DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 018 SO 016 858

AUTHOR Oppewal, Donald
TITLE Religion in American Textbooks: A Review of the Literature.
INSTITUTION New York Univ., N.Y. Dept. of Psychology.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 15 Jul 85
GRANT NIE-G-84-0012
NOTE 33p.; Section 1, Part 1 of Equity in Values Education: Do the Values Education Aspects of Public School Curricula Deal Fairly with Diverse Belief Systems? Final Report, July 1985 (SO 016 857).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bias; *Controversial Issues (Course Content); Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Ethnic Bias; Literature Reviews; *Moral Values; Public Schools; *Religion; Science Instruction; Social Studies; Textbook Bias; *Textbook Content; Textbook Evaluation; Textbook Research; Traditionalism; Values; *Values Education

ABSTRACT

This section, from a larger report describing a project designed to systematically investigate how religious and traditional values are represented in today's public school curricula, presents a review of the literature focusing on studies that have analyzed the treatment of religion and values in elementary and secondary textbooks. This survey is supplemented by an examination of a sampling of literature anthologies used in upper elementary and secondary English classes, health/sex education textbooks, secondary biology texts, elementary social studies texts and textbooks used in civics/government and history classes. Using a table categorizing types of sex and ethnic bias (McCune, Matthews and Gall) and the "Humanist Manifesto" developed by the author, texts were analyzed to determine whether religious and traditional values and beliefs are accorded equitable treatment. Findings indicate that the literature anthologies contain materials which expose students to traditional religious values, with amounts varying from negligible to significant depending upon whether the texts contain writings from earlier periods. The examination of three health/sex education textbooks and four secondary biology texts revealed the consistent taking of sides on controversial issues in the health/sex education texts and a shift from the traditional focus on biological concepts to controversial socio-moral issues in the secondary biology texts. Analysis of social studies texts also revealed an underrepresentation of the role of religious belief and the church in society as well as a misrepresentation or underrepresentation of traditional values. (LH)

SECTION 1: PART 1

Religion in American Textbooks: A Review of the Literature

Prof. Donald Oppewal

Calvin College

Grand Rapids, Michigan

July 15, 1985

The project presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant/contract from the National Institute of Education, Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education and no official endorsement by the National Institute of Education should be inferred.

In its: Equity in Values Education: Do the Values Education Aspects of Public School Curricula Deal Fairly with Diverse Belief Systems? Final Report, July 1985 (SØ 016 857). For related parts, see SØ 016 859-862.

Part of Final Report: NIE-G-84-0012; Project No. 2-0099

Equity in Values Education

RELIGION IN AMERICAN TEXTBOOKS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Dr. Donald Oppewal
Professor of Education
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Introduction

This report focuses on studies that have analyzed the treatment of religion and traditional religious values in elementary and secondary school textbooks. This survey of the literature is supplemented by the author's own research in the same area, and will cover a sampling of texts from literature, biology, health, social studies (including civics), and history.

An ERIC search (covering the years 1966-84) and using descriptors like textbook, bias, religious values, and equity turned up about 10 usable pieces of research on sp cific textbook materials. These sources, plus those already known by the author, and his own textbook research constitute the sources for this report.

It will be assumed that textbooks do treat value-laden matters, whether these be in science, language arts, or social studies. Previous studies of textbook treatment of blacks and women have shown the great difficulty in representing fairly their contributions. For ten or twenty years now the "bias" of textbooks on these topics has been systematically identified. What this report proposes to do is to apply similar criteria to evaluate the treatment of religion and traditional religious values.

Table 1 (next page), designed for detecting "Types of Sex and Ethnic Bias," and drawn up from other sources (Gall, 1981), contains six possible ways in which bias can occur. This eport will often use these categories as a screen through which the textbook material will be filtered.

In addition this report will focus on what alternatives, if any, to traditional religious beliefs are present in textbooks. The Humanist

TABLE 1 Types of Sex and Ethnic Bias

1. Invisibility: Certain groups are underrepresented in curricular materials. The significant omission of women and minority groups has become so great as to imply that these groups are of less value, importance, and significance in our society.

2. Stereotyping: By assigning traditional and rigid roles or attributes to a group, instructional materials sterotype and limit the abilities and potential of that group. Not only are careers sterotyped, but so, too, are intellectual abilities, personality characteristics, physical appearance, social status and domestic roles. Stereotyping denies students a knowledge of the diversity, complexity and variation of any group of individuals. Children who see themselves portrayed only in stereotypic ways may internalize those stereotypes and fail to develop their own unique abilities, interests and full potential.

3. Imbalance/Selectivity: Textbooks perpetuate bias by presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group of people. This imbalanced account restricts the knowledge of students regarding the varied perspectives which may apply to a particular situation. Through selective presentation of materials, textbooks distort reality and ignore complex and differing viewpoints.

4. Unreality: Textbooks frequently present an unrealistic portrayal of our history and our contemporary life experience. Controversial topics are glossed over and discussions of discrimination and prejudice are avoided. This unrealistic coverage denies children the information they need to recognize, understand, and perhaps some day conquer the problems that plague our society.

5. Fragmentation/Isolation: By separating issues related to minorities and women from the main body of the text, instructional materials imply that these issues are less important than and not part of the dominant culture.

6. Linguistic Bias: Curricular materials reflect the discriminatory nature of our language. Masculine terms and pronouns, ranging from our "forefathers" to the generic "he," deny the participation of women in our society. Further, occupations, such as "mailman" are given masculine labels that deny the legitimacy of women working in these fields.

