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AUTHOR Bauer, Norman J.
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ABSTRACT

The proper relation between religion and public schooling is addressed in this paper which reviews the secular humanist position and recommends ways to pursue the study of religion in classrooms. This dual purpose is achieved through the following process: (1) reconstruction of an empirical-naturalistic image of reality (Image 1); (2) construction of an image of reflective thought, which is the product of this view of reality (Image 2); and (3) examination of the implications of the two images for the philosophy of education, sociopolitical order, and curricular content, organization, and implementation. The secular humanist position is not foreign to the notion of religious ideas and values. Images 1 and 2 stress the contemporary secular humanists' optimistic belief in human nature and scientific reason for the attainment of human fulfillment. This position is compatible with the stance held by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution for the integration of religious study within public schools. (17 references) (LMI)

SCHOOLING AND RELIGION: A SECULAR HUMANIST VIEW

Norman J. Bauer, Ed.D.

Professor of Education

State University of New York

Geneseo, New York

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Norman J. Bauer
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"... the central humanist thesis that human beings are what they are because of their education rather than because they were created to be that way by God has persisted right through."[1]

"But that which in religion ranks first - namely, God - is, as I have shown, in truth and in reality something second; for God is merely the projected essence of Man. What, therefore, ranks second in religion - namely, Man - that must be proclaimed the first and recognized as the first."[2]

"In determining what ideas are true and what actions sound, Humanism depends upon human reason unaided, and unimpeded, by any alleged supernatural sources. We come nearest to living the life of reason when we approximate most closely the methods of science in our treatment of difficulties and in our solution or attempted solution of problems." 3.

Introduction

The problem of the relation between schools and religion has been a perennial one with man at least since the demise of the Roman Empire. We are all familiar with the role of religion in the education of humans during the scholastic era, with the stress placed on the need for all persons to save their souls. Tillichs monumental work stresses the fact that "Scholasticism was the determinative cognitive attitude of the whole Middle Ages," [4] roughly A.D. 600 to A.D. 1450. We know about the role of the monasteries, of the church, of variou sorts of schools, all of which were devoted to inculcating a Christian faith in the people. We are familiar with the theses of Luther, the advent of the reformation of the scholastic tradition, of the emergence of a variety of sects, and of the conflicts, often bloody and long-lasting, for instance the Thirty Years War, which developed between these different belief systems. And we are aware of how fiercely contested was the advent of systematic inquiry into nature in the early seventeenth century when the method of science became the prevalent way of thought.

This paper is addresed to all who are concerned about the problem of the proper relationship between formal religion and schools, including

teachers, administrators, pedagogical specialists, and, particularly , scholars within the 'Foundations of Education', a field which has been referred elsewhere as **Educology.**[5] In this paper I shall employ these two designations interchangeably.

The title of the paper ought to be modified a bit. It ought to read 'public schooling' rather than simply 'schooling' so as to avoid any suggestion that I am referring to other forms of schools, particularly those which are non-public sectarian institutions. I have no intention of contesting the existence or examining the nature of the genre of schooling which is pursued by those institutions, all of which exist for the primary purpose of furthering the Word and inculcating the belief system in some form of transtemporal, transempirical, supernatural being, many of which are incommensurable with one another, all of which are incommensurable with the secular humanist view. My intention in this paper is to remain solely within an empirical-naturalistic genre of perceiving and working with reality, developing the way in which a secular humanist views the place of religion in our **public schools**, and concluding by recommending reasonable ways in which study *abou* religion in public school classrooms might be defensibly pursued. To achieve this dual intention I shall (1) construct an empirical-naturalistic **image** or vision of reality (to be referrred to as **IMAGE 1**),situated clearly within the pragmatic view of reality as shaped by Peirce and Dewey; (2) construct a **image** or vision of reflective thought which is the product of this view of reality (to be referred to as **IMAGE 2**); (3) develop a number of implications of these two images for three significant categories, **philosophy of education**, **socio-political order** and **curricular content, organization and implementation**; and (4) develop and justify three normative claims about what ought to be done to bring about the integration of these conceptual categories in public school classrooms and which could, if implemented and stressed in public school environments, achieve within legitimate jurisprudential as well as secular humanistic principles the sorts of outcomes ordinarily connected with instruction in the various sorts of dogma which ground formal religions.

