen to not be bound by the rules of democratic decision-making. What they are *not* owed, however, is dramatically to attenuate democracy. They are not owed compliance with their worldview or their desires, however heartfelt these may be.

Finally, secular citizens should stop pretending public policies are neutral when they stand in direct opposition to deeply and sincerely held beliefs of others. It is not a neutral act to support full civil membership and rights for LGBT citizens, to protect by law a woman's right to choose or to have in every other way full equality with men, to teach evolution in science class, or to create sex-education classes that are both accurate and sex-positive. I argue each of these is the proper course of action, but Counts²⁶ was right: Neutrality is not possible. To say that such policies are acts of civil neutrality is not true, and it disrespects those citizens whom these policies offend. The question citizens must ask is, "how can we commit these violations and be respectful at the same time?"²⁷

Education and Incommensurability

I have been considering the failure to deal with religion in the broad political and civil frame. To conclude, I want to suggest that schools' failure to educate for democratic life is a significant contributor to the mess in which the U.S. currently finds itself and to briefly consider some alternatives. In this regard, it is important to note the common school was created, with all its flaws, to create democratic (technically, *republican*) citizens. One of the things schools ought to be doing is engaging young people with serious consideration of the proper form of social life and the kind of people they want to be. Schools should be helping students decide who they want to be, individually and together. More importantly, schools should be in the business of preparing children for their future role of citizen. Part of this is the ability to engage in serious and honest discussion with fellow citizens on issues of significance about which there is disagreement.

Schools should be helping young people understand they are not, and can never be, independent of their fellow citizens; they are *members of* a society and of communities, not just *individuals in* one.²⁸ Furthermore, schools should be helping young people think about the meaning of life and the nature of human flourishing, including the role of religion. And there are both theoretical and practical examples of what this looks like.

Perhaps the most obvious example of a teacher showing how to engage children in serious conversations about "things that matter"²⁹ is almost anything written by Vivian Paley, but let me use *You Can't Say, You Can't Play*³⁰ as an exemplar for my argument. In her book,³¹ Paley recounts the year she sought to end exclusion of some children by other children in her kindergarten classroom. After discussing the wisdom of such a rule with her children (and with children in the higher grades), she posts the rule one day and begins the process of implementing it.

What is of note here is that the process of implementation is not a matter of imposing consequences for compliance or non-compliance.

Rather, Paley engages her students in an extended, several-month-long conversation about the meaning of inclusion, the meaning of democracy, and the nature of the public square. Of course, none of these words are used (her interlocutors were 4- and 5-year-old children), but these were nonetheless the very issues engaged in the conversation. Further, as Paley herself makes clear to her children and her readers, her own motivation for making this the central topic of her classroom was her reading of scripture in the context of her everyday experience in the classroom.³² And when asked, she shared this with her students as well.

Specifically, Paley saw the casual cruelty with which her children treated each other in light of her reading of Leviticus: “The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the homeborn among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (19:34). She did not *justify* the new rule with reference to scripture, but she did in some sense *explain* the new rule that way. In other words, she gave several good public reasons and justifications for granting all children (and, by extension, all citizens) full membership and full presence in the democratic public square. However, these reasons, as good and as true as they might be, were not in fact Paley’s motivation for conceiving the rule in the first place: That was an outgrowth of the moral architecture given her by her Jewish faith.

A more specific argument for asking students to consider questions of ultimate meaning and the constituents of a good life is presented by Kunzman,³³ who asks readers consider the ways in which opportunities present themselves for schools to facilitate questions about the meaning of a good life and the ways to reach it. Kunzman tells how, in discussing *Brave New World* with his high schools students, he failed to follow the implications of one of his students asking, “Who are we to play God?” Reflecting back on his failure to confront that question directly, Kunzman argues adolescents are certainly able to pursue such questions and quite interested in doing so. The fact that schools rarely take advantage of opportunities to have these conversations, he argues, is one of the ways in which schools fail to serve legitimate ends of democratic education.

In doing so, of course, teachers will sometimes implicate students’ religious beliefs and moral commitments, which Kunzman argues is not only justified, it is a way to improve dramatically the quality of education and the engagement of students. Nel Noddings³⁴ confronts this argument in more detail, arguing education worth its name will ask students to consider different answers than thinkers have given to questions of meaning, value, morality, and immortality. She explores, in some detail and with great perspicacity, the ways in which sensitive subjects of meaning, religion, and spirituality productively can be

explored with students in a variety of subjects in ways that encourage open-mindedness and meaningful exploration of beliefs both within our own culture and across cultures. How do people answer questions about their place in the universe, the foundations of morality, and the question of immortality, and how have they done so across time and place?

I mean this list to be suggestive, not exhaustive. Many writers, far too many to explore here, indicate either the importance of thoughtfully preparing curriculum content that raises questions and shapes intelligent discussion about issues of ultimate meaning and the nature of a good life, well-lived. Many other writers share their own experience in so doing. Much of the past three decades of reform has been directed at reducing the purposes of schooling from fostering citizenship and human thriving to producing efficient economic units. This is a betrayal of the legacy of both common schooling and democratic governance.

Teaching children to accept radical and incommensurable differences begins with teaching young children to hear each other, as Paley does with her kindergarten children. This is not something that necessarily comes naturally to humans, but neither is it something against our nature. Rather it is a possibility, a potentiality, which, if properly developed, allows one to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. This is the proper task of public education: schools created and directed by the public to shape citizens capable of being members of a public. We know what we should be doing, and we know how to do it. The question we must consider is why, as yet, we have not.

Endnotes

- 1 Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides Us and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).
- 2 This is not, as we shall see, the same as trying to separate religion (or religious beliefs) from politics.
- 3 Frank Rich, *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).
- 4 It is important to note the discussion about marriage equality is a discussion about the *civil* institution and recognition of marriage. Religious institutions are properly presumed to have the right to discriminate, just as the Roman Catholic Church continues to deny divorced Catholics the right to remarry under the auspices of the Church.
- 5 John Winthrop, *City Upon a Hill* (1630). <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/Winthrop's%20City%20upon%20a%20Hill.pdf>

- ⁶ The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is the archetype of communities that do not keep God's law, though this is also the theme of the later prophets as they tried to explain why God allowed the Babylonian exile.
- ⁷ Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, *The 900 Club* (September 13, 2001). Transcript available: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/falwell-robertson-wtc/>; Video available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-CAcda_8I
- ⁸ Abraham Lincoln, *Second Inaugural Address*, Mar 4, 1965. Available: <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>
- ⁹ John Rawls, *The Idea of Public Reason in Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 212–254.
- ¹⁰ So the fact that “Thou shalt not kill” is a biblical commandment does not suggest we should not therefore prohibit murder. However, it does obligate us to find good reason to have such a law apart from the fact that it was one of the Ten Commandments.
- ¹¹ George Washington, *Farewell Address*, emphasis added. Available: <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=15&page=transcript>
- ¹² As cited in Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 96, no.1 (Winter 1967): 1–21.
- ¹³ This of course does not imply agreeing with the other, but it does mean taking their positions seriously, which is exactly what we have learned not to do.
- ¹⁴ That these two different descriptions purportedly describe the same things, but really do not is an example of just how divisive some issues are: we cannot even find a common language for them. “Marriage equality” implies marriage is marriage, and the debate is whether we should continue to deprive LGBTQ citizens of the right to marry. “Gay marriage,” in contrast, suggests we are discussing some sub-set of “marriage.”
- ¹⁵ The basic component of Covenant Christianity sees the United States as the heir of the Abrahamic Covenant: The United States is God's Chosen Land, with special blessings under the Covenant. The implication of this is that public immorality—failure to live according to the Covenant—places the United States in danger of Divine retribution and withdrawal of God's blessing and protection.
- ¹⁶ David Blacker, *Democracy Stretched Thin: How Complexity Challenges a Liberal Ideal* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).
- ¹⁷ Robert Kunzman, *Grappling with the Good: Talking about Religion and Morality in Public Schools* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

- ¹⁸ There are limits to this principle: victims of abuse and oppression, for example, have no obligation to listen with generosity to their abusers and oppressors.
- ¹⁹ Thomas F. Green, "Public Speech," *Teachers College Record* 95 (Spring 1994): 369–388.
- ²⁰ Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007).
- ²¹ Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).
- ²² Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008).
- ²³ The insincerity of this view is made obvious by the fact that when religious leaders support progressive policy preferences (living wage, anti-nuke, civil rights, immigration reform, etc.), progressives are quite happy not only to accept but to foreground such support. This makes it obvious progressives do not dismiss religious arguments *per se*, but only when those arguments lead to policies they do not like. In such cases, discussion should engage with the issue, not the religious nature of the support.
- ²⁴ Jonathan Kozol, *Children in America's School: With Bill Moyers*, Public Broadcasting Service (Los Angeles: Saint/Hayden Company, 1996).
- ²⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938).
- ²⁶ George Counts, *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1932/1978).
- ²⁷ In this paper I assume more than argue Tom Green is correct and we do indeed owe our fellow citizens this sort of respect.
- ²⁸ This does not mean we are not individuals, but that we are inevitably also, and first, members of some morally normative community (or communities).
- ²⁹ Kunzman, *Grappling with the Good*.
- ³⁰ Vivian Gussey Paley, *You Can't Say, You Can't Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- ³¹ See my fuller discussion of this book in John F. Covaleskie, "Paley's Paradox," *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*, 2003 (Champaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 2004): 330–337; *Membership and Moral Formation: Shame as a Moral and Social Emotion* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2013).
- ³² Paley, *You Can't Say, You Can't Play*, 102–103.

³³ Robert Kunzman, *Grappling with the Good*, 1–2.

³⁴ Nel Noddings, *Educating for Intelligent Belief or Disbelief* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

Sketches of Student Dysphoria: Analysis of Cartoons in an Underground Campus Newspaper, 1969–1971

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Introduction

The late sixties and early seventies were a time of political and social unrest which manifested in approximately 25% of college and university students being determined to change society and combat perceived hypocrisy.¹ During this era of free thinking, school administrators and professors were forced to confront the challenge of students incited by incidents at Kent State and Cal State, Fullerton.² Generally recognized as a time of changing social values, young people in the 1960s became disillusioned by perceived injustices and hypocrisy in the nation's political power structure and attacked political, social, and economic institutions in an effort to become actively engaged in a growing counterculture.³ Student attention was drawn to social topics that directly affected students' lives while university administrators sought to maintain orderly campuses through increasingly restrictive regulations.⁴

Against this backdrop the underground newspaper *The Catalyst* made its debut on 29 September 1969. Established as a biweekly publication, the paper acted as an alternative to standard newspapers in the Lubbock community; however, the focus of its attention was Texas Tech University (TTU) and larger social events of the time. Articles were aimed at the student audience and intended to raise awareness about issues, featuring analysis from a critical viewpoint. Although the staff was comprised entirely of TTU students, *The Catalyst* was regarded as an “underground” paper as university officials refused officially to sanction it.⁵

An underground newspaper can be any type of student publication not sanctioned by a school. The distinguishing feature of any underground paper is that it is produced without any school materials, assistance, or recognition. Students often choose underground publications within which to express their sentiments because of dissatisfaction with school-sponsored newspapers often closely controlled by university authorities, or lacking in critical social commentary.⁶

A gap exists in understanding content of underground newspapers during this time period. Underground newspapers aim to reach an audience outside the mainstream or homogeneous middle, consequently, historical study of the underground press has often fallen outside the scope of scholarship.⁷ Glessing makes the point that during the late 1960s and early 1970s most journalism educators and historians regarded the underground press as unworthy of scholarly examination.⁸ What scholarly inquiry that is available has examined such papers from a highly generalized perspective. Lauren Kessler's *The Dissident Press* examines six types of underground newspaper categories.⁹ College and university underground papers were known to reside within the broader category of those that opposed war; however, none have been examined in detail and no deeper examination of student-run papers has been made. David Armstrong provides a general overview of underground papers, yet his purview does not extend to discuss university student-run papers, but rather emphasizes larger-scale, commercial publications such as *The Village Voice*.¹⁰ Even when it comes to analysis of student-run papers, most studies focus on papers from universities located in major urban areas such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, yet the majority of underground, student-run papers were in fact generated in smaller cities throughout the country.¹¹ Historical perspectives on student activism generally are representative of Northern institutions. Astin, Astin, Bayer, and Bisconti's overview of the unrest era refers to examples from six universities, only one of which was drawn from the South.¹² Given the evidence, we argue student activism was more widespread and complex than existing literature suggests.

Historians' accounts have yet to address how underground newspapers use imagery to advance political messages.¹³ Henisch and Henisch examine how photography was used in political satire in the 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁴ Glessing, for example, discusses some of those novel, experimental visual techniques employed by underground newspapers during the 1960s, however a detailed case examination remains to be conducted. Underground newspapers employed visuals in order to do more than add factual information to an accompanying article or produce commentary; visuals could stand on their own to make a symbolic statement.¹⁵ Such images represent the intersection of imagery as a representation of factual knowledge and a form of art.¹⁶ The gap in the literature implies a lack of understanding the place and importance of the underground student press. In an effort to narrow the knowledge gap, we analyze cartoons and drawings from *The Catalyst* in order better to understand their meaning within the social and political contexts in which they were published and student-run, underground newspapers in general.

Theoretical Framework and Historical Background

There is a pressing need for a deep understanding of media's role in the history of higher education. Media shapes perception of issues through the way they present topics and images.¹⁷ Any examination of media must take into account its effect upon those who consume it.¹⁸ Mass-media, particularly commercial newspapers, are often perceived by the public as the normative perspective of news and analysis.¹⁹ Such dominance of public perception is subconsciously achieved through what Althusser refers to as the ideological state apparatus which includes mass-media.²⁰ Commercially driven mass-media is particularly powerful because of the ubiquitous nature of its presence, and because different forms of media reinforce one another since, by design, they communicate a message intended to reinforce the interests of the existing social order.²¹ Freire not only cautions against passive acceptance of information without critical inquiry or questioning, but also against pernicious societal uses of propaganda and sloganism. Mainstream, commercial media are an essential tool in transmitting propaganda to reinforce message control and social domination.²²

A pluralist model media helps conceptualize how competing groups bring forth alternative perspectives in ways responsive to public demand.²³ The pluralistic model is based on the assumption that because commercial mass-media's intent is to reinforce the existing social order it often presents news in a manner divorced from social context or critical analysis. Therefore, this model portrays the ability of commercial mass-media to present an independent or diverse perspective of news with skepticism.²⁴ An understanding of the role of the underground press must foreground its role as an alternative and challenge to a perceived state apparatus, which, at the time *The Catalyst* was in circulation, the underground newspaper's staff set about to do.