Sources: Shirley McCune and Martha Matthews, (ed.) Implementing Title IX and Attaining Sex Equity: A Workshop Package for Postsecondary Educators (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978). See also Gall, Meredith. Evaluating and Selecting Curriculum Materials (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1981).

Manifestos (see Appendix A for summary) will constitute the immediate eference point for identifying if alternatives to theism and traditional religion are expressed in those texts chosen in the various studies reported here.

Thus the major sections of this report use both Table 1 and the Humanist Manifesto as tools to identify to what extent traditional religious values are underrepresented or pejoratively presented.

While no list of these traditional values is possible, what will characterize them as being religious, traditional, or both is that they assume a transcendent or objective anchorage for their vitality and validity. When this transcendent, or religious dimension of life is underrepresented, in literature for example, then the text can be said to expose the learner to a view of life which does not fairly represent the variety of views present in society. This phenomenon would relate to Table 1, No. 1, the "Invisibility" criterion, and No. 3, the "Imbalance/Selectivity" criterion, and No. 4, the "Unreality" criterion. When in addition, traditional views are treated pejoratively the phenomenon would relate to the No. 2 "Stereotyping" criterion, and the No. 4 "Unreality" criterion. These four criteria, explained in Table 1 will be used to determine whether religious and traditional values and beliefs are accorded equitable treatment in the texts under analysis.

Literature Anthologies

Anthologies for literature class are used extensively in upper elementary and secondary school English classes. Because they draw from a vast pool of available material, editorial judgment as to what is appropriate for a given grade level enters heavily into the selection. Some are organized or sequenced historically and other grouped into genres, or under themes, and

this may also affect editorial judgment about what literary materials will be selected.

The under representation criterion and the pejorative evidence criterion (see Table 1) will be used singly or together in examining selected texts. Since no statistical reference point exists for the amount of attention that should be given to religious or traditional values, the best that can be done is to document the amount. However, some evidence exists that over the last 25 years the amount of attention given to theistic beliefs and practices has significantly diminished. One study of Missouri textbooks in the early fifties (Pflug, 1955) concluded that, even thirty years ago:

> the closer we get in textbook descriptions of present day life and literature the fewer theistic references there are. There is a noticeable tapering-off of religious references in the modern period. Thus an alert student may feel that the textbook dealing with today's problems no longer cites religion as a molding force in society (p. 260).

Another study (McCarthy et at, 1981 p. 122) involved a comparison of two junior high literature anthologies published by the same company 25 years apart. The research methodology consisted of counting the number of lines, in either editorial comment or the literary content, which recognized a religious transcendant dimension of life. Inclusion of the religious dimension of life was identified as consisting of any of the following:

1. devotional religious acts described, such a praying, Bible reading, church-going, hymn singing
2. religious occupations depicted, such as ministers or elders of churches, missionaries, or church school teachers
3. moral decisions made in an explicitly religious context and using religious sanctions.

The number of lines containing any of the above was then calculated as a percentage of the total lines in the text. It was determined that three times as much attention was devoted to this dimension in the earlier edition, with

the actual percentages being: 1.3% in the earlier edition, and .45% in the edition published twenty-five years later.

The Kanawha County, West Virginia textbook controversy in the early seventies provided the setting for another textbook analysis by scholars. Two scholars (Hillocks, 1978; McNearney, 1975), working independently, concluded that at bottom the conflict was ideological and that it was between traditional theism and some form of humanism. George Hillocks is a University of Chicago professor education and expert in language arts. He did an analysis of the language arts textbooks that precipitated the controversy. His analysis revealed that only six of the thirty-eight prose selections mentioned Christians or Christian beliefs. In addition, he noted that <u>all</u> of the six prose selections were "pejorative of Christianity, either directly in adverse comments about the shortcomings of Christianity or indirectly by showing Christians as hypocrites or fools" (p. 646). He also noted that only seven of forty-six poems in a given text dealt with matters in the Christian tradition (p.642). It would seem that there is, in this sampling, both a limited treatment and a pejorative depiction of traditional religious values. These would then fail the two criteria drawn from Table 1 reproduced earlier in this document.

Further personal research by the author has focused on textbooks published in the 1970's. Those anthologies which reach back in to the 17th and 18th century for their materials tend to score higher in terms of attention to the religious or transcendent dimension of life. This would be because of the inclusion of writers like Jonathan Edwards and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who persistently provided lines fitting the three categories of devotional acts, characters in religious occupations, and moral decisions calling upon religious sanctions. One such text (McFarland, 1972) included not only these

wr ters but also the 20th century Arthur Miller play The Crucible, in which the setting is an early New England colony. Even i these writers given extensive exposure the total number of lines in ext was 2% of the total. Since editorial comment was sketchy, and no teachers manual provided, there was no available evidence to determine whether the class discussion treatment was pejorative or supportive of the ideas and practices, although the play The Crucible could hardly be said to be a sympathetic treatment of Puritan society! (No recent literary material of a positive or serious kind with respect to traditional religion was included.)

Another type of anthology, arranging literature according to genres or types of literature, presents a different set of editorial judgments in the selection of the content. One text (Gordon, 1975) chosen for scrutiny included an extensive section on "Myths, Fables, and Legends." Since this genre deals almost exclusively with gods and other superhuman beings and events, a large number of lines are devoted to descriptions of beliefs about the transcendent. When the extensive mythology section was included the percentage of lines devoted to exposure to this phenomenon was 23%. Without the inclusion of this section it was 1%. The company provides as supplement to the student text a Handbook and Key by B. Welch. Analysis revealed about the same percentages as in the student text.

