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ABSTRACT

This paper thematizes the significance of postmodernism for the teaching of values in public schools. It elucidates the challenge of postmodernism and develops constructive proposals in response to its significance for teaching values. The operative contention is that a critical engagement with the challenge of postmodernism provides an opportunity for educators today to discuss values with their students. The first section of the paper presents three fundamental themes that are constitutive of the contemporary cultural climate of postmodernism: the rejection of the meta-narratives of history, the denial of objectivity, and the de-centering of the autonomous ego. The second section of the paper examines the practical considerations of postmodernism for teaching values: the necessity of teaching values, the possibility of the development of a single value framework from which to make ethical decisions, the need to integrate value education into all subjects, and the effect of value education on the curriculum. (Contains approximately 96 references.) (SM)

Postmodernism and its Effects On the Teaching of Values in Public Schools

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to thematize the significance of postmodernism for the teaching of values in public schools. The first part of the paper presents three fundamental themes that are constitutive of the contemporary cultural climate of postmodernism--the rejection of the metanarratives of history, the denial of objectivity, and the decentering of the autonomous ego. The second part of the paper is a consideration of the practical considerations of postmodernism for teaching values—the necessity of teaching values, the possibility of the development of a single value framework from which to make ethical decisions, the need to integrate value education into all subjects, and the effect of value education on the curriculum.

The context of contemporary conversation in education is the radical condition of postmodernism. The purpose of this paper is to engage the critical challenge of the postmodern world to discern its implications for teaching values in public schools,

To do this, I propose, first, to elucidate the challenge of postmodernism, and, secondly, to develop constructive proposals in response to its significance for the teaching of values. The operative contention is that a critical engagement with the challenge of postmodernism provides an opportunity for educators today to discuss values with their students.

The Challenge of Postmodernism

The term, 'modern,' designates an epochal moment of history. It denotes a break with the classical and middle ages that preceded it in time. The postmodern, therefore, depicts the break with the modern era: postmodernity signifies its social dimension; postmodernism, its cultural dimension. Although the social and cultural transition and construction of the postmodern condition are distinct, and this paper concentrates primarily on the latter, nevertheless, they are both bound together and mutually reflect and reinforce one another.

Thus, an understanding of postmodernism is possible only in the light of the modern world that it purportedly succeeds. Although there are diverse interpretations as to the developmental significance of modernity, this paper will focus upon the complex convergence of three fundamental themes that are cumulatively cohesive in its constitutive spirit: the epistemological foundation of the autonomous subject, the scientific presupposition of objective knowing, and the metanarrative trajectory of the progressive development of humankind. The author will first elucidate these themes as they appear in modernity, and then revisit these themes as they are challenged by postmodernity.

The Modern Era

The Foundation of the Autonomous Human Subject

René Descartes (1960) in his confrontation with the skepticism of the declining Middle Ages sought to reconstitute the foundations of knowledge beyond methodological doubt to a ground of unshakable certitude:

> ...inasmuch as I desired to devote myself wholly to the search for truth, I thought that I would take a course precisely contrary, and reject as absolutely false anything of which I could have the least doubt, in order to see whether anything would be left after this procedure which could be called wholly certain. Thus, as our senses deceive us at times, I was ready to suppose that nothing was at all the way our senses represented them to be... But I soon noticed that while I thus wished to think everything false, it was necessarily true that I who thought so was something. Since this truth, *I think, therefore I am*, was so firm and assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could safely accept it as the first principle of the philosophy that I was seeking (p. 24).

The *I think, therefore I am* is the principle of epistemological certitude that a human being is a thinking substance capable of knowing the truth and that a human person is an autonomous rational subject. This principle of certitude breaks with the medieval world of faith in authoritative revelation and tradition; it also inaugurates the modern world, the Age of Reason.

Immanuel Kant (1963) in his essay, What is Enlightenment?, characterized the emergent era as human autonomy: *dare to think!* He reinforced the subjective ground of the knowing subject in his influential Critiques. In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant (1965) articulated the constitution of the human mind, not as a static *tabula rasa* but as a dynamic agent. The mind experiences the world, not as passively representing raw sensory data, but as actively engaged in its organization as an intelligible perception. The object within the external world, the thing-in-itself, is represented in consciousness as a phenomenon, the thing in its appearance to us. Knowledge in effect is a constructive act of the human subject. However, the phenomenon constructed, because it is representative of the object in the world, is the same for all human

beings; it is universal in its structural resonance. The mind is wondrously more like unto a lamp than a mirror.

In the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant (1909) grounded the moral imperative in the autonomous human subject. He rejected the heteronomic determination of the moral order as grounded in authority and tradition. He founded the moral order in the unconditional imperative, i.e., the doing of the right thing for its own sake irrespective of the consequences that he mediated in the principles of humanity and universality. The moral norm as rationally determined, neither the will of an authority nor the prescriptions of a tradition, grounds the ethical order in which conscience is absolute.