Assumptions

This paper is based upon a number of assumptions which I accept unequivocally. Among the most important of these are: (1) the method of

empirical science offers humankind the most reliable means yet devised for pursuing the solution of emerging problems, for shaping and developing new problems, and for determining the nature of human destiny; (2) this method of handling empirical experience is neutral in nature; (3) it is possible to bring religious attitudes and dispositions into public school classrooms via this method without attaching to them the dogma of any institutionalized forms of religion; (4) that secular humanism is, as Gregory has pointed out, "... an intellectual attitude rather than the creed of a religious sect or political party; ... it is not in itself a guidebook to any kind of Utopia;"[6] and (5) Educologists, as well as others who proclaim their commitment to public schooling, have a very real need to apprise themselves of the nature of secular humanism so that they may apply their critical, normative and hermeneutical skills to those prejudiced certainties regarding the Will of God and the Destiny of Mankind which well-intentioned but misguided people with missionary zeal often are prepared to proclaim as vital to the success of public schooiing

Definitions

The position taken in this paper is based on a 'pluralistic', in contrast to both a 'dualistic' or a 'monistic', view of human experience, growth and the pursuit of truth and value. By dualism I mean the view which posits both a natural **and** a *separate* supernatural world; by monistic, I mean a teleological view of the universe, one in which the natural world of matter, *including* human matter, has an inherent ultimate destiny within it. Neither of these views is acceptable to a secular humanist frame of reference.

Certain terms which are employed in this paper would be likely to cause radical secular humanists profound upset because of their historic connection with dogmatic doctrines. Among such terms are god, faith, religion, religious and spirit. It would be well to be clear at the outset about how they have been used. 'Religion' refers to the organized, institutionalized, formal structures which are developed by people who hold differing beliefs regarding the nature of a supernatural realm. Religion includes a large amount of dogma which dominates the belief systems of those engaged in a particular religion and which control their moral behavior.

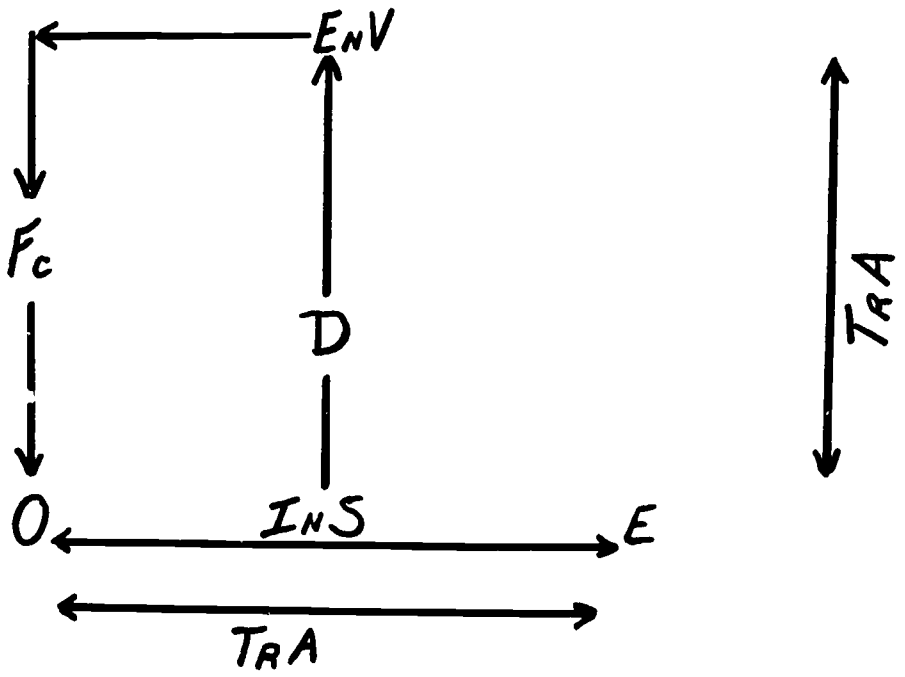
'Religious' does not relate to any particular belief system or body

of dogma related to a supernatural order. Rather, it refers to the attitude, to the disposition, to the manner in which a human being relates to the endemic uncertainties which arise naturally out of one's encounters with the world, 'indeterminate situations',[7] in the words of Dewey, "... which come into existence from existential causes, just as does, say, the organic imbalance of hunger."[8] Religious refers to the orientation one has toward any natural event, any object or idea, any end or goal which is pursued.