If one were sensitive in this case to the possible pejorative treatment of traditional religious beliefs and value, it would not be evident in the number or lines of religious material. It would lie in the editorial judgment that Judeo-Christian literature, paritcularly Bible events, were gouped along with Greek and other myths and fables. While other myths and fables are accepted as fictional interpretations of human origins and morals, the Old Testament in religious orthodoxy is presented as historical event, not literary

fabrication. The comparison in the Teacher Guide (pp. 164-174) between biblical myths and other myths in explaining human beings seems to ignore this key difference, and is clearly biased against the traditional belief as to the historicity of the biblical narrative.

One noteworthy quote from the student text (p. XVIII) strongly suggests the human origin of all myths:

> Man has always wanted to know how the earth was created, why there are seasons, why there are storms, why there is misery, what the limits are of his power and knowledge. To answer these great questions about himself and the universe he has fashioned superhumans or gods.

In summary, the literature texts examined do contain material which exposes the student to traditional religious values, with amounts varying from negligible to significant, depending upon whether the texts contain writings from earlier periods. Pejorative treatment of Judeo-Christian values and interpretations consisted of under representation of religious views, and in according biblical materials the status of literature, that are no more normative than any other literary expression.

Health/Sex Education Textbooks

This curriculum area, distinguishable from science broadly and biology narrowly, is one in which the teaching materials are very value-laden. They typically (Bucher, 1981) deal with nutrition, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, diseases, and even sometimes first aid (for burns and poisons, for example). The sex education component surfaces under such rubrics as "reproductive systems" or "venereal diseases."

Nutrition as a topic deals with diet, including the traditional four basis food groups. The value dimension appears again and again, in spite of the statement to the teacher in the "Philosophy" section (p. T3) that "the purpose of this text is to provide students with factual information concerning the

mental, physical and social aspects of health" and then adds the criterion "the scientific basis for intelligent self-help preventive medicine." An example of the violation of this principle is in the treatment of controversial issues such as vegetarianism which is treated pejoratively but the text does land on the side of favoring it as a diet. Using the expression "many people" the advantages given are that it is less expensive, less wasteful, and healthier, and concludes that "A vegetarian diet can be very healthful, especially if it permits the use of dairy products and eggs" (p. 162). Directly germane to this study is the single sentence assertion that "some people adopt this diet for religious reasons." This token acknowledgment of the relevance of religious belief is not supported, as the other arguments are, by any explanatory material. Thus the power of religion is under represented, compared to other arguments.

Another text (La Place, 1980) for secondary health class is a more striking example of value-laden material. A comparison of two chapters will reveal the negative and positive treatment of topics. Chapter 9, "Tobacco" is heavily loaded against smoking, linking it aggressively, in over 15 pages, with cancer and heart disease. It ends its treatment with "What to Do About Smoking" and the direct admonition that smokers "must admit that they can and should quit" (p. 271).

By contrast Chapter 6 "Sexual Behavior" has a consistent tone of approval for a wide variety of sexual behaviors. Three kinds of arguments are used to support them:

1. Use of statistics which show frequency of some behavior, like homosexuality (p. 182), masturbation (p. 177) and premarital intercourse (p. 179).
2. Use of "experts say" or "most authorities agree" as a means to lend

support to these behaviors.

3. The pitting of tradition against now, with tradition always shown in an unfavorable light. A striking example of this is the bold assertion that "Although homosexual acts have traditionally been categorized as deviant or unnatural, there is no evidence that they are any more or less so than heterosexual acts." (p. 182)

A strong prejudice against religious and traditional values is evident in the exclusive use of the above criteria. The argument from statistics or frequence of occurrence ignores the religious value dimension as normative, and would be used nowhere else to legitimize an act like lying or stealing. The "experts say" argument is biased because the experts are self-selected and usually the most liberal. The argument which pits the present against past tradition assumes that newer views are more right or socially better. All three criteria are consistent with moral relativism, and are much more than simply information.

Another text (Pengalley, 1974), designed for college level, is an even more striking example of the condemnation of religious sanctions and approval of the frequency criterion. In the treatment of incest and homosexuality the following is inserted:

> Unfortunately, we are inevitably on dangerous ground when discussing sexual behavior because the civil laws governing it are nearly always based on religious dogma, taboos, and superstition, which in turn are compounded by plain ignorance (p. 138).

This follows a specific value statement on incest in which approval is indicated by the assertion that incest:

> perhaps the most universally condemned sexual behavior of all, was considered highly desirable by the ancient Egyptian pharohs. Indeed, Cleopatra was the last of a long line of brother-sister matings, and from all accounts she was no insignificant woman (p. 138).

The frequency of occurrence criterion is used to provide support for what

have been traditionally called deviant and not merely variant sexual behaviors. In a section entitled "Forms of Variant Sexual Behavior" (p. 141-155) homosexuality is shown to be present in a long list of animals, which include fish, birds, lizards, and mammals like the cow. The generalization is made that "so far as mammals are concerned, it is safe to say that in all species that have been studied homosexual activity has been observed and is indeed common" (p. 141). When applied to human behavior the criterion is exhibited when it states "so far as the incidence of homosexuality is concerned, Kinsey estimated that 37% of American males have had some form of homosexual experience during their lives, and that 5% have been exclusively homosexual during their entire lives" (p. 142).

The frequency argument is also used to assess sadism and masochism affirmatively in the following:

> In any case, both sadism and masochism are widespread; as with so many forms of sexual behavior, the seeds are within all of us. Indeed, millions of sexual partners engage in minor sadistic rituals as routine before sexual intercourse (p. 148).