In the Critique of Judgment, Kant (1952) further elucidates the aesthetic determinants of good taste and natural purposes. In his magisterial Critiques, he formulated an architectonic of knowledge, a consummate transcendental reflection in the articulation and justification of the possibilities and limits of knowing. This becomes decisive in the educational determination of the realms of legitimate knowledge: science as the declarative description of the truth of things as they objectively are; ethics as the determination of the good as what is right and valuable; and the arts as the revelation of the beautiful in its expressive meaningfulness. The knowing, acting and feeling subject is supreme in its reflective self-awareness in the discernment of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Thus, while science, ethics, and the arts are united in the one autonomous subject, they are also separate from one another as distinct ways of knowing.

The Scientific World and Rational Objectivity

Francis Bacon (1960) in his Novum Organum sets the stage for the development of the scientific enterprise through methodical experimentation. Isaac Newton (1995) in his Principia Mathematica Philosophiae Naturalis advanced the cause of science by his perfection of Galileo's Copernican revolution and quantification of the natural world into a lawful mechanistic universe constituted of basic elements and forces. The natural world, no longer regarded as an organism but as a machine, could now be known in its essential structures and functions.

Science operates from an objectivistic perspective. It claims to know things as quantified matter that can be measured, weighed and timed. The human mind is capable of grasping things as they are. Language is capable of representing things as they are. Truth is the correspondence between one's assertions and the objective world about which they are made. One may entertain a detached observation of reality independent of oneself in a universal claim of certain knowledge.

The early centuries of the enlightenment have impressively confirmed the power and productivity of science in its objectified knowing and crafted technologies. The burgeoning development of industrialization and urbanization, the rapid growth of transportation and communication and the complex organization and management of government, business, and services (including education) attest to the productive advancement of the scientific spirit in Western societies.

The Metanarrative Trajectory of Progressive Development

Francis Bacon (1989) projected in his New Atlantis an ideal society of happiness as the work of science. Knowledge is power over nature and it promises the possibility of constructing a new heaven and a new earth. In knowing things as they are and how they work it is possible to shape things as one wills. Science and its technology become the projection of the perfection of human being and his world.

Descartes (1960) in his Discourse on Method devotes a substantial section to Harvey's studies and experiments of human anatomy and blood circulation. His depiction reflects his bifurcation of reality into mind (*res cogitans*) and body (*res extensa).* The mind in knowing the physical world as quantified matter is capable of controlling and manipulating it according to its own designs of repair and renewal.

The project of the enlightenment became the perfection of humankind. What for Augustine (1950) in The city of God was Faith in Universal Providence through the Middle Ages

became translated into secular terms by the *philosphes* as Reason and Progress. The modern world is the house that reason will build in its conviction that human perfection is possible.

The economic and political world will be shaped by rational forces of capitalism in its organization of productivity and calculation of profits and democracy in its public deliberation and universal suffrage of decision making. Freed from the hierarchical tyrannies of religious feudalism and its wars, the enlightenment thinkers projected a universal commonwealth of prosperity and peace. The kingdom of freedom will have come in the dialectical unity of universal reason in history (Hegel) and in the emancipation of human being from the exigencies of nature (Marx).

Jurgen Habermas (1997) in his "Modernity: An Unfinished Project," aptly summarizes the enlightenment project:

> The project of modernity, formulated in the eighteenth century by the Enlightenment *philosophes*, consists of a relentless development of the objectivating sciences, the universalistic bases of morality and law, and autonomous art in accordance with their internal logic but at the same time a release of the cognitive potentials thus accumulated from their esoteric high forms and their utilization in praxis; that is, in rational organization of living conditions and social relations. Proponents of the Enlightenment...held the extravagant expectation that the arts and sciences would further not only the control of the forces of nature but also the understanding of self and world, moral progress, justice in social institutions, and even human happiness (p. 45).

The world of modernity was fundamentally constituted in the formation of the autonomous subject, the scientific project of objective knowing and the utopian trajectory of the progressive development of the human species, a complex convergence of themes, multiple yet cumulatively cohesive in its constitution, but not without ambiguity in an historical realization that would give rise to the challenge of postmodernism. "The Enlightenment spirit, then, was quite optimistic; unlimited human progress seemed possible. To achieve the greatest progress, Locke, Voltaire, and others turned to science. They believed that the scientific method--the open-minded, cautious verification through empirical evidence--would produce the knowledge that would better the condition of all" (Crain, 1992, p. 318).