'Image' or vision pertains to the unseen, to those intellectual maps or schemata which, while not immediately present, nonetheless exercise control over the planning and execution of behavior, as Dewey stressed when he claimed that "While 'consciousness' as the conspicuous and vivid presence of immediate qualities and of meanings, is alone of direct worth, things not immediately present, whose intrinsic qualities are not directly had, are primary from the standpoint of control."[9]

Empirical-Naturalistic Image of Reality (IMAGE 1)

It should be clear at the outset that, while empirical-naturalism is a theory of reality which is grounded in a naturalism which accepts raw, undifferentiated experience as its ultimate determinate of reality, it nonetheless perceives the world in a way which can be clearly revealed. A diagram will help to show this image of reality.



Explanation of **IMAGE 1**

At the base one finds organisms **(O)**, human beings, related to environments **(E)**. Between these two components one finds what Dewey was so fond of referring to as the indeterminate situation, **(InS)**,the sort of situation which arises when the qualitative aspects of the experience being had by O create a degree of perplexing intensity within O which makes outmoded standard, habitual, tried-and-true ways of behaving, requiring that it be attended to in some deliberate fashion. Unless and until such a degree of perplexity is felt by O the relationships between these two components remains at the taken-for-granted level of consciousness, with little uncertainty emerging as a result. Hence the connecting link which I have referred to as InS is, for all intents and purposes, an interaction **(InA)**. An InA, in other words is a form of environmental relationship which does not create any large measure of intellectual emotional or physical discomfiture in O, remaining, as a result, at the unconscious level of awareness. A few examples may make this point clear: (a) throughout the course of an address, at a close distance, you observe a speaker intently, concentrating on every word spoken. Following the address, during conversation with others, the question of the color tie the speaker wore comes up. You are unable to respond to it, for it was not a part of your purpose during the course of the speech; (b) one is seated in a room with an air filter operating. One remains quite oblivious to the air movement generaed by this appliance unless or until its intensity is enough to elicit a feeling of discomfort. Countless other examples could be given to suggest what I mean by InA. Interaction, then, represents that state of bodily, cognitive and affective orientation which perceives nothing of a malforming sort in the environment.

Now, when the quality of feeling emerging from the relationship between O and E becomes of such an intensity that it breaks through the barrier of taken-for-grantedness, disrupting the status quo, challenging habit and tradition, then O may choose to construct by imagination and projection an end-in-view **(EnV)** which would be pursued in order to deal in an appropriate way with the intensity of feeling which O is experiencing. The act of shaping this EnV is the act of transaction **(TrA)**. Conscious of a malformation emerging in the relation with the environment, O now faces the task of how to resolve the emerging dilemma. A number of strategies, choice options, regarding how to

achieve EnV are intellectually surveyed and assessed. Finally a decision is made about which action to pursue at the outset. Here we see the doing **(D)** component of the paradigm enter in. O does something to the environment, something which is likely to achieve EnV. If successful in achieving EnV, O considers D to have been the right action in the axiological sense, the true action in the epistemological sense, to have been taken. After each D, O obtains feedback, either naturally from the environment itself, or with more formal feedback from others, often with technical devices designed for this purpose.This constitutes the feedback circuit **(Fc)**. Depending upon the success in achieving EnV, O may have to reassess D, considering alternative means to achieve EnV. In this manner O continues to integrate Fc with the continuing intake of raw, undifferentiated experience, the fundamental naturalistic basis for one's being, revising D's in ways which appear increasingly likely to achieve EnV.

An example of such naturalistic activity will help to make this process come clear. Following a recent dental appointment the writer was informed that, because of an unusual split in the root of one of his teeth it would be advisable to have the tooth removed. Returning for the extraction, initial discourse related to the need to have a local anaesthetic administered. Here the EnV of the dentist was related to the need to mitigate pain and stress during the ensuing process. Following this the dentist surveyed the environment surrounding the tooth, considering as he did so a number of strategies he might employ to perform the impending task. Here his EnV was related to the desire to extract the tooth and its roots as cleanly as possible. A strategy was selected and D was pursued. On several occasions he inquired of me whether there was any feeling of pressure or pain, thereby employing his Fc. Continuing D for a few moments resulted in the achievement of EnV, extraction of the tooth. Then, because of the unusual configuration of the split root at the base of the extracted tooth, and because of the possibility that a segment of either stem might have broken off during the extraction process, an exray was immediately taken to acquire Fc about this matter; results negative. Here we see a clear example of the naturalistic paradigm of reality in operation.