An extensive treatment of pornography combines the frequency criterion in "there is probably not a single man, woman, or child who has not had at least some exposure to pornography" (p. 155) with the appeal to selected experts, and concludes with "all the evidence we have indicates that parents and society worry quite unnecessarily about the effects of pornography, particularly on children" (p. 155). When treating the matter of sexual relations before marriage the author pits tradition over against the frequency criterion, using the latter to discredit tradition in the following:

> In any case, traditional sexual morality simply no longer has much meaning for the young, for recent surveys show that one-half of all females and two-thirds of males experience sexual intercourse before marriage (p. 71).

Negative treatment of religious orthodoxy is revealed in this text in two

additional ways. One is by a case history in which "the adverse effects of religious orthodoxy on sexual functioning in general" (p. 114) is depicted in detail, with pejorative comments that in the given case the partners were "trained by theological demand to uninformed immaturity in matters of sexual connotation...." (p. 115). The case study ends with the comment that "the serious damage caused by various religious indoctrinations to any form of natural sex behavior seems too obvious to warrant elaboration" (p. 116). Another case history is detailed with the same language (p. 122).

The second form of negative treatmet of the role of religious belief occurs in Chapter 13, "Cross-cultural and Historical Aspects of Sexual Behavior." The past is divided into two types of societies: sexually restrictive and sexually permissive. The sexually permissive societies, usually primitive island societies, are described affirmatively; sexually restrictive societies are shown to be those infected by religious beliefs, as shown by the assertion of "the severe inhibitory influences exerted by Roman Catholic and Protestant churches alike, including some newer 'home grown' ones" (p. 242).

In summary, the examination of these three textbooks on health/sex education reveals the consistent taking of sides on controversial matters. Both religious beliefs and traditional morality, when recognized as relevant to the subject, are pejoratively pitted against three substitutes for the transcendent norms claimed in traditional morality. These three call upon statistics (frequency criterion) as determining the norm for human behavior, call upon narrowly selected experts, and consistently assume that newer and recent opinion is superior to earlier and traditional beliefs. Taken collectively these three criteria reveal that traditional and religious values receive a seriously unfair and unbalanced treatment in these textbooks on

health and sex education.

Secondary Biology Textbooks

The BSCS (Biological Science Curriculum Study) texts, four in number, offer a striking example of how values are taught, these being in two related ways: (1) positions taken on controversial social issues arising out of biology (like drugs, the population explosion, human reproduction) and (2) the basic, life-orientation ideology which undergirds the treatment. Social issues when presented in a textbook can never be merely described; they are also interpreted, interpreted as to their seriousness, interpreted by what value judgments are made, what authorities are given as reference points. In all of these interpretive descriptions the authors' ideology is expressed but without being named.

The BSCS series represents a recent aggressive attempt to make biology relevant to learners by insertion of social issues into the discipline (James, 1974; Kieffer, 1975; Someborn, 1972). One study identified eleven "controversial issues and biosocial problems" present in varying degrees in BSCS textbooks (Leven and Lindbeck, 1979). The authors found that all presented some of the issues, but no one presented all. What is notable in Leven and Lindbeck's analysis is the almost total absence of recognition that religious beliefs bear directly on the issues being discussed.

In a different study (McCarthy et al, 1981) the four BSCS books were also analyzed for bias.* While each of the four was published by a different company, all were written under grants from The National Science Foundation with funds appropriated by Congress. They are reputedly used by more than

*The four textbooks are: Biological Science: Molecules to Man, 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976); Biological Science: An Inquiry Into Life, 3rd ed. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973); Biological Science: An Ecological Approach (Rand McNally Co., 1973); Modern Biology (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1977).

fifty percent of American high school students studying biology (Hurd, 1976). Analysis of state adoptions revealed that of the twenty one states requiring an agency recommendation, nine states have approved two of the books, eleven states have approved a third, and twelve have approved a fourth (McCarthy, 1981, p. 125).

The combination of their tax dollar funding, their development by a quasi-governmental agency, and their widespread official adoption and use gives this group of texts a power not accorded many school textbooks.

In analyzing these books the research methodology consisted of summarizing tenets (Appendix A) identified in Humanist Manifesto I (1933) and Humanist Manifesto II (1973). The texts were examined for the degree of congruence between these tenets and the perspectives which they presented. Hundreds of passages in all four demonstrate that the books express several key theses: (1) the origin of the universe through natural processes; (2) the naturalistic development of life from non-life; (3) the evolution of present living forms through mutation and natural selection; and (4) the evolution of human beings from an ancestry common with apes (Bird, 1978). These theses on the face of them contradict traditional religious belief on these points. Both the aggressive explication of these beliefs and the ignoring of the alternative beliefs represent a bias both against traditional religious beliefs and for the viewpoint of secular humanism as expressed in the Humanist Manifestos. One summary "doctrine" in the Manifestos is "Humanism holds to an evolutionary explanation of human origins and development," while another is "Humanism believes that the scientific method is applicable to all areas of human concerns, and is the only valid means of determining truth" (see Appendix A). There is a high degree of congruence between these Manifesto beliefs and the implicit and explicit teachings of these books. When authors incorporate

into their texts views on the nature and destiny of man, and not just the biological data, then they may be said to be ideologically biased. When the bias is identified with secular humanism, then one may conclude that the views are hostile to traditional religious beliefs in these same areas. The bias is more basic than simply underrepresentation of tradítional views but an explicit teaching of those views hostile to it.