In order to understand the intent of *The Catalyst*, one must situate the events of 1969–1971 within an historical context. What began at large universities spread to colleges and universities of all types,²⁵ and from 1964 to 1970 student unrest increased in response to incidents that would set the backdrop for institutional student censorship. Lynd posits that in the early 1960s, universities advocated a distinction between thought and action that discouraged students from translating their beliefs into action.²⁶

The U.C. Berkeley campus was the scene of one of the first violent student uprisings of the 1960s. Student dysphoria was initiated in the fall of 1964 by an administrative decision that prohibited students from using a portion of university property to distribute literature and solicit membership for student groups. Student and administration relations became increasingly strained culminating in students occupying the

administration building in December.²⁷ The events at Berkeley fueled the surge in student perception of the university institution as an enemy.²⁸

After 1967, students' political focus broadened to include race relations, the selective service, and university involvement in the Vietnam War effort.²⁹ Protests intensified in violence, and the image of the university as an enemy was reinforced when Columbia University students occupied five buildings in the spring of 1968 and held them for a week. Law enforcement removed the demonstrators by force with 707 people arrested and 148 injured.³⁰ In February 1970, students protested the arrival of General Electric representatives on campus for the purpose of recruiting graduating students from the School of Engineering. Students briefly occupied the Engineering building but were repelled by law enforcement. Following the King and Kennedy assassinations and the riots that erupted at the 1968 Chicago Democratic National Convention, students became further disillusioned with the idea of people working together to foster change.³¹

Methods

The data for this study consists of all 26 issues of *The Catalyst* circulated during the span of its publication from 1969 to 1971.³² This study is an instrumental case study, the case itself being of secondary interest,³³ and differing from content analysis in the sense that content analysis does not seek to capture the context within which historical documents gain meaning.³⁴ An understanding of historical context is central to this study because without it one cannot grasp the sociopolitical meaning and context of the images described herein.

Data were analyzed using a topic-related framework as suggested by Malinowski.³⁵ This framework helped categorize cartoons into topics derived from their meaning. Data collection and subsequent analysis was coupled with our theoretical framework since it presents a thorough understanding of how cartoons and images communicate critical social commentary or information considered to be contrary to that offered by commercial mass-media. Our approach is based on the assumption that meaning is socially constructed and can be understood through a rigorous examination of data.³⁶ Rather than seeking to understand only facts and causes, we sought access to the conceptual world of *The Catalyst's* editors in order better to understand how meaning was developed and politics communicated.³⁷

Discussion

The most common focus of *Catalyst* cartoons is federal and local government; state government receives hardly any cartoon attention. Among cartoons directed at the federal government, the most common

theme is the war in Vietnam. Manipulation of incoming war information portrays the military in an undesirable light that exposes a more brutal side of war than U.S. citizens were accustomed to seeing. One such rendering depicts a bomber dropping hordes of bombs on land below. The caption expresses the sordidness of close range combat, as opposed to the antiseptic methods of an air campaign. The cartoon captures the sentiment “killing is killing,” regardless of the chosen method or distance. A more sardonic depiction of the war is demonstrated in point of view of a mother reading a letter informing her son is “among the lowest casualty count in recent months.” The caption and drawing of this message points to the deep irony of war, highlighting how a good thing for the government, such as a low casualty count, is still human loss and hardly a positive outcome for civilians faced with the death of their loved ones. Most cartoons that refer to Vietnam emphasize the cost of war in terms of human lives. One particularly poignant example portrays flag-draped caskets being unloaded from an aircraft with the caption, “U.S. troops continue to be withdrawn from South Vietnam.”

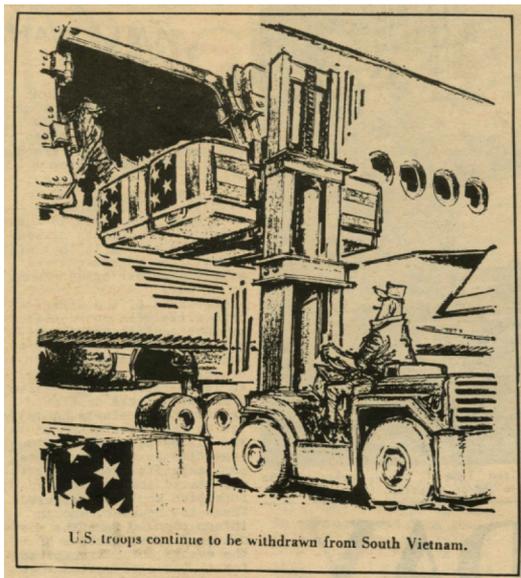


Fig. 1 The Catalyst I, no. 3 (1969): 4. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Along with abuse of power went the alleged failure on the part of the government and the military to take responsibility for the needless loss of life during the war. The killings and the loss of loved ones were

simply considered acceptable collateral damage, and not enough cause honestly to confront the reasons for the U.S. being in Vietnam, or incentive to pull out of a conflict producing such high costs in human lives.

Cartoons run by the *The Catalyst* meant to draw attention to the city of Lubbock are more crudely drawn, but still highly satirical. The derisive cartoons intended to insult Lubbock, or some part of it, do so by sneering at the significance that Lubbock might have in the eyes of those in control of the city and its institutions, including the university. An example of abuse of power on the part of the city includes the editor of the local newspaper, *The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, who students viewed as racist and closed-minded, and who they perceived to be using his position to represent his opinions as news or fact. Students saw the citizens of Lubbock as simply standing by and accepting what the newspaper printed as fact and what city officials pushed on them with unquestioning compliance. In *The Catalyst*, A mock obituary for the local paper's editor chastises him harshly for his views. His cause of death is listed as "bitterness, hatred, racism, prejudice, and ignorance."³⁸ The *Catalyst* claims no one has claimed his body and the all-lower-case "guy dies" headline demonstrates the unimportance and disdain *The Catalyst* writers attribute to this man and his role in the community.



Fig. 2 *The Catalyst* 1, no. 2 (1969): 6. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Perceptions of law enforcement are impossible to separate from how students behind *The Catalyst* viewed local government. In the years during which *The Catalyst* was published, law enforcement had a negative reputation among many young people. Law enforcement was seen as a way to use the state's power to intimidate communities deemed anti-social by enforcement officials.³⁹ This idea is most clearly portrayed in a cartoon, which shows a line of law enforcement officers in uniform, appearing stern and solemn. A closer look reveals one man is not a law enforcement officer, but a man in a suit who bears a striking resemblance to Adolf Hitler, yet who looks quite natural among other law enforcement officers. One officer to the immediate right of Hitler has the nose of a pig. Like many others, this cartoon communicates the impression that writers at *The Catalyst* and many other young people of the time had of law enforcement. For Hitler to look so much a part of the group, and for the pig nose to appear so natural suggests law enforcement officers were overstepping their mission as peace officers, to become just another branch of the armed forces: militant and tending toward mad dictator.

Additional cartoons portraying perceptions of law enforcement emphasize racism, greed, and oppression. These cartoons take law enforcement's abuse of power to comical extreme, but express frustration and disillusionment with corruption and dishonesty among the force meant to protect citizens and keep the peace. *The Catalyst* cartoons lead modern-day readers to believe law officers of the time were misusing their power to attack and crack down on anything that deviated from the norm. Power comes with a responsibility to be fair and just, and to protect the innocent, themes definitely missing in *Catalyst* cartoons depicting law enforcement. In fact, law enforcement is portrayed as a ready mob poised to beat the public, and university students in particular, into submission.

It is impossible to separate *Catalyst* cartoons on corporations from those on the environment, as the two are reliably coupled, blaming corporate greed for environmental damage. Visual satire is especially thick with contempt for those industries believed to fuel what was seen as environmental ruin on the home front. Most cartoons express this frustration, contempt, and anger by illustrating the future world as a barren wasteland, or a landscape cluttered with garbage and filth. Examples include the driver of the car asking a service-station attendant to "fill it up with lethal," and a huge, oil-covered hand reaching out of the ocean attempting to grab a frightened boy equipped with only his pail and shovel. The ocean is labeled, "a polluted world," and the giant, dripping hand is labeled with the word "profits." Another cartoon depicts a congested highway full of non-moving cars. The cars

conspicuously produce gas fumes and the roadside is cluttered with garbage. The blame for the environmental conditions is tied directly to corporate greed since corporations are portrayed as abusing the power they have over consumers, advertising in ways meant to make consumers crave to buy what is bigger and newer, believing bigger and newer to be better. This cartoon intimates corporations are ignorant of the results of their greed, as they fail to claim responsibility for the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and for their often-false claims made to consumers, as illustrated by the dissonance between the parked freeway driver in the billboard-advertised fast, “muscle” car. On the other hand, consumers share the blame since they allow themselves to be taken in by big business’ advertising and false promises and thus contribute to environmental and social ruination.

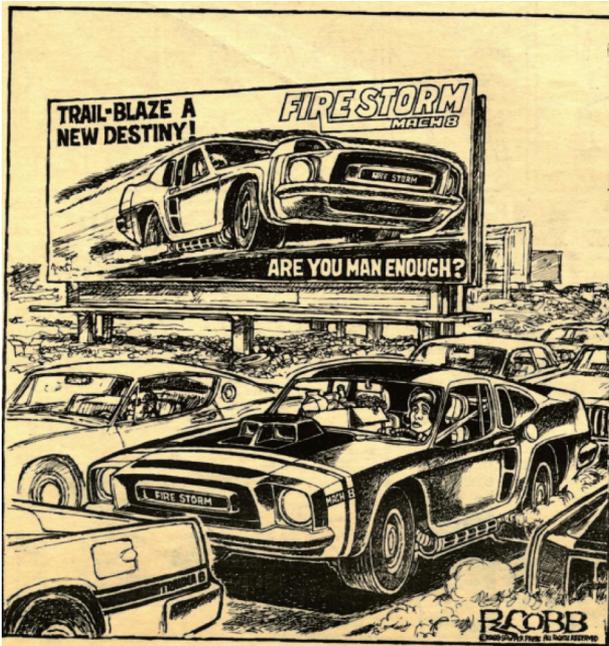


Fig. 3 *The Catalyst* 3, no. 1 (1970, Summer): 8. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Texas Tech University is the source of considerable attention by *The Catalyst*. As the size of the university increased, so did its function. Students perceived university administrators as ignoring their demands

to be treated as adults, resenting bitterly the impersonal nature of the university.⁴⁰ Many wanted a university which offered a familial atmosphere and at the same time free of all paternalism and normative guidance. Students perceived the university as irrelevant to the real world in its role as factory, processing and manufacturing students simply to fulfill the needs of capitalist society.⁴¹

The power the university has over students, and the negative relationship between students and faculty that grew during this era, are exemplified within sarcastic cartoons. One cartoon illustrates university commencement during which the professor handing out diplomas is dressed as a lion tamer. Equipped with a whip and shouting threats, he calls graduates to the front to pick up their diplomas. Another example shows a diabolical, bedecked professor standing before a huge pile of cow manure, announcing to students their diplomas are somewhere under the muck and students have four years to dig through the muck to find them. In the distant background a few students stand in caps and gowns, evidently those who successfully muddled through the mess. Whether *Catalyst* writers are decrying the out-of-touch university curriculum, the arbitrariness of university processes and procedures, the unearned or abused power of university faculty, or all three, their attitude about the journey of earning a degree is portrayed as embittered.



Fig. 4 *The Catalyst* 2, no. 2 (1969): 4. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Cartoons dealing with criticisms of the university serve to illustrate what students perceive to be abuse of power by those in charge of the university. University officials and faculty have power over various aspects of student life, and students view this power as pernicious, as if they simply saw university classes as a vigil of going through the motions in order to obtain a needed diploma. In their efforts to do so, students accuse the university power structure acting as an adversary, existing not necessarily to teach them, but to challenge “new,” radical, unpopular views students brought to campus.

Catalyst cartoons also focus on what can broadly be termed “social issues.” These cover a variety of topics such as racism, sexism, and censorship. Racism is confronted in the depiction of an African-American model having his portrait painted by an artist. The fact the artist paints a “spade” (a derogatory term used for African Americans) instead of a person’s portrait demonstrates the blatant, nonchalant racism against Black folks to which many students vehemently objected. Women are also shown as oppressed by the expectations set forth by the traditional patriarchal power structure. A cartoon instructing a person how to become a second-class citizen actually shows, when one reads the caption carefully, how to walk, talk, bend, and sit “like a woman.”



Fig. 5 *The Catalyst* 2, no. 2 (1970): 8. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Racism is also challenged in a drawing of what appears to be Klansmen and others taking part in a demonstration while several young people, presumably college students, hide, crouching behind garbage cans. The students are puzzled by the dissonance in how a demonstration characterized by overt intolerance is not perceived as disrespectful to the American flag.

Collective social issues are grouped together in one particularly telling illustration. It is one of only a few that accompany an article rather than stand alone. The full-page article encourages support for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). It cautions the fight for civil liberties is a war without end since the ACLU is so often required to return to the courts to secure enforcement of previous legal victories. The cartoon that accompanies the article shows the Statue of Liberty with a Hitler-like moustache, cautioning readers, “It could happen here.” The article and cartoon warn and encourage student vigilance to intolerance and power run amok while encouraging membership in critical civil-rights organizations like the ACLU, charged with defending democracy.