Nothing in this paradigm of reality reflects a separation of O from the empirical world of conscious experience or the EnV's which emerges from the tensions created by this naturalistic, ever-changing,evolving

world. Nor is there any **ultimate** EnV suggested by this paradigm.

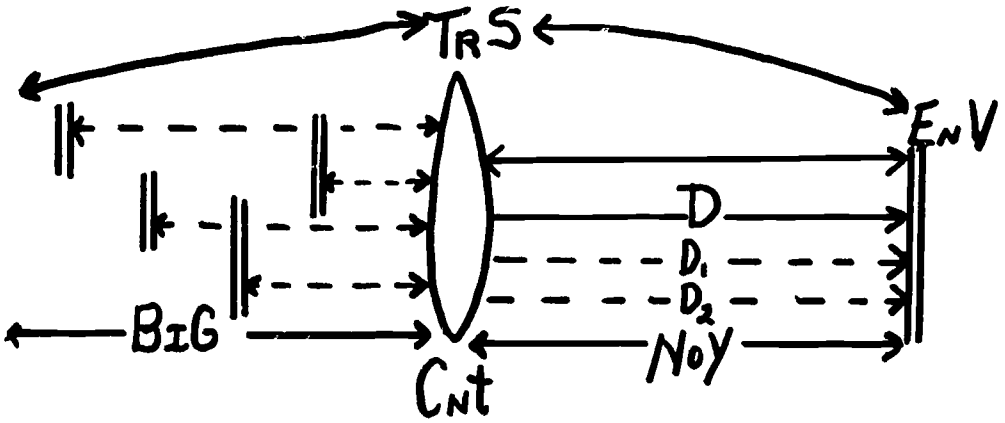
Reflective Thought Based on the Empirical-Naturalistic Image (IMAGE 2)

So very much has been written about reflective thought and the processes which it entails that it would be well, perhaps, to say a few things about just what is meant by this form of thought. Let me begin then with a consideration both of the terms 'thought' and 'reflection.' Three generic forms of throught, **rational**, **productive** and **practical**, have emerged in the Western World during the past twenty-five hundred years. By rationai thought I mean a form of thinking based on the assumption that there is regularity, order, design and form to our universe, that these characteristics, whether they be in the form of apriori truths in the Platonic sense, or a posteriori laws in the Newtonian sense, exist prior to the existence of persons. Whether such truths are pursued by such speculative means most acceptable to the Idealist or the Thomist, as intuition or revelation, with their accompanying standard of 'coherence' which is employed for judging the adequacy of what they are saying about reality and truth, or by such means as those derived from the method of science with its accompanying standard of 'correspondence' as it emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the thought and inquiry of such thinkers and inquirers as Bacon, Galileo and Newton. The assumption underlying each is that there is a systematic, orderly world which can be known by humans, if only they would employ the proper logical or empirical methods to acquire and verify their understandings. In a nutshell, then, I mean by rational the theoretical dimension of thinking about which we employ to structure our understandings about our universe.

By productive thinking I mean the actual making of things, symbols, artifacts, tools, appliances, conveyances, which reflect the way in which humans actualize the potentialities found in various forms of matter, including human matter. This capacity of humans, their homo-faber capacity, is one which begins to reveal itself in higher forms of apes, and which, in humans, enables them to fashion increasingly sophisticated forms of techne' to achieve their purposes.

By reflective thinking I mean our continuous efforts to manage the continuously arising existential uncertainties which emerge in our daily

encounters with the sensory world about us. Such thinking results when the metaphysical view of reality described above is transformed into an action-oriented process. It entails a number of related dimensions which must be comprehended if the entire process is to be understood. The illustration below, and the subsequent discussion, are designed to bring these dimensions into sharper focus.



Explanation of **IMAGE 2**

By transcendant **(TrS)** is meant the wholistic nature of reflective thought, including three sub-categories, the not-yet **(NoY)**, the context **(CnT),** and the biography **(BiG).** BiG consists of experiences retained in long-term memory, whether they be in private non-media or in some mediated form, available for use by a person when relevant to CnT and to NoY. CnT refers to the immediate present, to the uncertainties, the indetermanancies, the hesitantcies, of the particular circumstances in which one finds oneself. Here is where one encounters, via naturalistic phenomenal encounters with the physical and human environment those tensions,disequilibriums, malformations, breakdowns of habit which necessitate rectification if the organism is to retain an integrated degree of well-being and development. NoY refers to the future, to the shaping of personal and social evolution, including the construction of ends-in-view, of aims, which will serve as guidepoints, as standards, for assessing what is to be done in the CnT, both to create the sorts of EnV which should be pursued and to evaluate and assess the sorts of 'doings' which would be most desireable in the pursuit of the EnV.