In summary, these four texts in secondary biology seem to have shifted from the traditional focus on biological concepts to controversial socio-moral issues. In so doing the possibility of exhibiting bias is increased. In this sample the result has been that traditional grounding of values has not only been underrepresented but almost totally replaced by the values sanctioned by secular humanism.

Civics/goverment Text

This curriculum area is a required course in either junior or senior high in most schools; the textbook selected (American Political Behavior, 1972) has been identified as one of the two current front runners in sales (Le Fever, 1978). It appears on the adoption list of eight of twenty-one states having such procedures (McCarthy et al, 1981, p. 126).

The McCarthy study found a striking and explicit similarity between the creed of humanism and the viewpoint of this text. It is illustrated by the humanist doctrine which says that the scientific method is applicable to all areas of human concern, and is the only valid means for determining truth (Appendix A). Both in the Teacher's Guide and the main text this view is explicitly underscored. The Guide says that one of the most important goals established for the text is "influencing students to value scientific approaches to the verfication of factual claims and rational analysis of value claims" (p. 2). While admitting to some limitations of the scientific method,

"social scientists feel that by emulating the scientific method to the greatest possible degree, they can uncover more of the regularities of human behavior than have previously been set forth" (p. 11).

In the student text the commitment is made even more explicit in the following:

> Scientific inquiry is the best method we have for making decisions about competing alternative hypotheses about reality. It is the best method, because it is the most useful and reliable (p. 56).

This is a close paraphrase of humanist doctrine 2 (Appendix A) and contrasts sharply with the religious and many other disciplines' views on the sources of moral truth.

This explicit commitment leads consistently to several other key beliefs of humanism. Doctrine 4 is that humanism affirms an anthropocentric and naturalistic view of life. This is evident from the way the authors treat other nonscientific approaches to understanding political behavior, one of which is called "the method of Revelation." It is judged to be inadequate because:

> There is no easy way to confirm the claims of those who have experienced revelations. Ultimately, one must accept the word of the prophet on faith or reject his statements (p. 55).

The authors state that they are not opposed to religion, its beliefs or values. Indeed they point out that many scientists are religious people who attend church (p. 53). However, as the previous passages show, revelation claims do not stand up to the test of their understanding of the scientific method and are thus quietly discounted.

One looks in vain in the text for any serious treatment of the institution of the church and its role in society. Ignoring the church does not seem to be an oversight, but a conscious decision to discount the claim that the church offers a normative vision of life that has a bearing on social life and

political principles. The claim of the church to a normative vision of life that has a bearing on society is openly discredited in the section entitled "Beliefs Based on Faith." Here the text says, "A belief based on faith cannot be tested scientifically, since it cannot be confirmed or rejected in terms of what exists" (p. 53).

The irrelevance of religious beliefs and the role of the organized church in political events is particularly striking in the treatment of the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of 1955-56 (pp. 132-139). In a generally sympathetic treatment of the black cause the text tells the story of how segregation was fought and eventually defeated. The fact that Martin Luther King was a pastor and that the black churches played a key role is ignored. Political power and efficient organization are identified as the key factors. Thus the irrelevance of organized religion and theism are effectively taught by ignoring the church's impact on a political struggle in a very specific instance. At best such a representation of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and actions is a serious distortion of the truth.

A different, but related, perspective of the text relates to Doctrine 3, which states that humanism affirms cultural relativism, the belief that values are grounded only in a given culture and have no transcultural normativity. This view appears in both explicit statements and in the book's overall treatment of various dissident groups in American politics. A general explanation of how values are grounded is provided:

> Through the process of socialization, an individual learns what is considered right and wrong political behavior in his society. Through socialization an infant born in the United States of America learns to behave politically in the American way (p. 101).

Whether in a description of the Amish (pp. 91-99), the poor blacks in the Alabama bus boycott (pp. 132-138), the anti-war demonstrators (pp. 129-131,

155-158), or other groups, the beliefs, values, and priorities of any group are shown to stem essentially from the cultural conditioning of the group. Thus the student is taught that values are culturally bound. This contrasts sharply with the traditional religious belief that there are value norms which transcend any given culture.

The evidence suggests that this civics/government text does indeed exhibit bias -- one that goes deep into politics and covers fundamental ways of looking at society and its institutions. By both underrepresentation of the role of religious belief and the church in society and the negative treatment of the grounding of religious belief, this text clearly fails the test of equity -- of fairness.

History Texts

Most states require a course in American history before a student graduates from high school, so all students receive some formal instruction in at least one period of history. The American history text selected (Todd and Curti, 1972) has been approved by ten of the twenty-one states having adoption policies. Estimated sales figures reveal that the text sold 200,000 copies in 1977 alone. It is therefore a widely adopted and respected text -- and one that according to one study unabashedly states its perspective (McCarthy, 1981).

Humanist Doctrine 1 states that humanism believes an evolutionary explanation of both human origins and development. While this book does not address the question of human origins, it does perpetuate notions of evolutionary development by stressing adaptation to an environment and natural selection. For instance, in the sections on American colonization (pp. 54-96) the authors consistently point out that the settlers had to change their manners, language, techniques, and values, for the new environment demanded

radically new emphases and techniques in the lives of the colonists. Either the colonists had to meet the challenges of the frontier or suffer dire consequences. Although undisguised and explicit passages revealing this are not abundant, the book consistently uses the evolutionary model of adaptation and change to a new environment to explain the failures and successes of various leaders and movements, and largely ignores the role of religious belief in shaping that adaptation.