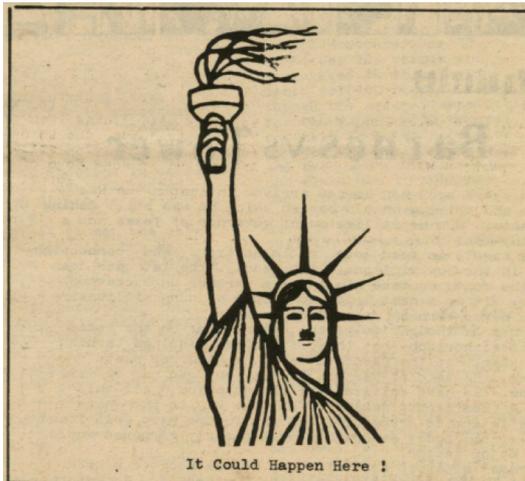


Fig. 6 *The Catalyst* 2, no. 2 (1970, Christmas Issue): 3. Courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

Implications

The Catalyst editors used both professionally drawn cartoons, and cartoons drawn by *Catalyst* writers/artists. Many cartoons relating to issues outside the scope of the university and city are clearly copied from other publications. Cartoons from *The New Yorker* are particularly

popular. We can infer cartoons pertaining to larger issues such as the war in Vietnam, or corporate/environmental damage were copied and used as a matter of convenience and because other, celebrated cartoonists had done such an effective job of portraying *Catalyst* editors' sentiments. However, in order to address more localized issues, subject matter such as the city of Lubbock or TTU had to be drawn by local artists, as they were not available from other publications. However, even locally drawn cartoons expressed concerns that stretched far beyond the local level of sociopolitical influence.

Two major, overarching themes span the cartoons' main topics: lack of responsibility and abuse of power. Within the topic abuse of power are multiple subcategories and topics at which the cartoons are directed. Satire is aimed at various facets of corruption perceived by *The Catalyst* editors and writers including fraudulence and corruption within corporations; environmental ill-use, deception by government; law-enforcement brutality; undue control of information; increasing military opprobrium; blatant university oppression of student concerns; and discrimination.

The Catalyst cartoons serve as a vehicle to expose the perceived corruption of power by those entrusted as stewards, and to mock that power by depicting various facets of the structure in a ridiculous and often embarrassing light. The cartoons' messages exemplify students' belief in governmental failure to communicate honestly with the public. Just as the cartoons sometimes deliver ambiguous or mixed messages, the U.S. government is portrayed as having done the same with regard to the war.

According to Anderson, the university, known as the "generator of knowledge," the arena for analysis, and purveyor of data which would help the U.S. not only compete with other nations but win the cold war, engendered the deep suspicion of students.⁴² Academe began to change, and besides teaching and research, professors also attended conferences, workshops, symposia, and consulted with government, industry, and business. Colleges began competing with one another to attract the most distinguished faculty and for public prestige. Competition among universities became more pronounced, and administrators began to compete for limited federal grants, research funds, endowment gifts, and organizational support.⁴³ In the course of this shift, many perceived academe to have lost the core mission of educating students. Some students believed the accumulation of human knowledge had not, in fact, led to deepened human knowledge, meaning, or understanding. Furthermore, the role of the university in the first half of the 1960s was not only to train students, but also seemingly to tame them to be conventional adults, enabling them to fit in, and ultimately to become

respectable citizens like their parents. However, many students had little desire to be “molded.”⁴⁴

Our analysis yields conclusions consistent with Jürgen Habermas’ notions about the shaping of public discourse through the industrialization of mass-media.⁴⁵ *The Catalyst* editors considered their underground paper an alternative to more-common mass-media such as local and national newspapers, and the university-sanctioned press. *Catalyst* editors introduced into the TTU community a media presence grounded in a critical analysis of issues rather than those moderate or conservative political perspectives driven by the interests of commercially oriented publications. Habermas’ historical framework inspires and promotes understand how *The Catalyst* editors and writers framed many of their cartoons as critical commentary on society’s ethics.

It is no coincidence *The Catalyst* thrived during the rise of the U.S. Civil Rights movement, women’s rights, and protests against the Vietnam War. Students’ desire to be heard was not contrary to the principles of a pluralistic society, their dissent was in fact entirely consistent with those principles even though they challenged the message of commercially driven mass-media. If the messages of commercial mass-media are considered a form of discourse, then the cartoons presented in *The Catalyst* must rightly be considered a form of counter-discourse, for cartoons can be much more than entertaining forms of art. Because they are socially constructed and require critical and oftentimes sophisticated interpretation to be understood, they often embody more meaning than that contained in the drawing itself.

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The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Released Time for Religious Education: Reflections on the Policy's 100th Anniversary

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The year 2014 marks the 100-year anniversary of released time for religious education, a practice through which students are “released” from public schools for devotional religious instruction.² Though states and school districts are not *required* to release students for devotional religious courses, public schools may legally establish released time programs anywhere in the U.S. so long as they obtain parental permission for student participation, meet off-campus, and are not supported by public funds or school resources. These safeguards against entanglement between church and state have alleviated most concerns about the constitutionality of released-time policies, and thus the programs have evoked little scholarly attention in recent decades. There has been, however, a significant change in the character of released time throughout its 100-year history, which raises salient and under-examined, normative questions regarding the appropriateness of contemporary released-time policies and practices within the context of a pluralist, democratic society. In the following section, I provide theoretical context to ground the arguments presented in this article. Focusing on developments in released-time policy and practice, I then summarize relevant history and First Amendment case law, providing necessary context for the subsequent normative analysis of contemporary released-time programs and policies.

Theoretical Context

Liberal political theory and a conception of democratic education informed primarily by foundational works of John Dewey (1916), John Rawls (1971, 2005), Amy Gutmann (1987), and Jürgen Habermas (1995) form the theoretical frame that grounds my thesis. This theoretical frame provides direction and tools for meaning-making especially helpful when considering decisions regarding curricular matters in public schools within pluralist, democratic societies.

John Rawls’ public principles of reason can aid school policy-makers who must sometimes make difficult decisions in the face of

incommensurate beliefs and values and in consideration of the often-conflicting demands presented by various cultural and religious groups inhabiting the same school communities. John Dewey's conception of education in and for democracy provides a foundation for most contemporary, liberal democratic theories of education. Adding to this foundation, Amy Gutmann offers a robust vision of democratic education consisting of principles of *nonrepression*, *nondiscrimination*, and *deliberativeness*, which together can help diverse democratic societies navigate many problems that arise in negotiations among various stakeholders of public schools. Jürgen Habermas' scholarship on participatory democracy, discourse ethics, and mutuality provides additional guidance for public schools working to develop good citizens of diverse societies. My theoretical frame has been constructed to view contemporary released-time policies to determine whether or in what ways they might support or undermine the democratic conditions and purposes of public schools.

Historical and Legal Context

Tension and negotiation between groups emphasizing either *disestablishment* or *free exercise* of religion characterizes U.S. historical discourse regarding religion and public education. The principle of disestablishment derives from the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which limits government actions relating to religion. The principle of free exercise, on the other hand, is expressed in the Free Exercise Clause, which protects individual expression of religious belief from government interference. Throughout the first century and a half of U.S. history, these constitutional protections applied only to actions of the U.S. Congress, leaving the states free to make their own policies regarding the relation between government and religion.

Beginning in the 1940s, however, the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Establishment Clause changed dramatically when it issued the first of a series of rulings that focused on clarifying the principle of disestablishment. In *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947) the Court incorporated the Establishment Clause through the Fourteenth Amendment, applying the protections of the Bill of Rights to the states. In other words, the Court ruled the principle of disestablishment would apply not only to the actions of Congress but also to those of state and local governing bodies. In the performance of their official duties, agents of the state, including public-school personnel, would now be subject to restrictions of the Establishment Clause. In relation to public education, the disestablishment rulings emphasized the state's responsibility to guard against the threat of majority will, as reflected in public-school policy, to individual and minority rights to freedom of conscience and religion. Specifically, the Court ruled agents of the state were

constitutionally prohibited from using the machinery of the public schools to advance one particular religion over others or show preference to religion over nonreligion.

More recently, the Court has interpreted the Free Exercise Clause to require schools to recognize and refrain from violating students' religious freedom. These free exercise rulings have upheld the rights of students to exercise religious freedom through constitutionally protected speech, prayer, and other forms of expression such as organization of and participation in Bible studies, religious clubs, and similar student-initiated religious activities. The Court has also required that student-initiated religious activities not give the impression they operate with the support of school officials. Such requirements were put in place to prevent violations of disestablishment in the name of free exercise. To further distinguish between free exercise and disestablishment, the Court warns, "While the Free Exercise Clause clearly prohibits the use of state action to deny the rights of free exercise to *anyone*, it has never meant that a majority could use the machinery of the State to practice its beliefs" (*Abington v. Schempp*, 1963). Thus, federal law requires schools to respect students' rights and remain neutral toward the subject of religion (USDOE, 2003).

In summary, the Court both affirmed robust religious liberties for public school students and required school personnel neither to advance nor inhibit religion. It is here at the crossroads of free exercise and disestablishment where one finds contemporary released time for religious education policy. The following overview of the history of released time is meant to explain how this policy is largely reflective of the broad pattern of tension and negotiation just described.

The Origins of Released Time

At the turn of the twentieth century, mass immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe greatly increased the religious diversity of many U.S. cities. Most urban public schools, long dominated by a Protestant ethos, responded to this growing diversity by secularizing curricula. Protestants were generally uncomfortable with these challenges to their historical dominance of public education and looked for new ways to bring religious education to public school students. It was in this environment the idea for released time emerged.

Mainline Protestant leaders, at an inter-denominational church conference in New York City in 1905, discussed what many perceived as an urgent need to improve the moral and religious education of young Americans (Pfeffer, 1975). Dr. George U. Wenner, a teacher in attendance, suggested students might be released from school for one afternoon each week for instruction in religion (Gorham, 1934). To

many fellow conference attendees, this was an attractive proposition. Growing religious pluralism in urban schools could not be ignored, however, and Protestant leaders soon recognized “Protestantism could return to the public schools only if it was accompanied by Catholicism and Judaism, and out of this realization came the released-time program” (Pfeffer, 1975, p. 181).

Mainline Protestant leaders and some public officials, including Dr. William Wirt, Gary, Indiana’s Superintendent of Public Schools, embraced the concept of released time. In 1914 Dr. Wirt established a program through which elementary students were released from public-school supervision to religious leaders for instruction in the Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish religion. Scholars generally recognize the “Gary Plan,” which became a model for released-time programs first across the Midwest and then later across the country, as the first U.S. released-time program (Berrett, 1998).³

Following the early success of the Gary Plan, released-time programs grew rapidly from the 1920s to the 1940s. In fact, by just over a decade after the first programs had begun, released time had expanded to 200 communities in 23 states, serving approximately 40,000 students. By the 1930s, programs had expanded to 400 communities in 30 states, enrolling around 250,000 students. By the 1940s, the explosive growth of these programs had reached 2,000 communities in 49 states, enrolling over two million students (Poore, 2006; RTBE, 2014; Shaver, 1956).

Mainline Protestant leaders, who embraced released time primarily as a way to support the religious and moral education of public-school children from Protestant families, launched most early programs. A significant number of Catholics also supported released time as a viable alternative form of moral and religious education for those students whose families did not send them to parochial schools. However, a “strange coalition” of Jewish-American special interest groups, secular organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, and most Baptist associations formed in opposition to released time. Interestingly, many Baptist organizations—with Southern Baptists being among the largest of the evangelical Christian denominations—originally opposed released time primarily because they thought it encroached upon parents’ exclusive right to direct their children’s religious education and, thus, violated the separation of church and state (Zucker, 2007).

It was only after a legal challenge in Champaign, Illinois that large numbers of evangelicals began to change their opinions about released time. This shift started and the strange coalition began to unravel when acknowledged atheist Vashti McCollum complained in 1945 the Champaign school district’s released-time policy discriminated against

her son James on the basis of religion. The courts initially dismissed her claim as frivolous, but she appealed her case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Three years into the appeals process, in an 8–1 decision that came to be known as *McCullum v. Board of Education* (1948), the Court ruled the Champaign released time program violated the Establishment Clause. The case had received significant national press, and, leery of being associated with atheists such as McCollum in opposition to the programs, evangelicals gradually changed course and began supporting released time (Setran, 2012).

Many school leaders incorrectly interpreted the *McCullum* ruling to have banned *all* released-time programs, and participation in the programs began a steady period of decline. The number of programs continued to decrease even though the Court, four years later in another landmark case, *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), upheld the practice of released time, as long as it took place with parental permission, off public-school grounds, and without state aid (Sorauf, 1959). Thus, the Court made an important distinction between the unconstitutional Champaign program of the *McCullum* case, held on-campus with the support of schools, and the constitutional New York program at the center of the *Zorach* case, held off-campus. Nevertheless, the decline of released time continued as the Court handed down additional rulings removing school-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in the 1960s, pushing Mainline Protestants' attitudes toward church and state in a more separationist direction. These Court rulings had a gradual but opposite effect on evangelicals. As schools became increasingly diverse and secular and Protestant hegemony less prevalent, many Catholics, too, lost interest in released time. Thus, by the early 1980s, released time had become a “diminishing phenomenon”⁴ (Kelley, 1980). This decline continued until the 1990s when evangelical activists, seeking creative ways to spread their faith to public-school students, revitalized and reconceptualized the released-time policy.

Despite the Court's rulings on the First Amendment as it relates to the role of religion in public schools, challenges to the legal boundaries of disestablishment in the name of free exercise and accommodation continued. Evangelical Christian activists who saw the public schools as a means of propagating their religious beliefs with the support of the state levied many such challenges. The public schools are particularly attractive to evangelicals because their central religious beliefs compel them aggressively to proselytize others, especially children and young adolescents who are generally more receptive to their message.⁵ Thus, evangelical activists have passionately sought to prohibit or undermine the teaching of evolution, reestablish school-sponsored prayer and devotional Bible reading, censor textbooks and library materials, and

generally prevent the teaching of subjects or ideas they perceive as threats to their way of life and vision for society. The recent revitalization and reconceptualization of released time as an “open door” to proselytize public-school students is among the latest in this long line of attempts by evangelical Christian activists to promote their comprehensive worldview through public education (Ericsson, Colby, Payne, & Crawford, 1996).⁶

By the 1990s, there were no longer many U.S. released-time programs in operation. In 1991, however, South Carolina-based School Ministries, Inc., which would become a leading organization behind a nationwide evangelical released time movement, began promoting the concept and by 1996 had established some of the state’s first contemporary released-time programs. This organization played a leading role in the passage of the South Carolina Released Time Credit Act (SCRTCA), which made South Carolina the first state with laws expressly permitting public schools to award credit for participation in released-time classes (Adcox, 2012; Bindewald interview with Breivik, 2013).⁷ Supporters of the policy argued that by attaching credits to the released-time course, the state was merely accommodating students’ desire to participate in religious exercises—a desire hampered by South Carolina’s requirements that students earn a minimum of 24 high-school-graduation credits (Bindewald interview with Hartgrove, 2012). Opponents argued “the policy was only masked in the language of accommodation to hide its actual purpose of offering a special bonus to encourage public school students to participate in ‘sectarian, evangelical, and proselytizing’ released time courses” (Amended Complaint, 2012, p. 12). Furthermore some opponents, such as attorney Patrick Elliott of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, believe the policy goes beyond accommodation and effectively sends the message to students, parents, teachers, and other community members that the state sanctions the courses’ aims and values and thus serves as an establishment of religion (Bindewald interview with Elliot, 2013; FFRF, 2009).