The Categories

Philosophy of Education

I commence with this category because, while the formal study of philosophy of education seems to have received less and less attention in programs of teacher preparation during the era of competency-based thinking, it remains, at least on the surface, as something to which most schools pay some lip service. There appears, in other words, to be a recognition of its importance, though often it stops at that point. What, then, are some of the basic secular humanist convictions with implications for a philosophy of education. Let me stress three, 'mind', science, and non-terminating growth. Mind to the empirical-naturalistic thinker is non-substantive, quite contrary to the view of such a thinker as Emerson who argued that "there is one mind common to all individual men."[10] "Mind," Dewey claimed, "appears in experience as ability to respond to present stimuli on the basis of anticipation of future possible consequences, and with a view of controlling the kind of consequences that are to take place."[11] Other writers have argued along similar lines. Rene' Dubos, for instance, argued that 'mind' is "... a manner of response by the living organism to the total enrironment - a response which is more or less elaborate, depending upon the complexity of the organism and perhaps even upon its history."[12] To the secular humanist, conceptualizing 'mind' as something which exists, as something which is prior to human encounters with existence, represents a failure clearly to understand the natural development of human kind. Instead, their commitment is one of directing energies toward the construction of mind out of the cauldron of experiential encounters, with no recognition of the existence of a prior mind or world which dictates the development of mind.

In terms of science, two interrelated commitments of the secular humanist need to be stressed. First, the commitment to empirical method with its deep and abiding respect for the natural ability of humans, individually as well as socially, to develop just and workable resolutions to the uncertainties with which they are beset.

Coupled with this reliance on empirical method comes the secular humanists demand for a thoroughgoing adherence to the method of science on all matters, in the interest of intellectual clarity and moral honesty. In this regard the secular humanist adheres to as objective an empirical method throughout as it is possible to pursue. His attitude, as Burtt has pointed out, "... is one of complete and unreserved welcome to any promising values that may come upon our horizon from any quarter... "[13]

Unlimited, non-terminating potential for intellectual,emotional, and social growth represents a commitment of the secular humanist which knows no bounds. Fully aware of the tentative nature of all decision-making, of all knowledge and value forms, this commitment is one which requires each person to live with a large measure of openness to empirical experience, recognizing the fallible nature of all structures of interpretation which are imposed on this experience, ready to pursue what Burtt argues is the "unprejudiced comparison of newly envisaged goods with those which have been previously assumed to be hightest."[14] This constitutes a tough test to be sure, constantly being open to new data, constantly engaging in criticism of current beliefs. On the surface it would appear that nothing from this standpoint remains compelling and stable. What the secular humanist finds, however, is that, while application of views to particular situations will change from time to time, there are, nonetheless, values which tend to remain constant: open-mindededness, the joy of pursuing truth, the creation of aesthetic form, the realization of friendship and love, along with the delight which comes from opportunities to share ones self with others, to cooperate and engage in mutually significant projects. These and other values seem quite stable through time, afford a degree of fertility for handling new experience in fresh and unique ways, and provide the ground for working through the improvement of humankind, human good, in a fashion which reflects, ...deed, a religious bondedness which is neither metaphysical dogma, or a response to other forms of authoritarian traditions, but rather reflects a commitment to those sorts of values which are appealing in terms of **all** human beings.

Socio-Political Order

Let me touch briefly on science, liberal democracy and religion to reveal how the two images of empirical-naturalistism affect the orientation of the secular humanist. Secular humanists are adamant in their commitment to the First Amendment as a whole, particularly the first two clauses of that Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the 'establishment' and 'free exercise' clauses. These represent the cornerstone upon which, in their unequivocal judgment, the United States has grounded one of its most significant moral contributions to the historical emergence and improvement of the human condition. On this matter they can not and will not compromise with anyone. They are

absolutely convinced that formal religion is **not** a necessity for improving the ethical living of people and they are intolerant of any who would argue otherwise. This is not to suggest for a moment that they lack sympathy for the plight of humans in many parts of the world, but they argue that we need to have faith in a view of the world as reflected in Image 1,along with a recognition of the power of human intelligence, individual and collective, to be derived from the application of image 2 to the uncertainties which we confront. The way to bring about an improvement in this form of human intelligence is to provide a strong emphasis on the practice of reflective thinking within public schools. Clearly, such thinking would be impossible within sectarian institutions.