The text also has a strong commitment to the scientific method, not only as a valid means for determining truth in history but also as the only reliable method with which to understand all areas of human concern. First, the authors believe in using the scientific method in the writing of history. The student is told:

> Like the social scientist, the historian uses the scientific mode of inquiry in making his investigation.... In subjecting their sources of evidence to "the most severe and detailed tests possible," historians use scientific modes on inquiry... (pp. 206-207).

Second, the authors favorably portray the advancement of the scientific method in American culture. For instance, the authors highlight the scientific method as it was applied to medicine, agriculture, and chemistry (pp. 556-559, 810-817). Another example of eulogizing the scientific method comes toward the end of the book:

> ... by the 1970's the United States and other technologically advanced nations had the capability -- or could acquire the capability -- of doing just about anything men wanted to do. Stated concisely, through science and technology men had acquired Godlike powers (p. 822).

Finally, the authors assent to the application of the scientific method to other areas of life. One of the striking features of this text is a series of essays, interspersed throughout the book, explaining the nature, methodology, and concepts of selected social science disciplines. Case studies in these areas are also provided that demonstrate how the findings of these

investigations can aid us in understanding the issues and periods of American history. The authors emphasize that the scientific method is a common component of all these disciplines. For example, in the essay on "Sociology" the authors write:

> These are the scientific methods of inquiry developed and refined by sociologists .... The social sciences, then, although they differ greatly in the questions they ask, do not differ greatly in their methods of investigation (p. 94).

In their defense, the authors might contend that they are merely attempting empirically to describe the present state of affairs in the social sciences and history. However, by highlighting and emphasizing the exclusive use of the scientific method in all areas of life, without paying due attention to other methods of determining truth, they are exposing a profound bias in their presentation. Their stance is therefore an epistemological commitment and not merely a commitment to scholarly accuracy.

Another tenet of naturalistic humanism is the belief that values are grounded only in a given culture and are not normative in another culture (Doctrine 3). Such cultural relativism comports with several points made in this text, especially in the sections dealing with the colonization of America. The authors discuss how much the values of the pioneers changed in their new environment; that this happened is understandable and plausible. However, the authors go a step further and suggest that all values are relative to a given culture (p. 93).

Another principle of naturalistic humanism is the affirmation of an anthropocentric and naturalistic view of life (Doctrine 4). In various subtle and perhaps unwitting ways the text concurs with this creedal statement, as the following excerpts illustrate. Viewing history as "the recod of mankind on earth" (p. 1), the authors describe "the freedoms we cherish, the material

comforts we enjoy and the institutions that serve us" as the products of man (Teacher's Manual, p. 2). The history of America is regarded as "the most dramatic and significant story in all human history" (p. 6). (Hardly a scientific fact!) The Constitution is regarded as "the supreme law" (p. 189). In reflecting on the bicentennial, Americans should celebrate that:

> ...through understanding and through participation in the democratic political process, they have been able to solve their problems (p. 843).

(This statement is among other things simply very bad history since the Civil War represented a major failure of democracy to solve a national problem. Indeed, the Civil War was in many respects a conflict over values so discrepant that physical violence was the only "answer.") In the preface to the Teacher's Manual, the authors express their statement of purpose:

> But if we can help our students to face these problems courageously, intelligently and with humility, we may hope that they will create a richer and more meaningful life for themselves and future generations (p. 1).

Man is always at the center of the picture the authors paint. What this picture reveals is more than just an absence of transcendent norms or the Christian religion. It asserts an optimistic faith in the ability of man both to create and shape the world he lives in and to solve his own problems. Like the adherents of naturalistic humanism, the authors seem to believe that man is autonomous.

Another very recent study (Bryan, n.d.) surveyed twenty American history texts approved for use in the Montgomery County, Maryland school system. The results of that study are given in great detail. The author selected some texts for limited approval, but most were criticized for their treatment of the role of religion and religious figures in America. Subtitled "How Public School Textbooks Treat Religion," the study by an ecclesiastical historian

found these representative texts to be a mixture of anachronism, discontinuity, and oversimplification (p. 6) in most of their treatment of religion.

Of several conclusions of significance for this report one is that "there is a remarkable consensus to the effect that, after 1700, Christianity has no historical presence in America" (p. 3). Another conclusion was that in representing Puritan ideas and Puritan institutions, "almost every referrence to Puritanism is negative" (p. 4). The study also found that later religious and ecclesiastical developments (like the Great Awakening) and their influence on social issues (such as abolition, immigration, women's suffrage, and temperance) are either ignored or misrepresented (p. 11-12).

Thus, this sampling of American history textbooks reveals that by both historical criteria and pedagogical principles, they underrepresent traditional beliefs or treat them pejoratively.

Elementary Social Studies Texts

Social studies covers a wide range of subject matter dealing with people interacting with each other and their environment. Because its focus is on persons and their social institutions many value-related questions must be treated, whether in our culture or some other. Some are: Where does the civil government get its authority? What is the family structure like? What role does the church and religion play in the lives of people?

One recent text (Cangemi, 1983) selected was analyzed for the amount of attention given to the religious dimension of life, classifying such treatment into the incidence of (1) mention of devotional religious acts, (2)depiction of persons with an ecclesiastical identity, and (3) moral issues portrayed as influenced by religion. Since this text is a world culture text it discusses many societies, ancient, medieval, and modern. In each culture the role of

religion, its rituals and its beliefs about ethical matters as well as the afterlife was described, usually in purely descriptive terms. Only occasionally are the cultures evaluated negatively, such as when the caste system related to the Hindu religion is called "cruel" (p. 261). Religious leaders, like Gandhi, Confucius, Muhammed, and Joan of Arc are given positive identification.