Contemporary released time is more controversial than traditional programs because (a) the ways in which evangelicals have reconceptualized programs as a means of using public schools to win religious converts and, (b) the fact public schools can award credits to students who participate in programs. These characteristics differentiate contemporary evangelical programs from the earlier non-credit-bearing programs run by Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews established with the primary purpose of providing moral instruction to children *within the religious tradition of their parents*. Some of the earliest Mainline Protestant programs were also committed to evangelism (Cocar, 2011), however this brand of proselytizing was typically geared toward children of Protestant parents and moderated by an equal commitment to the

Social Gospel, a more tolerant view of other religions, and a more reserved attitude toward aggressive missions to convert non-Protestants to Christianity. Among the primary goals of reconceptualized evangelical released-time programs, however, are to recruit “unchurched” public-school students, immerse them in devotional study of the Bible as the literal, inerrant word of God, and lead them to make “a rock-solid, life-long commitment” to Jesus Christ.⁸ This more aggressive brand of proselytizing, especially when combined with public-school credits, is quite problematic.

In fact, a contemporary credit-bearing program in 2009 led parents of two public high-school students—one Jewish and one non-religious—to file a lawsuit against their school district in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In what became *Moss v. Spartanburg County School District 7* (4th Cir., 2012), plaintiffs argued awarding credit for released time unfairly advantaged evangelical Christians and served as an unconstitutional establishment of religion. The school district maintained its released time policies were based on South Carolina law and were not unconstitutional, and the lower court agreed, stating the district policy merely accommodated students without the primary purpose of advancing religion. The plaintiffs appealed, and in 2012 a three-judge panel upheld the lower court’s ruling. The plaintiffs then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which declined, as it typically does in the absence of conflicting rulings by lower courts, to hear the case. This decision effectively upheld the lower court’s ruling (U.S. Supreme Court, 2012).

Normative Analysis (or The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Released Time)

The attachment of public-school credits to overtly proselytizing religious courses situates reconceptualized released time at the crossroads of free exercise and disestablishment. Although the courts have ruled on the particular policy in Spartanburg, South Carolina, other districts and states that implement released time credit policies may encounter similar resistance. If this happens, separate courts plausibly could hand down conflicting rulings, in which case the U.S. Supreme Court would likely deliberate on the constitutionality of such policies. Thus, the legal battle surrounding released-time credits may be far from over.

The legal perspective, as interesting as it may be, is only one angle from which to analyze released time policies and programs. For instance, instead of asking, “Is this particular program constitutional?” one might ask, “Is it wise?” “Is it just?” or “Is it appropriate for public schools in

a pluralist, democratic society?” Addressing such normative questions can provide additional depth to the ongoing public discourse about the proper role of religion in public education. Therefore, in the following normative analysis I expand the scope of the conversation by identifying and explicating what I see as the good, the bad, and the ugly of released time for religious education.

The Good

At its best, released time represents a reasonable accommodation to religious believers in a pluralist society with secular public schools. A compelling case can be (and often is) made that the increasingly secularized environment of the public schools has contributed to a decline in religiosity among the general public. Whether one views this phenomenon as a generally good or bad outcome certainly depends on one’s worldview, but whether the secularizing process is fair to all citizens, religious and non-religious, is another matter. A liberal democracy should be concerned when its policies contribute to cultural loss, and it seems proper to take reasonable steps to avoid, whenever practical, these effects. Therefore, released time, when conceptualized as a proper accommodation, may provide devout parents with an arrangement through which their children can receive the benefits of both secular and religious education. Furthermore, it may prevent a significant number of devout parents from abandoning public education in favor of fundamentalist private schools or homeschooling.

The secularization of the public schools, along with increasing religious pluralism and decreasing religiosity, contributes to a host of anxieties for many religious conservatives. Many evangelicals, in particular, see these phenomena as a move away from God and evidence of U.S. cultural and moral decay. They envision public schools as a central battlefield in the so-called culture wars, which they fight with the hope of turning the nation back in what they believe to be a more godly direction. Proponents of evangelical released time point to relatively high rates of academic failure, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, vandalism, violence, disruptive classroom behavior, and other significant social problems as evidence of the U.S.’ cultural and moral decline. While I remain unconvinced these problems are worse now than in the past or that rising U.S. secularism (or religious pluralism) causes these ills or is detrimental to the welfare of the nation, I am sympathetic to the suggestion U.S. public schools could do a better job of helping to alleviate such problems. Any program that potentially leads to less behavioral disruptions in the classroom, lower rates of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, and so on (which evangelicals claim as outcomes of their released-time programs), deserves a serious look. Furthermore, there is some evidence that participation in released-time programs contributes to positive social outcomes without undermining

academic performance. In fact, in a few cases, participation in released time seems to have improved some measures of academic performance.⁹

Instruction in morality or ethics ought to be included as a significant component of a comprehensive education, but it is difficult for public schools to provide substantive moral education in a culturally diverse society. While most U.S. citizens would likely welcome increased efforts by public schools to instill in students a common civic morality, it would be difficult to provide meaningful moral education in U.S. public schools because of the resistance such efforts would provoke from religious fundamentalists and others concerned about cultural loss for illiberal minority groups. To generate a broad consensus of support among citizens of a culturally pluralist society, the moral or ethical principles would need to be inclusive and somewhat generic. Fundamentalists would likely resist such efforts because exposing students to a “watered-down” or compromised morality might undermine parental efforts to indoctrinate their children into a more authoritarian, comprehensive, fundamentalist Christian worldview.

A “meaningful” or substantive moral education would require a normative foundation or some form of justification for the privileging of some values, virtues, or behaviors over others. Constitutional law requires curricular decisions be justified by secular rather than religious criteria which, when applied to moral education, would be problematic for fundamentalists who would likely find objectionable anything other than appeals to divine revelation as justification for a code of morality. Furthermore, using secular reasoning (i.e., something akin to Rawls’ public principles of reason) as the foundation for a normative moral education would invoke opposition from other groups worried about cultural loss.

All this is not to say public schools should give up efforts to promote a secular, civic morality just because some may find it unattractive or superficial. Rather, released time may provide opportunities for like-minded parents to provide their children, in addition to the civic education provided in the public schools, with a more substantive, culturally specific moral education within the regular school day. This arrangement could offer a counter-balance to the secularizing force of the public schools, prevent some devout parents from abandoning public education, and offer additional support for more substantive moral education and other positive social outcomes. At a minimum, for the reasons I have cited, released time deserves more scholarly attention.

The Bad

Despite the potential for released time to provide religious believers with a reasonable accommodation and support legitimate social aims, it

also has potential to undermine some important efforts of public schools. As I mentioned earlier, the Court has made its position clear that released time programs are constitutional. Thus, when I say released-time programs are potentially problematic, I am making a normative, moral argument rather than a legal one. Specifically, I frame the present argument around a set of assumptions about the proper purposes of public schooling, including the belief schools should help students develop both individually and socially into autonomous, rational, critical thinkers and tolerant, engaged, and informed citizens. Based on this understanding of public education, released time is potentially problematic for several interrelated reasons.

Released time provides an “open door,” to borrow a phrase from the evangelical literature (Ericsson et al., 1996), to what some see as an un-harvested, public-school mission field. The significant cause for concern is that this arrangement aids fundamentalists in their recruiting efforts and potentially leads to greater numbers of young people being indoctrinated into dogmatic and intolerant belief systems. Fundamentalist pedagogical approaches, for instance, have strong potential to undermine key aims of public education, including a school’s efforts to help students develop the habits of sound reasoning needed to navigate an increasingly complex world. Furthermore, these programs may undermine public schools’ efforts to promote tolerance—for example, a normative case study of evangelical released-time programs in South Carolina shows these programs sometimes denigrate other religions and encourage students to view classmates with other beliefs either as evildoers or targets for religious conversion (Bindewald, 2014). It is extremely difficult for individuals with such dogmatic beliefs to reason with one another across differences—a foundational requirement for a functioning, pluralist democracy.

Most modern religions eschew indoctrination, dogmatism, and intolerance, and released time would serve as an appropriate accommodation for these groups. However, constitutional law forbids discrimination on the basis of religion, so it would be unlawful to allow some religious groups but not others to participate in released time. Public schools may, however, adopt secular criteria to serve as guidelines for all participating programs. It is possible these criteria could include requirements participating programs not denigrate other religions or religious believers. These requirements would need to be designed so as not to target particular religions but rather to protect students and prevent the programs from undermining civic aims of public education.

The Ugly

Granting public-school credits for released-time courses exacerbates these problems. The idea that released-time credit policies merely serve

to accommodate religion is mistaken. Proper accommodation does not require a state to remove potential obstacles to the religious missions of private organizations or grant them permission to use the machinery of the public schools to advance such aims. Much more than a mere accommodation, the attachment of public-school credits to released-time courses aids religious organizations because it gives students, their parents, and the broader community the impression that the aims, values, and beliefs promoted through released-time courses bear the state's seal of approval. In other words, public-school credits symbolize democratically accountable entities such as state-appointed curriculum committees, school boards, and other public-school policymakers have approved a course after determining it meets widely supported standards.

It is this earned public confidence that gives public-school credits their power and significance. Community members should be able to trust that when a course carries public-school credit, it has been examined thoroughly, meets the same standards, and is subject to the same oversight and accountability generally applicable to all other publicly accredited courses. It is an eerie coincidence that, in the era of micromanagement and hyper-standardization of public education, private organizations would request (and, even more incredulously, some school districts would grant) the state's seal of approval for courses with few of the associated accountability measures. When released-time organizations convince public-school systems to award credit for largely unregulated religious courses, they co-opt this power and reap unearned and inappropriate benefits for their programs.

Conclusion

Public schools should help prepare young people to become autonomous, critical thinkers and productively engaged citizens. They should be places where students learn to tolerate and respect others and engage in open-minded inquiry and dialogue. To the extent that released-time programs undermine these messages, they jeopardize the important civic mission of public education. Granting credits for released time inappropriately aids organizations whose courses may leave students more intolerant of difference and less capable of realizing the intellectual and civic aims of public education in pluralist, democratic societies.

Public schools are legally permitted, but not required, to offer released time as a religious accommodation to students. They are rightly prohibited from allowing some groups but not others to participate, but they may protect students' interests and wellbeing by establishing secular criteria all programs must satisfy. If a school wishes to adopt a released-time policy as an accommodation to its students, it has a responsibility to

ensure courses do not encourage intolerance or undermine the school's civic mission. Thus, released-time policies that provide access to devotional religious courses but do not award public-school credits or permit participating organizations to denigrate other religions may be appropriate accommodations for families who wish their children to receive both secular and religious education during the regular school day.

Endnotes

- ¹ Special thanks to reviewers and editors for their excellent feedback on the original manuscript.
- ² 1914 is the year most commonly cited as the beginning of released time for religious education in the U.S., although Mormon (Latter-Day Saints) high school "seminaries" had been established prior in Utah .
- ³ As referenced in an earlier footnote, Salt Lake City, Utah public schools had previously established Latter-Day Saints' high school seminaries for Mormon students in 1912, which now operate under released time policies.
- ⁴ On the basis of observations made over a 22-year period as Director of Religious and Civil Liberty for the National Council of Churches, Kelley claims released-time programs were a diminishing phenomenon and no longer a topic of discussion among national church leaders.
- ⁵ For a thorough explanation of this approach to child evangelism, see popular evangelical author Luis Bush's (2009) *The 4/14 Window: Raising Up a New Generation to Transform the World* (Flushing, NY: Compassion International).
- ⁶ See Bindewald (2015) for a more detailed account of the religious right's historical efforts to influence public-school policy and curriculum.
- ⁷ School districts in other states such as Utah and Georgia also grant high-school credits for released time participation, though these states have not passed laws specifically granting the districts such authority.
- ⁸ These sentiments are expressed throughout the literature produced by two of the largest regional released-time programs in the state, Christian Learning Centers of Greenville (CLCG) and Spartanburg County Bible Education in School Time (SCBEST).
- ⁹ See "Secular Benefits of Contemporary Released Time Programs" section in Bindewald's (2014) *Public School Credits for Devotional Courses in Religion*.

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Spirituality and the Practice of Educational Leadership

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The recent work of Lewis Fry and Yochanan Altman (2013) reminds us there are conceptualizations of effective organizational leadership independent of top-down, command, and control principles. In their book, *Spiritual Leadership in Action* (2013), Fry and Altman describe the transformation of a complex, modern business organization through the application of leadership practices derived from emerging research into a spiritual workplace. Fry and Altman's study is one of several recent works that address changes in how corporations may be restructured from the dominant, rational and bureaucratic model, dependent upon a command-and-control style of leadership, into a new form having less to do with enforcing rules and keeping order and more to do with finding meaning, purpose, and community in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fry, 2003; Pfeffer, 2003). Leadership practices that derive from spiritual influences in the workplace include recognizing employees have inner lives they bring with them to work; endowing work with a sense of broad social value and calling; and fostering an organizational culture that builds a network of connectedness and belonging among employees.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) trace the growing interest in spirituality in the work environment to several factors. First, the rash of corporate downsizing, re-engineering, employee layoffs, and the movement of jobs off-shore that marked the 1990s have resulted in a demoralized workforce and a growing inequality in wages (Brandt, 1996). Second, with the decline of neighborhoods, churches, civic groups, and extended families many people have come to perceive the workplace as their primary source for community and link to people. The workplace then becomes the setting where the human need for connection to a broader community is met (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). Third, Brandt (1996) and Conger and Kanungo (1994) suggest that, as the baby-boomer generation ages, interest grows in contemplating life's meaning and its inevitable end. Finally, expanding global competition has led corporate leaders to recognize employees' imagination and creativity need more

outlets and opportunity for expression within the workplace. But releasing creativity is difficult in environments where work is tightly controlled and spirituality is not considered meaningful (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). A workplace shaped by spiritual values offers one possible response to challenges in a changing work environment.