Liberal democracy, by which the secular humanist recognizes the classless nature of the United States which has been achieved by virtue of the emergence of voting rights for all who are eighteen and older, represents something which, to the secular humanist, constitutes a sacred development. Advocates of free schooling, with some now arguing for this at the college level, tax support of public institutions, racial integration, rights of women, of the handicapped, of all segments of our population, are part of the liberal democratic agenda of all secular humanists. Neither image I or 2 represents something which is the private property of any particular group. Humankind, wherever found, has the capacity to think reflectively; hence the potential for building an integrated, global, harmonious world culture.

Recognition of the potential power inherent in scientific method for resolving social problems receives the unremmiting support of the secular humanist at all times . Great stress is placed on the power of this method to affect and improve upon the social policies in effect in all institutions.

To conclude this section, the fundamental commitment of the secular humanist to the socio-political order stems from his frank and unremitting empirical method of facing the world in all of its extreme forms, recognizing the emergence of new, complex and exceptionally puzzling issues, and the need to construct solutions to these problems in ways which promote the highests ideals that humans, individually and collectively, can pursue. This task requires that environments be established which are genuinely and significantly open to all humans. What this means, as Burtt points out, is "a radical reform and redirection of

most of the social institutions under which people now live, so that they will respect rather than flout the ideal of a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good."[15]

Curriculum Content, Organization and Implementation

In this section of my paper I extract ideas from the thought of Philip Phenix whose 1966 book, *Education and the worship of god,* has received far less attention than such a significant text pertaining to one of the most delicate, often treacherous, always difficult realms of instructional endeavor should have been given. Early in this book Phenix says two things which are of utmost importance in understanding the thrust of this paper and the position of the secular humanist regarding the relation of religion and schooling. "A *religious* perspective on anything at all," he argues, "results from seeing the meaning of it in relation to the supreme object of one's commitment."[16] Further along he argues that "... every person has some kind of comprehensive life orientation and some God that he worships, and that this faith and this devotion are exemplified in the conduct of education... (and) "that education in turn creates and transforms faith. A person," he continues, "grows in his life commitments on the basis of his **experience**. Convictions about what is supremely good and true are not simply given to one ready-made. They are hard-won attainments, fashioned out of the continual struggle to discover the meaning of life and to fulfill one's destiny. The quest for faith," he continues, very much within the empirical-naturalistic paradigm of such thinkers as Dewey, "never ends. No one ever achieves finality of commitments, entirely immune to the possibility of modification through new experience."[17] This is precisely the case revealed by each of the two images described thus far in this paper, the metaphysical image of reality and the epistemological image of knowing. We come now to the identification of those categories suggested by these images which have religious connotations and which, if perceived from an empirical-naturalistic view, could integrate religious experience in the classroom in a perfectly acceptable, secular-humanistic fashion.

Here I am going to examine briefly, employing perspectives compatible with both Image I and Image 2, three the five curricular categories developed by Phenix in his work, language, science, and the arts. Within the framework of each of these categories I would like to

argue that it would be possible within the framework of Image I and Image 2 to engage in religious practice while engaged in classroom instruction which would be perfectly acceptable to a secular humanist and clearly within the framework of the first two clauses of the First Amendment.

Let us commence with language. It is almost a truism to suggest that one of the significant capabilities of humans, the one which distinguishes humans in large measure from their ancestors is the power to create symbols, to represent the elements in their world and to employ these symbols in written and vocal form to communicate with other humans. Clearly, in both their images of reality and epistemology, empirical-naturalists recognize the need for a large measure of **respect for language** forms when engaged in communication. Words and patterns of words need to be used with respect lest relationships between O's become strained, even impossible. A large measure of **sympathetic imagination** between O's must prevail if communication is to take place by which all are able to acquire the sorts of common understandings required if uncertain situations are to be managed and resolved in desirable fashion. At the same time, because of this supremely significant human capacity, O's must recognize the power of **conceptual flexibility**, a power which enables them to reconstruct their way of thinking about the world in light of new evidence. This power to shape new understandings, reflecting as it does the acceptance of what Popper has come to call 'fallibilism', reveals a powerful potential outcome of the empirical-naturalistic school of thought.