The Post-modern Era

Although the problematic development of the modern world may be expressed in the emergence of a post-industrial, consumer society, the expansion of communication and computerization (Bell, 1973), the simulacralization of reality and the hyperrealization of the world (Baudrillard, 1988), the canabalization of historical forms into a melange of shapes and styles that constellates into pastiche and shimmering surfaces devoid of depth (Jameson, 1991), the colonization of the life-world (Habermas, 1984-87), the culmination of human self-assertion (Blumenberg, 1983), we will focus upon the three significant themes of modernity in their provocative reaction: the rejection of metanarratives, the denial of objectivity and the de-centering of the autonomous ego.

The Rejection of Metanarratives

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) in his Postmodern Condition defines the meaning of postmodernism, admittedly in simplification, as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). The dominant ideal of reason and its progressive realization has become deeply challenged. The advance of science that sought its justification in grand stories has become questionable.

The legitimacy of certain knowledges as secured in these metadiscourses has collapsed whether that of the dialectics of the spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the liberation of the rational subject, the emancipation of the worker from the exigencies of nature or the creation of wealth.

The ambiguities of rationality have become evident: the transition from a mechanistic to organic society in the division of labor in its pathological inducement of *anomie* and suicide (Durkheim, 1933), the transformation of a social order from a community of intimates to a society of strangers (Tonnies, 1957), the disenchantment of the world by rationalization and its expansion into the social construction of an economic system in its calculative determinations and a political system in its extensive bureaucratization become an iron cage (Weber, 1958) and the indomitable fragmentation of modern life (Simmel, 1976). The critique of rationalization

culminates by the "administrated society" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972), one-dimensional man (Marcuse, 1964) and a world reduced to the technological (Ellul, 1980) into the horrors of Auschwitz and Hiroshima.

The forms of professional practice (e.g., medicine, psychiatry, and criminology) and of institutional development (e.g., hospitals, sanitariums, and prisons), so evidently acclaimed as progress, have also been exposed in their rational legitimations for their hidden exploitative and oppressive dimensions (Foucault, 1965, 1973, 1977). The other of reason (i.e., all that is non-rational) has been contained, constricted, occluded, marginalized, alienated, exterminated. The advance of reason as essentially grounding a progressive development of the human enterprise in all metanarrative discourses is profoundly questioned in its instrumental and calculative transactions in a crisis of fundamental legitimacy and credibility.

The Denial of Objectivity

The critique of objectivity originates in the critique of Descartes's mind-body split. Martin Heidegger (1962) rethinks the *Cogito* as the ontology of human being as fundamentally being-in-the-world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) reformulates the notion of human subjectivity as essentially embodied and Paul Ricoeur (1966) reconstructs a philosophy of the will in human being as an incarnate subject.

The critique of objectivity had been radicalized in the nihilism of Friedrich Nietzsche (1976). Knowledge is a demonstration of the will to power. Ultimately there is nothing but what human beings construct out of their subjective inclination and projections. Reality is a rhetorical configuration of the imagination under the impact of one's own desire for one's ownmost possibility for being. Truth is a fiction. Religion is an illusion. Morality is a lie. Power is decisive. Art is positive. And ultimately all that is solid melts into thin air...

Wittgenstein (1968) in his Philosophical Investigations proposed reality as a universe of 'language games' reflective of respective 'forms of life.' This in effect radically conditions objectivity, truth and meaning to concrete contexts of diverse worlds. Language is a social

phenomenon; truth, a social construction embedded in, and reflective of, diverse ways of being together.

The realization of human claims to knowledge as conditioned by inseparable material conditions and situated in inextricable circumstances of life was significant in the emergent claims of subjugated knowledge for recognition whether for reasons of gender, sexual orientation, race, class and ethnicity.

The human sciences, despite the attempt to assimilate its methodology to the empirical sciences as an ideal, had always recognized a subjective factor in its knowledge claims in so far as the object of its study was the human subject in its inaccessible drives, indeterminable freedom, imaginative construal of meanings and elusive purposes whether historical, social, political, economic, psychological or religious. The physical sciences which had claimed a pure objectivity and certainty of the disinterested observer, however, began to call its assumptions into question. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle of an essential and invincible indeterminancy, Einstein's theory of general relativity and Hubbel's constant/law, in which measurement of the flow includes subjective conditions of the knower, challenge the pure objectivity of scientific knowledge. Quantum, complexity, and chaos theories call into question the mechanistic structure of the universe in its atomic simplicity.

Thomas Kuhns (1970) in his Structure of Scientific Revolutions reads the history of science as a series of paradigm shifts. A paradigm is a social construction of reality which reflect "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community" that prevails in a given scientific community at a given time in history (p. 175).