A striking exception is the final chapter on the United States, treated in twenty pages. References to religious institutions and leaders is non-existent. The only reference occurs in the simple assertion: "Americans are free to worship as they please" (p. 424). Also, the chapter on "The Soviet Union" has not a single line which would state the role of religion in its culture.

While the total percentage of lines exhibiting a relgious dimension in the student text is .029, the Teacher's Edition and the editorial materials, consisting of "Section Review" questions contain even less. No mention of religion occured in any of the review or discussion questions provided at the end of each chapter, thus suggesting to both student and teacher its insignificance in understanding each society.

In summary this textbook for upper elementary students included references to religion in most, but not all chapters, but neither the teacher nor the student is given encouragement to react to or discuss such influence. The underrepresentation criterion would be most evident in the chapters on the United States and Russia.

Analysis of another secondary social studies text by Weitzman and Gross (1974) revealed a greater degree of similarity in the student text and the instructor's guide than the one just described. The percentage of lines devoted to the religious dimension was 7% in the student text and 4% in the

teacher's edition. The religious dimension in the text is often tied to the art, drama, marriage customs, and holidays of a culture. The description is often sympathetic. The manual for the teacher has, for example, the objective:

> Students should be able to respond with understanding and empathy to the myths and creation stories of historical and living peoples and then to the values inherent in these stories (p. 10).

Chapter two: "From Angel to Ape," contains material on the conflict between religious and scientific beliefs about human origin and development. The attempt of remain neutral is expressed in the Guide by the objective that the student should be able to:

> Characterize religious and scientific explanations of creation and understand the values of each in human societies (p. 11).

Thus in general this text is neutral, and sometimes sympathetic, toward beliefs about origins derived from religion, although it typically underrepresents traditional religious beliefs.

A way in which this text is subtly pejorative in its treatment of religion is in associating it with myth and ignorance, and with early primitive cultures, rather than with sophisticated contemporary thinkers in America and the West. Religion and the values derived from it are depicted as an historical phenomenon, powerful in early cutlures, but not a living alternative for today.

One of the most controversial of the numerous elementary school textbook series is Man: A Course of Study (MACOS), designed for fifth grade. The series contains a wide array of teacher's manuals, student texts, student activity sheets, records, films, maps, and simulation games. It was produced in the middle sixties under a grant from the National Science Foundation, which in turn is funded by congressional appropriations. The series is reported to have cost over seven million tax dollars for its development and

marketing (Marshner, 1975). Like the BSCS biology texts, the series thus can be said to represent a more "official" ideology than any published by private publishers.

Analysis of state adoptions (McCarthy, 1981) reveals that only one state, California, includes MACOS on its approved list, a low number probably because of its controversial qualitities. Objections to the materials are many and varied, and not all are relevant for this study. The charges most relevant to our study are that it aggressively teaches both cultural relativism (Doctrine 3) and environmental determinism (Doctrine 6). Much of the controversy centers on the unit dealing with Netsilik Eskimos, the only unit dealing with humans. It is also the longest of the units. It is preceded by units dealing with the king salmon, the herring gull, and the baboon, in that order. One might wonder why units dealing with animals dominate in a social studies program named Man: A Course of Study, but what all the units have in common is a focus on mating habits, infant rearing practices, and family structure in both animal and human social groupings, in order for simple to complex.

There is considerable evidence in both student and teacher materials that MACOS teaches ethical and cultural relativism. Doctrine 3 holds that values are grounded within a culture and have no transcultural normativity. Since the student materials are so varied, their ideological outlook is not readily apparent on the surface. However, a number of social practices in the Eskimo unit, such as cannibalism, wife-sharing, and senilicide (abandonment of the aged) are consistently portrayed as plausible and natural responses to the social situation. The student materials do not contain any negative evaluation, but merely describe these practices. However, the materials for teachers reveal a clearer ideological orientation. A separate publication, Talks to Teacher (Dow, 1970), contains explicit observations that signal

congruence between the orientation of MACOS and the sectarian and creedal formulation of humanism on ethical relativism. The project director states as a major objective:

> Second, we hope that through this course children will come to understand that what we regard as acceptable behavior is a product of our culture (Dow, p. 6).

Elsewhere (Dow, 1975) he has been even more explicit about whether values are transcultural. In describing one of the overall effects of the materials he says:

> For one thing, it questions the notion that there are "eternal truths" about humanity that must be passed down from one generation to the next (p. 80).

The MACOS series conveys the measage of humanist Doctrine 6, that humanism affirms cultural determinism.

When elements of the humanist doctirnes of evolution, cultural relativism, and cultural determinism are present as shapers of curricular materials produced by a quasi-governmental agency, one may well ask whether MACOS does not indeed teach a civic religion which opposes traditional theistic positions on the same issues.

In summary, these texts in social studies would underrepresent religion as a living force today and are pejorative in such underrepresentation, even when neutrally described. The third, the MACOS materials, reveals most clearly the ideology of humanism as the perspective which is offered as the alternative to traditional religion and its values.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

-- American Humanist Association, "A Statement Affirming Evolution as a Principle of Science," The Humanist, January-February, 1977, p. 4.

-- Bird, Wendell, "Freedom of Religion and Science Instruction in Public Schools," The Yale Journal, Vol. 78 (1978), pp. 521-2.