In terms of science, one is reminded of the struggles early empiricists had in their battles to pursue their interpretation of empirical data in face of the powerful opposition produced the dominant theologies of those days. In a vivid passage Whitehead points out that these early founders of modern science had to have "... the inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles. Without this belief the incredible labours of scientists would be without hope. It is this instinctive conviction, vividly poised before the imagination, which is the motive power of research: that there is a secret, a secret which can be unveiled. How has this conviction been so vividly implanted in the European mind? When we compare this tone of thought in Europe with the attitude of other civilizations when left to themselves, there seems but one source for its origin. It must come from the medieval

insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher. Every detail was supervised and ordered: the search into nature could only result in the vindication of the faith in rationality. Remember that I am not talking of the explicit beliefs of a few individuals. What I mean is the impress on the European mind arising from the unquestioned faith of centuries. By this I mean the instinctive tone of thought and not a mere creed of words."[18]

How else explain the death sentence of Giordano Bruno and the continued efforts of Galileo Galilei to pursue the **truth** about nature in face of impaccable opposition from the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church during the early years of the seventeenth century. This pursuit of truth, the willingness to construct, and reconstruct interpretations about the nature of our world, to continue the pursuit of truth, with no ultimate end in view, is an implicit aspect of each of the images of empirical-naturalism. Stressing the **tentative nature of all truth,** the reflective paradigm retains a large measure of **openness** ar **flexibility**, both characteristics of religiousness which make it possible for continued individual and social growth to occur in a non-terminating way. In addition, the stress in each of the empiricial-naturalistic images on **publicness**, on **brotherhood, sharing, love** and **democratic community,** reveal attributes we have come to associate with empirical-naturalistic thinking which have unmistakeable religious overtones.

Let me cite a portion of a letter written by Galileo, "the creator of the modern scientific method,"[19] on November 29, 1602, to Guidobaldoi, to illustrate each of the foregoing religious attributes:

> "You must excuse my importunity if I persist in trying to persuade you of the truth of the proposition that motions within the same quarter-circle are made in equal times. For this having always appeared to me remarkable, it now seems even more remarkable that you have come to regard it as false. Hence I should deem it a great error and fault in myself if I should permit this to be repudiated by your theory as something false; for it does not deserve this censure, nor yet to be banished from your mind-which better than any other will be able to keep it more readily from exile by the minds of others. And since the experience by which the truth has been made clear to me is so certain, however confusedly it may have been explained in my other [letter], I shall repeat this more clearly so that you too, by making this [experiment], may be assured of

this truth."[20]

Clearly, in the above passage one can find a desire on the part of Galileo to **share** his data and his methodology with another person, an example of what many of us would refer to as **brotherhood**, as well as an implicit measure of **love** for the other person. Each of these attributes represents qualities found in most formal religions, yet it is not necessary to teach the dogma of any religion to bring about habits of thinking and acting of this sort. Indeed, the reflective method of empirical naturalistic thought, if practiced regularly, would bring about comparable tendencies.

In a very revealing passage Bronowski simultaneously reveals three potential religious categories within empirical-naturalism, art, science and history, when he argues that "**art** and **science** are both uniquely human actions... they derive from the same human faculty: the ability to **visualize** the **future**, to foresee what may happen and plan to anticipate it, and to represent it to ourselves in **images** that we project and move about inside our head...."[21] (Emphasis mine). Dewey adds something of a similar nature to the importance of the imaginative, the artistic, when he argues that a gardener, a worker of metals, will not get far in his work if he does not observe and pay attention to the properties of the material he deals with. But if he permits these properties to dictate what he does, he will not get 'anywhere.' Development," he continues, " will be arrested, not promoted. He must bring to his consideration of what he finds the ideal of possibilities not realized. This idea and ideal must be in line with the constitution of the raw material; it must not do violence to them; it must express 'their' possibilities. But, nevertheless, it cannot be extracted from any study of them as they now exist. It must come from seeing them imaginatively, reflectively; and hence it must come from a source other than what is already at hand."[22]

Normative Claims About What Ought to be Done to Bring About the Integration of These Conceptual Categories in Public School Classrooms