In this paper we offer a definition of “spirituality,” provide a limited review of the emerging research on spirituality in the workplace, and describe two models of leadership that incorporate spirituality. We first present a general introduction to spiritual leadership, especially as it pertains to the workplace. We proceed then to a description of two spiritual leadership models drawn from the literature, including issues related to religion and the ethics of spiritual leadership. Finally, we argue the relevance of spiritual leadership for those who lead public schools.

Defining Spirituality

Spirituality is a broad term with no clearly agreed-upon definition. Proffered definitions of spirituality run the gamut around man’s search for meaning. For example, Cacioppe (2000) conceptualizes spirituality as the search for a meaning, a value, or a purpose for one’s life and work. Ellison (1983), too, considers spirituality as part of humanity’s ongoing quest for meaning and purpose embodied in a super-rational being or a force greater than the self. Fullan (2002) writes that spirituality involves identification of a moral purpose for our lives that connects principled behavior to something greater than we are. Mitroff and Denton (1999) equate spirituality with one’s effort to live an integrated rather than compartmentalized existence. Houston and Sokolow (2006) posit spirituality requires a person make a concerted effort to go outside the self to locate that part of the human being that is more than material and, once found, provides a connection to the infinite. Mayes (2001) defines spirituality as “the pursuit of a trans-personal and trans-temporal reality that serves as the ontological ground for an ethic of compassion and service” (p. 6). Finally, Beazley (1997) holds spirituality consists of a faith relationship with a transcendent power that lies beyond and is independent of the material universe. Broadly then, the term “spirituality” refers to an individual’s search for meaning, purpose, and value in an integrated life connected to the transcendent and infinite, that engenders a commitment to an idea or cause greater than the self, and provides the foundation for an ethic of compassion and service to others. We employ this understanding of spirituality as we unfold our argument.

Spiritual Leadership’s Core Concepts

Models of spiritual leadership share certain core concepts and ideas. Patterson (2003) identifies seven “virtuous constructs” that “work in a

processional pattern” (p. 2) to shape Servant Leadership. These concepts are agapo love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Fry (2003) identifies the essential qualities of Spiritual Leadership as vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith. To these qualities he adds the human need for “spiritual survival.” Although the essential characteristics of spiritual leadership vary to some degree, there are commonalities. Our understanding of spiritual leadership merges concepts from Patterson’s (2003) and Fry’s (2003) theories to isolate qualities and values we maintain are essential to spiritual leadership. These key concepts include vision, altruistic love, humility, service, and spiritual survival. We argue combining concepts from these specific models results in a more complete understanding of spiritual leadership: one that can be put to use in schools.

Spirituality and the Workplace

There is an emerging interest in the influence of spirituality in the workplace and a rising number of scholars at work on the topic (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Biberman, 2003; Fite, Reardon, & Boone 2011; Fry, 2003; Fry & Altman, 2013; Gotsis & Kortezi 2007; Pfeffer, 2003; Phipps, 2012). Christian, Essounga-Njan, and Morgan-Thomas (2011) posit: “Spiritual matters, although personal to many people, are now a matter of public discourse, particularly as it pertains to the workplace” (p. 1258). Phipps (2012) offers a framework that connects individual spiritual beliefs and strategic decision-making in an organization. He notes that although conversations about religion and spirituality involve matters of private belief they are relevant to the workplace because employees bring their innermost beliefs with them to the workplace. Dolan and Altman (2012) agree, urging employers and employees to move beyond silence on spiritual matters because:

...[a] spiritually friendly workplace respects people’s deepest beliefs, allows and encourages them to wear their faiths (including non-faith) on their sleeves and incorporate these values in what they do and how they go about their work, giving expression—a voice—to their innermost values. (p. 27)

Spirituality in the workplace is about people

...experiencing a sense of purpose and meaning in their work beyond the kind of meaning found...in the job design literature, which emphasizes finding meaning in the performance of tasks [and] experiencing a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135)

Workplace spirituality is about nourishing employees’ inner selves at work.

Certain questions confront researchers who study spirituality in the workplace (Kahnweiler & Otte, 1997; Sass, 2000). For example, should researchers assume one's inner life is qualitatively different in the workplace than in other settings? Furthermore, can workplace spirituality be considered an aggregate of personal values and, if so, which values are to be included in incorporating spirituality into the workplace? Finally, is workplace spirituality an individual or collective phenomenon (Giacalone & Jurkeiwicz, 2010)? Giacalone and Jurkeiwicz (2010) urge research into workplace spirituality become integrated into the broader research agenda on organizational behavior and organizational performance. Ashmos & Duchon (2000) suggest research into workplace spirituality be grounded upon three assumptions: employees possess an inner life; employees have a need to find work meaningful in ways that go beyond the mundane concerns of everyday living; and a commitment to serve others provides employees with a context for spiritual growth. These assumptions establish the parameters for research into workplace spirituality.

Several scholars (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992; Neck & Millman, 1994; Paloutzain & Kirkpatrick, 1995; Trott, 1996) identify practical, work-related aspects of spirituality. There are indications that spirituality in the workplace affects employees' initiative, strengthens motivation, encourages teamwork, and improves employees' commitment to the organization. Spirituality in the workplace may also influence long-term behavioral change in employees. Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkeiwicz (2008) note organizational spirituality is positively related to employee job-involvement, to employee identification with the organization, and to work-rewards satisfaction. Finally, research by Reich (1981), Freeman (1994), and Himmelfarb (1994) conclude a spiritual culture in the workplace tends to make workers more productive. Research also suggests leaders who view their work as a spiritual endeavor lead their organizations to higher levels of performance and accomplishment. Restructuring the workplace to support employees' need for meaning, purpose, and connection requires fundamental changes in how leaders act and interact with followers.

Two Models of Spiritual Leadership

Here we present two visions of spiritual leadership relevant to all categories of organizations, including educational organizations. These visions are servant leadership, based on the original work of Robert Greenleaf (1977), and a theory of spiritual leadership developed by Louis W. Fry (2003, 2005).

Servant leadership is grounded in interpretation of the New Testament and in the extensive writing of Robert K. Greenleaf (1977) who asserts the primary purpose of leadership is service to followers.

The servant leader [is] servant first.... [Leadership] begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader...perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.... The leader first and the servant first are two extreme types [of leadership]. (p. 13)

The difference between the leader-as-servant first or leader-as-leader first lies within how the leader determines to meet the needs of others. Servant leadership is about facilitating how followers accomplish shared objectives through enabling individual development, empowerment, and collaboration in an environment designed to promote the health and welfare of followers. Servant leaders assist those who are being led become “healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become leaders” (Greenleaf, 1977, pp. 13–14). The measure of effective servant leadership is how well followers grow in autonomy and become leaders themselves. Greenleaf’s approach to leadership is unique and value-based. The primary value on which servant leadership is based is the leader seeks not her or his own recognition or power, but the opportunity to create a social architecture that benefits those for whom the organization is responsible. Warren Bennis (2004) writes servant leadership provides “a counter balance to the glorification, deification, and lionization of leaders who have...neglected or forgotten why they are there: to serve the people who are affected by the organization” (p. xii). This is why servant leadership matters. Nair (1994) reinforces the need for the desire to serve others to remain central to the concept of servant leadership. He writes,

As long as power dominates our thinking about leadership, we cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership. We must place service at the core; for even though power will always be associated with leadership, it has only one legitimate use: service. (p. 59)

The need to exercise power does not motivate the servant leader.

Patterson (2003) theorizes servant leadership is characterized by the focus a servant leader has on his or her followers. The leader’s behaviors and attitudes flow from this focus on followers. The priority focus on followers’ needs and development makes servant leadership unique and different from transformational leadership, where the primary focus is on the organization and its objectives (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). Moreover, servant leadership is a “virtuous” theory, wherein virtue is defined as a “qualitative characteristic” embedded in the leader’s character (Patterson, 2003, p. 2). As a virtuous leader, the servant leader

attempts to do what is right in any given situation (Kennedy, 1995). The desire to do what is right for the long-term welfare of followers gives direction and purpose to the servant leader's actions.

Patterson (2003) argues the servant leader considers phenomena not usually addressed by other leadership theories, e.g. service to others, agapao love, and humility. Agapao love, derived from the Greek term meaning moral love, is the cornerstone of the servant/follower relationship, referring to a leader's desire to "do the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons" (p. 12). Agapao love is "love in the moral or social sense" (p. 3), for servant leaders truly appreciate followers and care for their people (Russell & Stone, 2002). Humility is also an important underpinning of servant leadership. Humility protects the servant leader from hubris and the tendency to overestimate his or her own importance to the organization compared to that of his or her followers. To remain humble means the servant leader acts in moderation, listens to the advice of others, and realizes the ethical use of power means rejecting command-and-control types of behavior in favor of trust-building and empowerment (Harrison, 2002). Humility becomes the underlying premise of servant leadership in that the leader seeks first to serve others; this commitment of service is a natural concomitant to a leader's desire to serve others. The commitment to leadership as service is consistent with Greenleaf's (1977) belief the authentic leader is servant first. Great leadership comes not from those who seek leadership in pursuit of power, but from those with a compelling vision and a desire is to serve others (Spears, 1997).

Fry (2003, 2005) proposes a theory of spiritual leadership based on intrinsic motivation theory that incorporates elements of vision, hope/faith, altruistic love, and a sense of spiritual survival based on calling and membership. Fry (2003) defines intrinsic motivation as flowing from an "interest and enjoyment of an activity for its own sake" (p. 699), arguing intrinsic motivation is associated with active engagement in a task people find enjoyable and which promotes growth and satisfaction of higher needs. Intrinsic motivation has been linked to better learning, performance, and well-being and to contribute to an individual's need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In addition to spiritual leadership, intrinsic motivation is an important component of several leadership theories, such as path-goal leadership, charismatic leadership, and transformational leadership (Fry, 2003).

Spiritual leadership is comprised of the "values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary...intrinsically [to] motivate one's self and others so...they have a sense of spiritual survival" (pp. 694–695). Spiritual survival is dependent upon two interlocking elements in the workplace: a sense of transcendence—calling or being called vocationally—and a

need for social connection or membership (Fry, 2003). To be “called” is to experience a sense of making a difference through service to others and, in doing so “deriving meaning and purpose in life” (p. 703). Membership emerges from the interplay of the cultural and social structures in which people are immersed and through which they seek to be understood and appreciated. Pfeffer (2003) identifies four benefits people seek through the workplace relevant to spiritual survival. These elements are: interesting and meaningful work that endows one with a sense of competence and mastery; work that provides a sense of purpose; an environment characterized by a sense of connection and positive relations with co-workers; and the opportunity to live an integrated existence where work and non-work roles are in harmony with a person’s sense of him or herself. The first two of these benefits (meaningful work that gives one a sense of competency, mastery, and purpose) supply a sense of calling; the last two (a sense of connection and to co-workers and the opportunity to live an integrated existence) comprise membership. Calling and membership are integrated, universal, and common to human experience (Fry, 2003).

According to Fry (2003) the essential components of spiritual leadership are vision, altruistic love, hope/faith, and spiritual survival. *Vision* produces a picture of the future of the organization that contains implicit or explicit reasons as to why people should work to create that future. Vision serves three critical functions: it *clarifies* the general direction of the organization; it *coordinates* the activities of a large number of different people; and it *mobilizes* members of the organization by describing where the organization is headed, giving meaning to the work of the organization, and encouraging hope and faith (Fry, 2003).

Altruistic love is an essential component of spiritual leadership. It is defined as a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through values such as care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others. It encompasses the practices of patience, kindness, lack of envy, forgiveness, humility, trust, loyalty, and truthfulness. Altruistic love serves to counter the negative emotions associated with life within organizations: fear, anger, a sense of failure, and pride (Fry, 2003). This concept is consistent with the idea of *agapao* love described previously.

Hope/Faith is the basis on which organization members are convinced the organization’s vision will be achieved. “People with hope/faith have a vision of where they are going and how to get there” (p. 93). Because they have hope/faith, organization members are willing to “do what it takes” in achieving the organization’s future (p. 714).

Spiritual survival refers to a sense of calling or of being called to an occupation or profession and the need for social connection or

membership. Calling is associated with how one makes a difference and derives meaning and purpose in life. Membership refers to participation in the cultural and social structures of an organization through which one seeks to be understood and appreciated as a person. Feelings of understanding and appreciation are a result of the quality of the interrelationships and social interactions in which people in the organization are involved. Calling and membership address the dimensions of what people seek at work: interesting and meaningful work that provides a sense of purpose; a sense of connection and positive social relationships; and the ability to live an integrated life consistent with who one is (Fry, 2003). People's need for sense of calling and membership are universal.

This spiritual leadership model incorporates intrinsic motivation, vision, altruistic love, hope/faith, and a sense of spiritual survival. The exercise of spiritual leadership contributes to positive organizational outcomes such as a positive perception of the meaning and purpose of work, a sense of calling and membership, commitment to the organization, increased productivity, and a commitment to continuous personal improvement.

Discussion

In this section we undertake a discussion of issues surrounding spiritual leadership including the ethics of spiritual leadership, the relationship of spirituality and religion, a comparison of spiritual and transformative leadership, limitations of the theories, and the relevance of spiritual leadership to the practice of leadership.

The ethics of spiritual leadership. Servant Leadership and Spiritual Leadership are examples of ethical leadership theories (Yukl, 2013). Ethical leadership theories concentrate on the leader's use of power to influence the behavior of others, and emphasize the personal characteristics of leaders, especially integrity, altruism, humility, empathy and healing, personal growth, fairness, and empowerment of others in the organization. Ethical leaders nurture followers, empower them, promote social justice, and discourage unethical practices in both followers and the organization as a whole (Yukl, 2013). Servant leadership theory "explains why the primary concerns of leaders should be to nurture, develop and protect followers," (p. 357) while spiritual leadership theory describes how leaders can "enhance the spiritual meaning in the work experienced by followers" (p. 357). Both models of spiritual leadership, with their emphasis on the welfare and development of followers and prohibition of the coercive use of power, constitute ethical approaches to leadership.