-- Bryan, Robert. History, Pseudo-History, Anti-History: How Public School Textbboks Treat Religion. (Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies in Education, Learn, Inc., n.d.)

-- Bucher, Charles. Health. (New Jersey: Silver Burdett Co., 1981).

-- Cangemi, Jo Ann (ed.). Holt Social Studies: Our World. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983). Also Teacher's Edition.

-- Dow, Peter, "MACOS: The Study of Human Behavior as One Road to Survival," Phi Delta Kappan, October, 1975.

-- Dow, Peter. Talks to Teachers. (Cambridge, Mass.: Educattion Development Center, 1970).

-- Gall, Meredith. Evaluating and Selecting Curriculum Materials. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981).

-- Gordon, E. (ed.) Introduction to Literature. (Lexington, Mass.: Ginn and Co., 1975).

-- Hillocks, George. "Books and Bombs: Ideological Conflict and the Schools," School Review, August, 1978.

-- Humanist Manifestos I and II. (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Press, 1976).

-- Hurd, Paul, "An Explortory Study of the Impact of BSCS Secondary School Curriculum Materials," American Biology Teacher, Vol. 38 (1976), pp. 80 ff.

-- James, M. et al., "Social Issues Serve as Unifying Therm in a Biology Course," American Biology Teacher, Vol. 36 (1974) pp. 346-348.

-- Kieffer, M. "Future Planning: Biology, Society an Ethical Education," The Science Teacher, Vol. 42 (1975), pp. 10-12.

-- La Place, John. Health. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980, 3rd ed.).

-- Le Fever, Ernest (ed.) Values in an American Government Textbook (Washington, D.C.: Public Policy Center, Georgetown University, 1978).

-- Leven, Florence and Joy Lindbeck, "An Analysis of Selected Biology Texts for the Treatment of Controversial Issues and Biosocial Problems," Journal of Research In Science Teaching, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1979), pp. 199-203.

-- McCarthy, Rockne et al. Society, State, and Schools: A Case For Structural and Confessional Pluralism. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981).

-- Marshner, Susan. Man: A Course of Study--Prototype for Federalized Textbooks? (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, Inc., 1975).

-- McFarlund, P. et al. (eds.). Themes in American Literature. (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972). No teacher edition or manual.

-- McNearney, Clayton. "The Kanawha County Textbook Controversy," Religious Education, September-October, 1975.

-- Pengalley, Eric. Sex and Human Life (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1974).

-- Pflug, Harold, "Religion in Missouri Textbooks," Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1955, p. 260.

-- Schmidt, James and J. Conley. "Social Issues Serve as Unifying Theme in a Biology Course," American Biology Teacher, Vol. 36 (1974), pp. 346-8.

-- Sonneborn, M. "Secondary School Preparation for Making Biological Decisions," NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 56 (1972), pp. 1-12.

-- Todd, Lewis and Merle Curti. Rise of the American Nation (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972 edition).

-- Welch, Betty. Introduction to Literature and Teacher's Handbook and Key. (Lexington, Mass.: Gin and Company, 1975).

-- Weitzman, D. and R. Gross. The Human Experience: World Culture Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974). Includes instructor's Guide and key.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF A HUMANIST CREED*

1. Humanism holds to an evolutionary explanation of both human rights and development.

Manifesto I, second thesis:

> Humanism believes that man is a part of nature, and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.

Manifesto II, second thesis:

> Modern science descredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context.

2. Humanism believes that the scientific method is applicable to all areas of human concern, and is the only means of determining truth.

Manifesto I, fifth thesis:

> Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

Manifesto II, Preface:

> We need to extend the uses of scientific method, not renounce them.

Manifesto II, first thesis:

> The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems.

---

*While this summary from Humanist Manifesto I (1933) and Humanist Manifesto II (1973) is the work of the author, a remarkable similar list of six "tenets" of humanism has been identified by John Whitehead and John Conlan, "The Establishment of the Religion of Secular Humanism and its First Amendment Implications," Texas Tech Law Review, 10 (1978).

3. Humanism affirms cultural relativism, the belief that values are grounded only in a given culture and have no transcultural normativity.

Manifesto I, fifth thesis:

> Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.

Manifesto II, third thesis:

> We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest.

4. Humanism affirms and anthropocentric and naturalistic view of life.

Manifesto I, eight thesis:

> Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.

Manifesto I, tenth thesis:

> It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

Manifesto I, fifteenth thesis:

> Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.

Manifesto II, first thesis:

> We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists we begin with humans, not God, nature, not deity. Be we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much we do not know, humans are responsible fo what we are or will become. No diety will save us; we must save ourselves.

5. Humanism affirms an ethic of individualism, one in which personal values take precedence over community standards for behavior.

Manifesto II, fifth thesis:

> The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value.... We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility.

Manifesto II, sixth thesis:

> While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults.... Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to pursue their life styles as they desire.

Manifesto II, seventh thesis:

> To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies.... It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.

6. Humanism affirms cultural determinism, the belief that values in a given society are largely determined by environmental circumstances.

Manifesto I, fourth thesis:

> Humanism recognizs that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded to that culture.

7. Humanism believes in the innate goodness and perfectibility of the human species.

Manifesto I, fifteenth thesis:

> We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.... Man is at least becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.

Manifesto II, Preface:

> But views that merely reject theism are not equivalent to humanism. They lack commitment to the positive belief in the possibilities of human progress and the values central to it.... The humanist outlook will tap the creativity of each human being and provide the vision and courage for us to work together. This outlook emphasizes the role human beings can play in their own spheres of action.