Increasingly people across the country are giving consideration to the need to include the topic of religion within the curriculum offered by our public schools. But can this be done in a way which will satisfy the basic principles of secular humanism and also the requirements of the the

U.S. Constitution. What, in other words, is the appropriate place, if any, of religion in the public school curriculum? Let me address these questions by looking at the constitutionality question, by examining the nature of university and college preparation of prospective teachers and by addressing the subject of textbooks and resource materials. Quite simply, the failure to address the issue of religion in our textbooks in any significant fashion represents a failure of scholarship in terms of the role religion has played through the centuries in the life of humankind. Granted, at times this role has been anything but pretty, it has nonetheless been a part of history; to avoid its study is to eliminate a significant segment of understanding from the consciousness of students. Those who engage in the production of such resources for use in schools ought to revise their thinking and make every effort to include as objective an account of religious input into their texts and materials as it is possible to provide. Such input would consider all dimensions of the question of religion.

A second important recommendation has to do with the need to provide all prospective teachers with a measure of religious studies as part of their preparatory curriculum. Preservice as well as in-service teachers need to have particular training and experience with religious materials. As Phenix points out, "every teacher, no matter what his personal religious orientation, needs to understand not only such standard professional matters as the psychology of learning, the methods of organizing teaching materials, and the process of evaluation, but also the nature of faith, its symbolic expressions, and its manifestations in every cultural domain. In order to gain this understanding, he needs the opportunity deliberately to study religion in relation to education."[23]

In addition to such study, those responsible for developing professional curricula for prospective teachers need to take steps to develop formal courses which can be made available for such students. These courses might take such titles as "Church-State Separtation," "Church, State and the First Amendment", "Church and State in Education," "Religion and Human Development," "Religion and the Realms of Human Meaning," "Secular Humanism and Religion" or other appropriate titles. In any event it is very important that every program of teacher education make some sort of effort to enable prospective teachers to acquire sound and valid perspectives about the relation of religious faith and learning, perspectives which meet both the test of the secular humanist and of the

First Amendment.

Finally, it should be stressed that it is constitutional to teach *about* religion in our public schools. It should be clear that, although the school prayer cases before the high court have generated rulings against state-sponsored school prayer and bible reading in our public schools, the Court, in its Abington v. Schempp decision, kept a window open for teachin*about* religion. In that decision, Associate Justice Tom Clark quoted Judge Alphonso Taft over one hundred years earlier: "The government is neutral, and while protecting all, it prefers none, and itdisparages none." He then went on to write on behalf of the Court that " "it might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment."[24]

Summary

It has been my intention in this paper to develop the position of a secular humanist regarding the relation of religion and the public schools. Recognizing that this is never an easy topic to discuss, a topic which can often inflame the emotions of people otherwise quite objective in orientation, every effort has been made to point out that the secular humanist is not foreign to the notion of religious dispositions and values. The secular humanist considers commitment to humanly chosen ends, to a continuous reconstruction of experience in the pursuit of such ends, to be vitally related to a religious life, a life of **reverence for sensory experience**. Recognition of the continuous need to interpret, shape, and manage such experience for the benefit simultaneously of the individual and of the group remains uppermost in the thinking of those with this persuasion. **IMAGE 1 AND IMAGE 2** clearly reveal the secular humanists view of reality and the nature of human thinking which this view of reality entails. Clearly there is **no ultimate end**, no ultimate resting point, toward which either of these images points. Each image stresses what all contemporary secular humanists accept, that "Humanism is optimistic regarding human nature and confident in human reason and

science as the best means of reaching the goal of human fulfillment in this world. Humanists affirm that humans are a product of the same evolutionary process that produced all other living organisms and that all lideas, knowledge, values, and social systems are based upon human experience. Humanists concluded that creative ability and personal responsibility are strongest when the mind ic free from supernatural belief and operates in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy."[25]

Still, they offer the possibility of approaching our existential encounters with religious dispositions, respecting the empirical aspects of those encounters as well as the need continuously to examine taken-for-granted reifications which often encase us in settled ways of interpreting these encounters. In this way secular humanists offer our socio-political world the potential for continuous reconstruction and improvement of the human condition, a potential which, if properly executed, offers encouragement to those who would like to work to improve the religious knowledge and orientation of prospective teachers in ways which meet the test both of the secular humanist position and of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

END NOTES

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American Humanist Association, 7 Harwood Drive, P.O. Box 146, Amherst, NY 14226-0146.