Spirituality and religion. One of the issues effecting spiritual leadership theory is the relationship of spirituality to religion and religious belief.

Tisdell (2001) defines religion as an organized community of faith centered on a written set of dogmas. Spirituality, on the other hand, is broader than any organized religion's particular set of doctrines (Fry, 2003). Spirituality is "the source for one's search for spiritual survival—for meaning in life and a sense of interconnectedness with other beings" (p. 705). Spirituality describes an individual's search to discover his or her potential, his or her ultimate purpose, and to find a relationship with a transcendent power that may—or may not be—called "God." Fry (2003) invokes the Dalai Lama:

Religion I take to be concerned with faith in the claims of one faith tradition or another, an aspect of which is the acceptance of some form of heaven or nirvana. Connected with this are religious teachings or dogma, ritual prayer, and so on. Spirituality I take to be concerned with those qualities of the human spirit—such as love and compassion, patience[,] tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony—which bring about happiness to both self and others. (p. 705)

Spirituality is not synonymous with or necessarily exclusive of any of the world's organized religions.

Spiritual and transformative leadership. Spiritual leadership differs from transformative leadership in important ways. As conceptualized by Burns (1978) and Bass (1998), transformative leadership's seeks to elevate the awareness of employees to look beyond their own self-interest to the mission and good of the organization. It is essentially a process for building employee commitment to organizational goals and empowering them to achieve those objectives (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). This model does not necessarily seek the employees' growth and development beyond what is needed to meet the organization's goals. In contrast, spiritual leadership shifts leader focus from the goals of the organization to the long-term development of employees. The primary difference between transformational leadership and spiritual leadership is the focus of the leader. While both theories demonstrate concern for followers, transformational leaders have greater concern for achieving organizational goals while spiritual leaders focus on service to employees. The degree to which the leader may shift his or her focus from the organization to the follower is the distinguishing factor in determining whether the leader is a transformational or spiritual leader (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003).

Limitations of the theories. There are certain limitations to spiritual leadership theories and many questions remain. For example, how do the values and skills influence the behavior of the leader? How specifically do spiritual leaders influence followers? What is the relative

significance of calling and membership and how are they interrelated? How does one become a spiritual leader and what life experiences are most relevant? Can spirituality and religious belief be separated effectively, especially in organizations and communities with strong cultural values and religious traditions?

Spiritual leadership theories have emerged in response to fundamental changes in the ways organizations function and the need to find a more holistic, humane approach to leadership. This new leadership paradigm integrates the totality of human existence, the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual into the workplace. The current environment of public education, where teaching and leading are being reduced to “numbers”—e. g., standardized test scores, dollars devoted to merit-pay programs, scores generated by a punitive “value-added” teacher-evaluation system, the total of narrowly educational outcomes met (Taubman, 2009)—seems ripe for such a change in leadership. With its emphasis on the long-term development of followers, an ethic of care and concern, and its element of trust-building and collaboration, spiritual leadership offers one possible alternative to top-down, command-and-control, and punitive styles of leadership. Fry (2003) offers the following description of spiritual leadership:

A spiritual leader is someone who walks in front of one when one needs someone to follow, behind one when one needs encouragement, and beside one when one needs a friend. Spiritual leaders lead people through intellectual discourse and dialog and believe that people, when they are involved and properly informed, can make intelligent decisions and that, with appropriate information, can assume responsibility for decisions that affect their lives. (Powers quoted in Fry, 2003, p. 720)

We can think of no more powerful a description of genuine educational leadership.

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Reflections on the Termination of Two Universities and the Creation of a New University

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Introduction

In 2012 the University of Texas System Regents voted to approve a request to merge two of its campuses, The University of Texas–Pan American (UTPA) in Edinburg, Texas, and The University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) in Brownsville, Texas,¹ campuses located approximately 65 miles apart in South Texas. In September 2015 a new university will be created as an Emerging Research One university featuring a new medical school. In this paper I relate the history leading up to the consolidation of the two universities and explore the impact of the merger process.

A visit to the web foretells both nationally and internationally many universities have merged or have considered mergers in recent years. Susan Resnick Pierce, President Emerita of the University of Puget Sound, enumerates the most common reasons for mergers: “declining enrollment; untenable tuition discounts; too much debt; the growing skepticism on the part of prospective students, their families and elected officials about whether the value of a college education is worth the cost; staggering amounts of deferred maintenance and decreased state support for public campuses.”² In the UTPA/UTB merger funding and the opportunity for more programs are the major impetuses.

Background

The UTB campus is across the Mexico border from Matamoros, Mexico, and the UTPA campus is about 19 miles from Reynosa, Mexico, 230 miles south of San Antonio, Texas. In fall 2014 the UTPA campus had an enrollment of over 21,000³ and the UTB campus enrolled a little over 8,000.⁴ Both campuses enroll about 89% Hispanic students. UTPA began as a junior college in 1927, and in the 1970s a satellite campus was created on the grounds of Texas Southmost Junior College. That senior-level college became UTB in 1991.⁵

In 1926 and 1927 the predecessor institutions of UTPA and UTB were the only ones providing higher education to the lower South Texas

counties of Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, and Starr. A former faculty member who started at the university in 1945 told me enrollment was so low that in the mid 1940s she and other faculty were called together and told they would have to close the doors if they could not matriculate a specific number of students for the following year. She and other faculty members personally visited parents of every high-school graduate in several Rio Grande Valley counties and encouraged them to send their children to college. The administrators told faculty that if the college could remain open through that year, all would be well because the next year the G.I. Bill (1944) would go into effect. On opening day the college miraculously had enrolled exactly the number of students needed. Since that difficult year enrollment has never quit growing. The college evolved from a city-funded college to an area-funded college, and in 1952 became a four-year college named Pan American College. The college became a state-supported institution in 1965. Before the area had a four-year college, those pursuing a degree had to leave the area.

Before 1952 locally those who wanted to teach could receive three- and five-year, temporary teaching certificates. If a district wanted fully certified teachers, counsellors, and administrators, they had to look for them elsewhere until graduate degrees were approved in 1970. In 1971 the name changed to Pan American University. Until master's degrees were approved, most local school administrators, counsellors, and faculty pursuing master's degrees left school as soon as the last bell rang and drove the 102 miles from Edinburg or 120 from Brownsville to Texas A & I University–Kingsville,⁶ attended class then drove back after 10:00 p.m.

While the addition of master's degrees brought benefits to the public schools and their communities, there was still a void in higher education when compared to many other areas of the state. However 1989 would be a stellar year for the college beginning important growth because two important events occurred. First, a border initiative was passed. The border initiative began the first step toward improving and expanding higher education along Texas' border with Mexico, and it affected UTPA and UTB.

President Leo Sayavedra, TAMU–International [Laredo, Texas] explains,

In 1986, the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) presented a report to the Texas Select Committee on Higher Education that detailed the realities of higher education funding and programs offered along the South Texas border (Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education, 1986). Once this report was conducted, it became clear that the institutions in the central and north Texas were

funded quite a bit above the institutions of South Texas. The data indicated that per capita the institutions north of Interstate 10 were being funded at a rate of \$290 per capita and the institutions south of Interstate 10 were being funded at \$69 per capita.⁷

In 1989, the Texas Legislature approved the South Texas/Border Initiative (STBI). The goals of this initiative were to provide equitable funding to nine universities along the Texas Border, merge these regional institutions with the larger university systems in the state, and create additional graduate programs at both the Master's and Doctoral levels.⁸

Then in 1989 the Chancellor of the UT System, Hans Mark, became a friend to UTPA. He and PAU President Miguel Nevarez liked and respected one another and soon UTPA became part of the UT System. Chancellor Mark initiated an engineering school, several dozen master's programs, and two doctorates. From that time it became obvious UTPA was entering a new era.

Emily Calderón Galdeano relates,

It is estimated that between 2000 and 2040, Texas' population will grow from 20 million to 50 million, and 96% of the net increase will be non-Anglo, with 59% of those being Latino (Murdock, White, Hoque, Pecotte, You, & Balkan, 2003). Latinos currently make up 38% of the Texas population (U.S. Census, 2012), with the greatest area of growth along the Texas–Mexico border. Additionally, the number of Texas residents in public colleges and universities is set to double in the next 40 years (Murdock et al., 2003).⁹

In 1990 the area of Texas just above the border had 26 universities, which offered 4,384 degree programs, while the nine border universities only had 649 with only two doctoral programs for the border institutions versus 589.¹⁰ Galdeano explains, “this translated into one doctoral program per million people in the border area, as opposed to 43 doctoral programs per million people in the rest of the state.”¹¹ Because those students affected are overwhelmingly Hispanic, access to higher education has been an ongoing social justice and affirmative action issue in this area. For students in the poorest area of the state to be without the same educational opportunities as the rest of the state due to geography and potentially racism led to a workforce less ready for the demands of work, so limited in future career options.

In looking back it is obvious South Texas higher-education institutions have made significant progress. The new problem we now confront is how we utilize opportunity presented by the coming merger.

As many can attest, any marriage is a challenge. A good marriage is not easy, and so this cooperative venture we have started will have many complexities. As higher education evolves, more mergers are likely. Therefore, I ask how the process has unfolded and what might we learn from the experience thus far?

Merger History

The news that UTPA and UTB would be dissolved and recreated as another university came as a surprise to students, faculty, and many administrators of both campuses. No specific reasons were given for the decision at first, but the ability to share in the Permanent University Fund, better known as the PUF, was often mentioned. Another less-well-known reason has also been posited. In a doctoral defense of a dissertation concerning the history of the border initiative, former UTPA President Miguel Nevárez argued a strong reason for merger is the agreement no university could have a medical school if another system school had been previously approved to submit a request. UT–Austin wanted a medical school, but UTPA’s request was made prior to UT–Austin’s request. Therefore, no medical school could be awarded Austin until UTPA had one.¹² Quite possibly both access to the PUF and the granting of a medical school to the UT–Austin campus were considerations. The University of Texas Regents have great power, and all those sitting at the time of the merger decision had been appointed by Republican Governor Rick Perry, who approved the merger, and the state legislature is predominately Republican, so the request for a merger was quickly approved by the legislature. Once the Regents voted to make a request for creation of a new university, the request was introduced in the Texas senate, and that body voted unanimously to create a new university in South Texas. Governor Rick Perry signed the bill July 16, 2013.¹³ On December 12, 2013 the name of the new university, The University of Texas–Rio Grande Valley, was approved by UT System Regents.¹⁴

The Permanent University Fund (PUF)

While many in the community were unaware of the PUF, they soon found there was one outstanding benefit to the creation of a new university: more money. The PUF was created when 2.1 million acres of land in West Texas was dedicated to “help fund higher education” by Texas Governor Mirabeau Lamar who says “a cultured mind is the guardian genius of democracy” (his quotation is also the UT–Austin motto).¹⁵ The original recipients of funding from PUF profits were UT and Texas A & M and then later their system schools. This land, in the days before oil, was poor for farming and ranching and very sparsely populated so legislators gladly approved it for the use of higher education, which included mineral rights.

According to Amy Madden:

Revenue from oil production and lease sales does not go directly to university operations. Under state law, it feeds the permanent fund, which is managed by The University of Texas Investment Management Co., a private, nonprofit company. University regents can distribute 4.75 percent of a three-year average of the Permanent University Fund's asset value for uses such as paying off debt and administrative costs. The UT System gets two-thirds of the return, while a third goes to A & M, said Jenny LaCoste-Caputo, spokeswoman for the UT System.¹⁶

In a state with the U.S.' number one (Brownsville–Harlingen) and number three (McAllen–Edinburg–Mission) high poverty areas, the opportunity to share in such wealth presents a staggering windfall.¹⁷ However, since UTPA and UTB did not enter the UT System participating in the PUF, but in another lesser fund, their ability to share in the interest on the \$14.5 billion¹⁸ PUF could only be approved in one of two ways: either the voters of Texas would have to approve a constitutional amendment or a new university would have to be created. Since Texas voters are not known to support constitutional amendments and since the creation of a new university by dissolving UTPA and UTB and reforming them was possible through the legislature, the latter was chosen.

The PUF may be used for “instruction, research equipment [including labs], library acquisitions, scholarships, recruitment, and student services such as counseling and career center services.”¹⁹ Prior to the implementation of the PUF new buildings had to be requested as special items in the budget. With the PUF, a lump sum is allocated to each university each time interest is distributed.

Reflections on the Process

Facilities

The fund has already begun its impact on the Edinburg campus, the subject of my reflection. So far Edinburg has completed or begun a \$96-million-dollar science building, a \$54-million 88,000-square-foot building dedicated to the first two years of students' medical education, an \$11.9-million 46,000-square-foot Student Academic Center,²⁰ and a \$124-million medical-school building dedicated to the first two years of study.²¹ When I arrived in 1967 Edinburg was a campus split by railroad tracks, with “old” campus on one side and “new” campus on the other. We struggled for years as did all border colleges in areas with a poor but fast-growing population. The funding from the PUF for buildings and

labs should also help with the college's overall budget. With a rapidly growing student enrollment of over 31,000, come September PUF funding will be essential to providing up-to-date labs, technology, and buildings for students.

Administration

Shortly after the announcement the universities would merge came the announcement all administrators from the president and deans down to faculty and staff would no longer retain their positions when UTRGV came into being in fall 2015. If they wanted to be employed at UTRGV, they would have to reapply for their positions. Juliet Garcia, president of UTB, resigned to assume the position of Executive Director of The University of Texas Americas Institute.²² UTPA president Robert Nelsen applied for the position as president of UTRGV, a position for which he was not selected. A new president of The University of Texas—Rio Grande Valley, Dr. Guy Bailey, arrived on campus; so our campus now had two presidents: one president of UTPA with one year to go before the merger and a new president for the newly named UTRGV. Dr. Nelsen resigned instead of staying for the 2014–15 academic year. He was given tenure on the faculty and a one-year appointment to work within the UT System, and later named president of California State University, Sacramento. An interim dean was appointed for the College of Education who, at the time of this writing, spends two days a week on the Brownsville campus and three on the Edinburg campus.

Deans were told they would not be informed of their status until July 15, 2014, when they would receive a letter outlining “pathway” options. The College of Education dean immediately sent out his résumé because of the short time line and uncertainty. He is now dean at a Research One university. On January 20, 2015, the faculty received an email announcing search committees for deans would be formed. As of June, 2015 a College of Education dean has yet to be named.²³ No permanent department chairs have been selected but interim chairs for the 2015–16 academic year have been appointed across campus, albeit without faculty input.

Tenure

Soon after the merger announcement, in an early meeting faculty members came away with the impression tenure would not be affected. However, soon afterward, Dr. Francisco G. Cigarroa, Chancellor of The University of Texas System, was asked at a meeting of the UTB faculty what would be the status of tenure, and he did not give a direct answer. His public lack of clarity created anxiety, unrest, and rumors among faculty.

Faculty were then told tenure would cease and everyone with a terminal degree who had earned tenure or who held a tenure-track position would have to reapply. The rehiring would be conducted in two phases. Phase One required the faculty member have a recent criminal background check, no grievances filed or found against him or her, and a terminal degree. Faculty who did not apply for Phase One or who were turned down for Phase One could apply for their former position or a different position, but their job would be advertised and those who applied would have to compete in a national search. At the November 19, 2014 UTPA Faculty Senate meeting the chair asked the Ad Interim President about the results of Phase One (since Phase Two was not complete).

He stated that 620 positions had been opened representing positions for all current UTB and UTPA faculty. They had received 612 applications. Of those, 583 (96%) were automatically transitioned. 25 were not automatically transitioned as they did not meet the criteria because they either 1) did not have a terminal degree in the field, 2) had nonsatisfactory evaluations, or 3) had disciplinary actions, and that the reasons were stated in their rejection letters. They were also given the opportunity to appeal that decision. [In the minutes the faculty Senate Chair] reiterated that he is receiving many comments from faculty that they are disappointed in the way that this process has been completed, and that morale is low and faculty are feeling disrespected.²⁴

Faculty

While the rest of the UTPA campus was allowed to begin meeting with their colleagues on the UTB campus before winter break 2013 to become acquainted or to plan programs, College of Education faculty were forbidden to meet or discuss any changes with the UTB faculty until UTB faculty had completed its National Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) review. Since NCATE no longer exists, rather it has become CAEP, all faculty met with a CAEP consultant June 18, 2014. The deadline for completion of our new degree plans and catalogues was September 15, 2014. By June faculty were gone or teaching and planning to be away. Only a few days' notice of the first meeting was given. I kept wondering when we would meet again. Finally I asked if I could organize a meeting, and we met a couple of times in August with the UTB faculty at Texas State Technical College. With the exception of an early meeting which seemed tense the graduate Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) faculty came to like one another and worked well together.

Things were tense in some program meetings so the CAEP consultant was called back September 4, 5, and 6, 2014. During this time the C & I graduate faculty continued to work well, but we congratulated

ourselves too soon. The carefully constructed programs and courses were submitted on deadline, September 15, 2014. On Thursday September 18 at 4:00 p.m. I received an email from the Provost's office with the formal submission attached as it would be presented to the combined Graduate Studies Council of UTPA and UTB for approval to be presented to the UT System. Two core courses had been changed even though they had been approved by faculty. Trying to find some area of agreement, we explored the possibility of cross-listing for one, and there seemed to be agreement. However at 11:00 p.m. the night before the combined Graduate Studies Committee was to meet and approve all courses for submission to the UT System, we received a brief email from the UTB graduate C & I committee chair stating, "My folks do not want to cross list." Later one course was restored but another in the UTB catalog that everyone in our joint faculty meetings had voted to replace was substituted for the one approved unanimously by faculty. The time line was too tight to do anything but leave it as presented. We never found out for certain who made the change although we have opinions. I do not think it was any member of the UTPA or UTB faculty. I feel that we had a good beginning experience with our counterparts at UTB. I believe we genuinely like each other and can express ourselves openly. I do not know where the change came from, but there had been some changes in personnel and responsibilities, and I thought it best to be on alert but positive. This new UTRGV entity entails a lifelong commitment so it was to our advantage to work well with one another.

Staff

Another serious concern is the continuing low morale of the staff, who, ten weeks before the fall 2014 semester was to begin, are still waiting to find out if they will be rehired and they may not be notified for weeks or even a month or two because of the amount of time the procedure requires. At this point some excellent staff have retired early and can now work elsewhere and have their UTPA pension and medical benefits. Some staff no longer will have their old positions at the beginning of the fall semester because their positions were advertised and the market is competitive. Faculty and students depend on staff and share concern about their morale.

Upon reflection I would urge anyone who is involved with a merger to stress the need for a well-thought-out communications approach. Many of the morale problems could have been avoided if information had been clear, timely, and specific. Also, since this is such a complicated process, someone trained in negotiations and conflict management would have been invaluable. Counsellors also would have been helpful. I

urge readers to search the internet using the term “university mergers” to see how widespread mergers have become in the U.S. and in other countries. This practice is becoming a trend—much more so today than in the past.²⁵

Community

The unity of valley communities toward UTRGV is promising. All area towns and officials have been very supportive. Many are also supporting the medical school with funding. The medical school’s emphasis will be on medical research into diabetes because the area has the highest incidence per capita in the U.S. “Over the next 30 years, the number of Latino adult Texans with diabetes is projected to grow from 855,000 to 4.7 million, more than the number of white and [B]lack diabetics combined. These rates will be particularly pronounced in South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, demographers suggest, where obesity is particularly prevalent and health insurance coverage is extremely low.”²⁶

Students

New PUF-driven funding for UTRGV buildings will provide the facilities needed for an Emerging Research One university.²⁷ “To be designated an emerging research institution, research expenditures need to be more than \$30 million, the institution should offer 10 doctoral degree programs, have at least 150 students enrolled in those programs and grant 20 doctoral degrees every year.”²⁸ This will be a boon for this area of Texas. Poverty does not encourage higher education, but the PUF monies and support of the powerful UT System will go a long way toward offering new and exciting opportunities to the youth of the Rio Grande Valley and increase the percentages going on to attend university and earn degrees. “Between UTB and UTPA, the schools offer five doctoral degree programs. . . . UTPA has \$29 million in awards, while UTB accrued approximately \$15 million in awards.”²⁹

Another positive result of building a new campus in Brownsville as it transitions from the Texas Southmost College site is it will provide a safer environment for students. The new campus will be farther away from Matamoros, Mexico now in view of the current campus. Bullets from drug cartel gang warfare in Mexico sometimes penetrate campus in its current location. In 2010 drug cartel violence reached a critical mass and the university took action.

Students, faculty and staff at the school are being asked to enter their cell phone numbers in a university database, so whenever drug violence explodes near the campus, warnings can be text-blasted out. The plan comes after a particularly scary incident a couple weeks ago

caused university officials to cancel weekend classes. Hair Balls, the Houston Press news blog, “wrote about that gun battle, but, basically, 55 people, including a cartel boss and journalist, were killed in Matamoros, Mexico, which is about half a mile from the UT–Brownsville campus. When police heard the gun fight from the university’s soccer fields, they decided to send students and faculty home.”³⁰

Moving Forward

Reactions to leadership salaries have been mixed. Although not everyone is positive, it is interesting how many people in the larger community are very impressed with the \$600,000 salary awarded UTRGV President Guy Bailey³¹ and the \$630,000 salary awarded Dr. Francisco Fernandez,³² the UTRGV Medical School’s founding dean. UTRGV will be an Emerging Research One University. The medical school will improve health care in the Rio Grande Valley, and students in the first class will attend tuition-free for their first class.³³ The fact the UT System offers the UTRGV campus administrators such large salaries has lent prestige to the university’s image in the minds of many people. There will be no raises for UTPA faculty this year because UTB faculty salaries must be raised. With higher and higher salaries being paid to administrators and more administrators being hired, this trend has not gone overlooked by faculty. The UTB faculty had to be brought up to the level of the UTPA faculty, but many UTPA faculty were not pleased because many understand UTPA faculty salaries to be already below the national average. Some hope as an Emerging Research One university, UTRGV faculty will receive raises because their salaries will be compared with other Emerging Research One institutions.

Driving distance is something that will have to be addressed. Even though technology can bring us closer together, person-to-person contact still is important in preventing morale problems. Faculty have been told they may have to teach on campuses 44 to 65 miles away. That makes a round trip at night on the freeways for a graduate class quite a challenge. However the amount of new technology that will be in place next academic year is impressive so driving may not be required as much as some fear.

There is ongoing controversy over the new school’s mascot. UTPA’s much-loved mascot is Bucky the Bronc and UTB’s is the ocelot. The new selection has resulted in dozens of letters to the editor and even political entities making official pronouncements opposing the new mascot, the Vaquero. Many letters to the editor state unequivocally the writer will never, ever again attend an athletic event and never donate more money to the university. Even the merged universities’ new name did not evoke such an uproar. However, the early outbursts of anger are

subsiding.

A major plus for the College of Education, especially the Curriculum and Instruction Department, is the opportunity to share in one another's programs, which will provide an exciting challenge. UTPA has an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, UTB has one in Curriculum and Instruction. Having our own C & I doctorate is something I never thought would come to fruition so I am especially excited about that as are my graduate students, several of whom just graduated and have applied to the Ed.D. program in C & I.

The doctoral degree programs are just two of many collaborations we will need to work through. Another exciting one will be when our science-education students and teachers have access to the development of Stargate, the Spacecraft Tracking and Astronomical Research into Giga-hertz Astrophysical Transient Emission (STARGATE) complex which will be a public-private partnership between the Center for Advanced Radio Astronomy (CARA) at UTB and SpaceX.³⁴ Now this partnership will be part of UTRGV.

The future is exciting. In an area of the country where students are somewhat isolated by geography and poverty, the newly merged UTRGV now provides opportunity for their futures right in their own area. Those of us who may have become a little too comfortable with the status quo will be challenged by new experiences, learn to be more flexible, and make new friends at the other end of the Rio Grande Valley. This area of Texas has too few doctors and too many health problems. The doctor shortage is predicted gradually to shrink thanks to the presence of the medical school. The life of every community and every community member will be improved once the medical school is up and underway. The capital investment in this area of the country will improve the lives of our students and their families, enrich our communities, and supply much-needed employment. This transition to UTRGV and its future are an important part of south Texas' and Hispanic's educational history. The UTPA-UTB merger promises to be an exhilarating learning experience for us all.

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The Centrality of Experience in Carter G. Woodson's The Mis-Education of the Negro

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Introduction

In 1933, Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950) published reflections on his extensive experiences as an educator spanning over half a century in both hemispheres, teaching students of all backgrounds and colors. In *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, he argues Black children were mis-educated because their education was not drawn from their own life experiences. He maintains that the type of education Black children received was mis-educative because it created a personality split in African Americans typified by dual identities resulting in a profound identity crises which has made educated African Americans “decry any such thing as race consciousness” (1933/1993, p. 7). Woodson goes on to note, “The chief difficulty with the education of the Negro is that it has been largely imitation resulting in the enslavement of his mind” (p. 134). Woodson’s argument here is, the type of education given to Black children was remote from their humanity. On the contrary, he suggests African-American children should be given the type of education not imposed from without, that is, the type of education determined by the make-up of the people themselves and what their environment requires of them. He implies education for African Americans should incorporate African-American experiences as well as their distinct social and cultural characteristics.

In spite of the passion and evidence inherent in his argument, Woodson’s work is never mentioned in the same breath as the other great 20th century Social Foundations authors even though his *Mis-Education of the Negro* predates Dewey’s popular *Experience and Education* (1998/1938) in which Dewey talks of mis-educative experiences. Aversion to Woodson’s work by Foundations scholars may be due to scholars thinking they have plentiful other works to reference, therefore their hesitancy to add one more book to a long list, or it may be as Davis (2014) notes recently that in the academy, “while radical views are tolerated, they are often marginalized, or worse, ignored, especially

within professional fields such as education” (p. xl). It is important to point out that radical views, as in this case, may simply be views outside the mainstream or may just be progressive philosophical views. However, unfamiliarity with Woodson’s work, as one anonymous reviewer suggests, may be due to the threat posed to liberal-arts education in an era of accountability. Whatever the case, as I talk about Woodson’s work at seminars, conferences, and workshops I am always amazed by the number of students and Foundations scholars who reliably ask me why they have never heard of Woodson or his work. In this essay, I focus my attention on Woodson’s argument that educators should use students’ prior experiences and frames of reference to make learning more relevant, and on his argument for cultivating a nurturing and supportive learning environment to enable students to develop to their fullest. In embarking upon this journey, it is my hope Woodson’s work will begin to receive more serious attention by Foundations scholars as they begin to see his work’s purpose and relevance to our contemporary educational system.

The Centrality of Experience in Woodson’s *The Mis-Education of the Negro*

In his greatest educational work, Woodson notes with dismay the poor quality of education provided Black children owing to a profound lack of connection between Black children’s education and their cultural orientations and experiences. Woodson’s book documents the mistakes made in education, more specifically in the education of Black children. U.S. education, Woodson maintains, does not adequately prepare Black children to function successfully in society. He highlights the most important variables in the learning process: the learner, the values and aims of his or her society, and a knowledge of subject matter.

Through painstaking analyses of historical data, he argues, Black children were not given the right type of education, rather their education subjected them to the will of others and was never determined by the make-up of the people themselves; that is, education did not factor in the distinct social and cultural characteristics of African Americans. In explaining the inadequacies of U.S. Black children’s education he argues that U.S. education is socially constructed to privilege white norms, experiences, and expectations. He comes to this conclusion because of the “neglect of Afro-American History and distortion of facts concerning [Blacks] in most history books, [which] deprived the black child and his [or] her whole race of a heritage, and relegated him [or] her to nothingness and nobodiness” (Wesley & Perry, 1969, pp. 1–2). Woodson is appalled by the lack of social and cultural connection between Black children’s experiences and their education

stating, "It is merely a matter of exercising common sense in approaching people through their environment..." (p. xi). As Woodson sees it, "if education [is to be] of any practical value it should serve to guide us to living, to fit us for the work around us and demanded by the times in which we live" (in Ellis, 1997, p. 26). Indeed, education "should aid us into putting the most into life in the age, country, and into the position we are to fill" (p. 26).

Woodson notes, similarly in the Philippines, teachers were once compelled to use U.S. textbooks and teach students in language outside the students' own realm. Recollecting his observations, he notes, "Every pupil started in the first grade with *Baldwin's Primer* which featured the red apple (a fruit unknown in the Islands), polar bears, and blizzards" (Scally, 1985, p. 7). On the contrary, he envisions a great and true educator for Filipino children should be one who takes great pride in teaching his or her students Filipino music and who does not teach his or her pupils to sing, "Come shake the Apple Tree," when they had never seen such an object, but rather "Come shake the Lomboy Tree," something which they had actually done" (Woodson, 1933/1993, p. 153). Woodson's language is deliberate here because he believes a knowledgeable teacher should speak to his or her students about their own native hero, José Rizal, "who gave his life as a martyr for the freedom of his country" (p. 153), instead of George Washington who children knew nothing about and could never appreciate.

In the U.S., Woodson is concerned about a curricular knowledge base far removed from the experiences of Black children because when discontinuity exists between the knowledge base and student experiences, the result is what Page (2006) calls a *hiding curriculum*. According to Page (2006), whenever a *hiding curriculum* exists in schools, students learn "to see knowledge as merely the school's gambit, not as a resource that they and all people depend on in better making their way in a precarious world" (p. 51). In such an instance, knowledge exists only for its own sake and the curriculum is compartmentalized which does not allow for "the fullest possible realization of human potentialities" (in Snelgrove, 2013, p. 210). The centrality of experience is critical to students' success in school because culture, tradition, and economic conditions have very powerful effects on learning. Greene (1978) argues that because of the ontological rootedness of experience, students' knowledge cannot be separated from their own real life experiences. Indeed, as she sees it, "the life of reason develops against a background of perceived realities, that to remain in touch with one's original perceptions is to be present to oneself" (p. 2). She reminds us that, "A human being lives, as it were, in two orders—one created by his or her

relations with the perceptual fields that are given in experience, the other created by his or her relations with a human and social environment” (p. 2).

Education, according to Woodson, is the means of social continuity of life rooted in experience. It is by facing real-life problems that creative intelligence develops. In other words, “genuine thought begins with a ‘problematic situation,’ a block or hitch in the ongoing stream of experience. In encountering these blocks, consciousness is brought to focus and one is made more acutely aware of the situation” (Ozmon & Craver, 2007, p. 136). Our experiences consist of physical realities and social relationships as well. However, experience must be seen in its connectedness and as “a social instrument for human adaptation within historically changing social and physical environments” (Rigstad, 2007/2008, p. 5). This is to say, one’s geographical location and experiences shape both one’s values and social needs as he or she learns and absorbs new ideas. As a result, every generation must engage in some form of critical and, to some extent, experimental examination leading to social reorganization of their experiences. During this process, traditional practices are revised and some are discarded following what has been learned in the process. Woodson, indeed, believes firmly in and wants his readers to see the organic connection between a child’s experience and his or her education.

How to Rectify Mis-Education

Woodson argues mis-education can be rectified. As a remedy he suggests a bottom-up approach not imposed from without. In other words, education for Black children should be determined by the make-up of the people themselves and should be carried out according to the circumstances their environment requires of them because education dictated by one’s environment allows an individual to think for him or herself. This is to say, children are affected in their learning by internal factors and by their environments guided by the principles of interaction and continuity. This means predispositions that students develop during past experiences affect their future experiences (Carver & Enfield, 2006). The curriculum therefore should emphasize knowledge and experiences African-American students bring to school to empower them to learn from each other and to explore community and social improvement through collective decision making. Research shows activating students’ prior knowledge is an important tool in enhancing students’ engagement with the lesson and in helping them to make sense of new information (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Discussing with students what they already know has the added advantage of increasing their engagement with the text and provides a substructure on which they can connect the topic to their prevailing knowledge and experiences (Gamoran,

Nystrand, Berends, & LePore, 1995). Indeed, Woodson agrees with Dewey (1998/1938), that “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 27). As Dewey (1966/1916) argues, education is “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (p. 76), so, too, does Woodson. In fact, Woodson has so much faith in the inherent centrality of experience in education he remarks, “Only by careful study of the Negro himself and the life which he is forced to lead can we arrive at the proper procedure in this crisis” (p. x).

Mis-Education in Public Schools Today

African-American parents’ disappointment with U.S. schools continues to the present. Eighty-two years after the publication of *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, statistics show Black children in U.S. schools lag far behind whites in academic performance and are placed in lower academic tracks in disproportionate numbers to white students. They are also far more likely to be suspended and disciplined in schools than their white counterparts. In some urban districts, up to 40% of Black students drop out of schools (Lipman, 1995; see also Gay, 2010 and Ladson-Billings 1995; 2009). According to Ladson-Billings (1995), the reason for such massive failures of Black students in U.S. schools is due to cultural discontinuity between what students experience at home and their experiences in school.

It is hardly necessary to point out U.S. schools and colleges remain substantially culturally and socially out of touch with the needs of African-American students (Dillon, 2011) since there are rarely concrete links made between the curriculum and the social, cultural, and economic environment of African-American learners (Maiga, 1995). In other words, existing curricula in schools are built largely on the thinking, experiences, and desires of white students (Tate, 1995) making these types of learning environments unsuitable for African-American students, according to Woodson’s argument. Apart from the alien contents in all areas of the curriculum, studies also show despite schools’ changing demographics, teachers are drawn predominantly from white European and middle-class backgrounds (Avery & Walker, 1993; Bassey, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Jones & Jones, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009). As Avery and Walker (1993) note, “most [of these] teachers have limited knowledge about cultural and linguistic groups different from their own” (p. 27) (see also Bassey, 1996; Gay, 2010; Jones & Jones, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). As products of their own society, these teachers know very little about Black children’s values and characteristics and have limited knowledge and preparation needed for

working with African-American students (Avery & Walker, 1993; Bassey, 1996; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Jones & Jones, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Consequently, these teachers are often not cognizant of historical forces that work against Black students. The result is often low expectations for African-American students (Athanases, Wahleithner, & Bennett, 2012; Jones & Jones, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009). As Jones and Jones (2002) argue, “Low expectation refers to the beliefs—those of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and policymakers—that African American students cannot achieve at levels equal to or better than their Euro-American peers” (p. 134). Oakes (1987) maintains, the patterns of lower achievement and underrepresentation of Black students in certain academic subjects begin early in the educational process and grow larger the longer students remain in school. Indeed Delpit (1995) argues that academic problems often blamed on Black children in schools are most of all attributable to miscommunication, power imbalance, and inequality. Steele (1992) finds African-American students are devalued more by white teachers than white students and recent studies show some teachers use microaggressions to oppress Black students in schools (Andrews, 2012; Murray, 2013). Microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Murray, 2013, p. 61). And Murray (2013) maintains “the educational establishment has adopted microaggression as a tool for responding to student behaviors deemed counter to white, middle-class value system that forms all school processes’ and procedures’ backbone” (p. 62).

Empowering Pedagogy: Culturally Responsive Teaching for African-American Students

According to Tate (1995), “Woodson posit[s] that education built strictly on the thinking, experiences, and desires of [w]hites was inappropriate for African Americans” (p. 166). Just as Woodson argues in the pages of *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, contemporary scholars who examine empowering pedagogy for African-American students have come to the conclusion social context, interpersonal relationships, and emotional-wellbeing are important in student learning (see Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, 2015; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009) because learning style is affected by an individual’s environment linked closely to the demands of his or her daily life (Nelson-Barber & Estrin, 1995). The implication here is that learners as members of families, peer groups, and classrooms located within the larger context of schools, neighborhoods, and communities, are influenced by culture, shared beliefs, values, and norms.

Understanding the influence of these interacting contexts on learners enhances learning effectiveness. This means the “more teachers know about the cultural backgrounds of students and how differences in values, beliefs, language, behavioral expectations can influence student behavior, including interpersonal dynamics, the better they will be able to facilitate effective teaching-learning interactions in their classrooms” (Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, 2015, p. 21; see also Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). As a remedy for African American underachievement in schools, it has been suggested there should be “concrete links between the curriculum, classroom instruction, and the social, cultural, and economic environment of the learners” (Maiga, 1995, p. 209). This is to say, teachers should make classroom instruction more compatible with the cultural orientations of African-American students in what is often referred to as empowering pedagogy or culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Lipman, 1995; Tate, 1995).

Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for [students]” (p. 31). On her part, Ladson-Billings (2009) maintains culturally relevant teaching “is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 20). Indeed, culturally responsive teachers view culture as a set of strengths which can be leveraged effectively to enhance academic and social achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Scholars who have analyzed the work of teachers who practice empowering pedagogy or culturally responsive teaching (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lipman, 1995; Maiga, 1995; Shujaa, 1995; Tate, 1995) conclude such teachers are grounded in pedagogical practices, teaching conceptions, and social relationships that enhance learning experiences by relating the curriculum to students’ backgrounds, establishing connections with families, understanding students’ cultural experiences, establishing connections with local communities, creating shared learning experiences, and recognizing cultural differences as strengths on which to build programs. These teachers understand education is not apolitical, helping students to understand their roles as change agents in society. They inspire, motivate, instill values and knowledge; they nourish racial pride and the need for equality (Delpit, 1995; Fairclough, 2007; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Lipman, 1995). In *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Ladson-Billings (2009) tells us the eight teachers she identifies in her study of

successful teachers of African-American students utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning, have strong focus on student learning, are creative, develop cultural competence, and cultivate sociopolitical awareness in their students. In her much acclaimed study, she tells us how one teacher in her research uses rap music as a vehicle for teaching poetry to African-American students leading her students to outperform other schools' students where such an approach was not adopted; another teacher involves parents in her classroom by creating, an "artist or craftsperson-in-residence" program to enable students learn from and share wisdom and knowledge from parents in the community. Parents are often invited to this teacher's classroom to share their cultural knowledge with students. In another instance, a teacher encourages her students to use their home language while learning the standard language resulting in her students' remarkable ability to be fluent in both languages at the end of the school year (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009).

Other studies of culturally responsive teaching (Delpit 1995; Gay, 2010; Gehlbach, 2014; Johnson, Nyamekye, Chazan, & Rosenthal, 2013; Lipman, 1995; Maiga, 1995; Shujaa, 1995; Tate, 1995) record similar academic successes by African-American students in different subject areas. Remarkable qualities possessed by teachers who practice culturally responsive teaching are they are enthusiastic about their work; respectful of parents, and understand Black children's duality of operating in many worlds: that is, the world of their home environment, the world of the school community, and the world of the global community. Other characteristics of empowering teachers are they support culture as an integral part of the school experience, have very few discipline problems in their classrooms, have very high attendance rates, and students score at the highest percentile on standardized tests (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Accordingly, students in these classes experience academic success, and develop critical competence and critical consciousness. After a careful review of numerous educational studies, Gay (2010) concludes African-American students perform better in schools where teaching is filtered through their own experiences. To be effective, teachers of African-American students must have the courage, confidence, and competence to teach in a culturally responsive manner. Recent scholarship on empowering pedagogy for African American students includes those of Ladson-Billings, 2009, 1995; Gay, 2010; Johnson et al., 2013; Gehlbach, 2014; Hammond, 2015; Delpit, 1995; Tate, 1995; Lipman, 1995; Maiga, 1995; and Shujaa, 1995, to name just a few.

Delpit (1995), in particular, discovers a good number of teachers who use culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms with remarkable success. What all these researchers find is culturally

responsive teaching is good for all children because in culturally responsive classrooms all children are valued and their contributions recognized; teachers are responsive to the needs of all children; they care and value each child; they begin with common ground but celebrate the unique contributions of every child; they use multiple teaching and learning strategies to engage students in active learning that encourages the development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills, and, indeed, these teachers are able to adapt instruction to meet the needs of individual students (Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Lipman, 1995; Maiga, 1995; Shujaa, 1995). Empowering teachers make good teaching choices by eliciting, motivating, engaging, supporting, and expanding the intellectual abilities of all students (Hammond, 2015).

It is critically important to note culturally responsive teaching cements the connection between social justice and pedagogy, creating the space needed for discussing social change (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Rather than dwell upon or blame their students' lack of resources, these teachers do something about it. In his recent work, an exemplary teacher, Schultz (2007) tells how he co-created with African-American fifth-graders in Chicago a year-long, authentic, transformative and integrated curriculum designed to get a new school building for the students and their community. He maintains, "In their quest to replace their under-funded and marginalized school, the students were 'able to identify root causes of problems' and also ready and willing to implement 'strategies that might bring about substantive changes'" (p. 166). In this case, students in this teacher's fifth-grade class identified the poor condition of their school building as the major problem confronting them. With their problem clearly identified, students began to brainstorm how they would make their problem known to the community. Their suggestions included talking to certain people, making their plight known through publication in newspapers and magazines, and putting pressure on politicians. Those to whom they wanted to talk in the community included law-makers, political leaders, members of the school board, school administrators and staff, and heads of major corporations. To help with publicity, two newspapers were chosen. The students deliberated on ways of putting pressure on members of the community to achieve their goal. Other strategies adopted by the class included, "surveying students, teachers, and staff; petitioning; interviewing people with power in the community; writing letters to the legislature and inviting politicians to the school; holding a press conference; and producing a documentary video" (p. 169). In order to get much-needed publicity for their project, students

wrote letters to the media, to the powers that be, and to political elites in their community. Their story was very quickly picked up by newspapers and the entire community, and the public began to clamor for answers. Indeed, in the process of this exercise students learned cooperative work, how to conduct surveys, how to prepare documentation, and how to take photographs. The assignment also helped students with written assessments, data collection and analyses and with mathematics. In the final analysis, students' hard work was rewarded with a better school building in subsequent years and with numerous public service awards (Schultz, 2007; see also Bassey, 2010).

Conclusion

The central issues which Woodson identifies as responsible for the mis-education of U.S. African-American students are alive and well even today because African-American students are still being disenfranchised by the educational system through the use of "foreign" curriculum and pedagogy (Tate, 1995). However, more recently, scholars have begun to explore teaching strategies that ameliorate mis-education of African-American students by placing students' social context, interpersonal relationships, and emotional wellbeing at the center of learning to correct the inadequacies Woodson criticized some four decades ago.

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