Postmodern science is anarchic:

> The only principle that does not inhibit progress is: anything goes... Without chaos, no knowledge. Without a frequent dismissal of reason, progress...For what appears as 'sloppiness', 'chaos',or 'opportunism'...has a most important function in the development of those very theories which we today regard as essential parts of our knowledge...These deviations, these errors, are the condition of progress (Feyerband, 1988, p.23ff.).

The distinction between the scientific, the ethical and the moral domains of knowledge have become questionable. The interrelatedness of all forms of knowing open up the project of learning to an interdisciplinary mode of understanding.

The Decentering of the Autonomous Subject

The mastering ego of the autonomous self was radically called into question by Freud (1989) for whom the conscious ego struggled to mediate between the conflict of the unconscious *id* and the *superego*. The project of maturation as the process of enabling *ego* to become where *id* once was is forever postponed in the realization that the *ego* is radically incapable of becoming master in its own house.

Jacques Lacan (1977) reasserts Freud's original indication of the impossibility of self-integration against the ego-psychologists in his depiction of the developmental phase of the mirror stage. The infant views itself in a mirror as being a unified whole, whereas in actuality it is a fragmented body-ego of disruptive desires, of being as in bits and pieces, *un corp morcelee,* a tragic, illusory misrecognition.

Martin Heidegger (1971) rethinks human being as being with others (*mitsein).* He recognizes the profound interdependence of human being. The house of being is language. It is in language that human being comes to his/her self. It is language that one is shaped to be who on is. This ontological lingusitic communality of human being is the historical ground of Hans Georg Gadamer's (1975) interpretive community in whose tradition human being is constituted. This recovery of the essential social interdependence of the human person as constituted in the

tradition of particular historical communities is invincibly foundational in Charles Taylor (1989) and Alisdair MacIntyre (1981).

Jacques Derrida (1982) engaged in a deconstruction of the totalizing myth of the Western philosophical tradition in his critique of the metaphysics of presence as structured in hierarchical logocentrism. His disruption and displacement of the bipolar super/sub-ordination of reality into being/non-being, presence/absence, reason/emotion, male/female, white/black, etc. opens a world of *differance*, of infinite difference and endless deferral.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1959) construed language as a binary opposition of internal signs. Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) deployed linguistic construction of reality as paradigmatic of myths in the structural dissolution of the human subject: "I believe the ultimate goal of the human sciences to be not to constitute, but to dissolve man" (p. 247).

Michel Foucault (1972) interprets the genealogical foundations of human subjectivity as the systemic construction of discursive practices. He depicts the human project in light of its ultimate disappearance:

> One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a restricted geographical area--European culture since the sixteenth century--one can be certain that man is a recent invention within it... And that appearance was not the liberation of an old anxiety, the transition into luminous consciousness... It was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge. As the archeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.
>
> If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared...then one can wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn into the sand at the edge of a sea (1970, pp. 386-7).

The critical challenge of postmodernism to the enlightenment project in its foundation of the autonomous subject, the scientific determination of objectivity and the progressive realization of a master narrative is dramatic in its confrontation: the rejection of metanarrative, the denial of pure objectivity in the physical sciences and the dissolution of the autonomous ego.

The Implications for the Teaching of Values

These aspects of postmodernism present challenging opportunities and threatening possibilities for education today. As we begin to consider the implications of these aspects of postmodernism for the teaching of values, it is important to acknowledge that there is no comprehensive understanding of what postmodernity is. We are still in its early stages and, therefore, the ideas and concepts are still evolving (Doll, 1993). Secondly, it is illogical to believe that postmodernity, with its attack on the meta-narrative, is itself a meta-narrative that is logical, consistent and all embracing. "Utilizing disparate trends--paradoxes, anomalies, indeterminacies--is one of the greatest hurdles traditional educators and curricularists have in accepting an eclectic and diverse post-modern pedagogical frame" (Doll, 1993, p. 129).

Donald Willower (1996) argued that it seems to him unlikely that the problems that schools face on our times will be eased by those who advocate postmodernism. He believes that they live in a world of "political extremism and censorious rhetoric... far removed from the practical day-to-day concerns of school administrators and teachers (p. 362)." There are some who argue (Rust, 1991; Escolano, 1996) that postmodernism is not a new era, but simply an extension of the modernist era. In this paper, postmodernity is not treated as either a new or a better era than modernity. We simply argue that an understanding of that which is proposed as postmodernism will enable us to assess our own assumptions and to make improvements in our schools.

In the remainder of this paper practical considerations will be discussed: the necessity of teaching values, the need for teachers to both enter and to invite others to enter into the public dialogue, to integrate value education into all subjects, and the effect of value education on the school.

The Necessity of Teaching Values

Children need to be taught values. They are adrift is a sea of conflicting opinions. Their world is a constant barrage of media competing for their attention. This is the generation of acting, with the promotional ideal that an active life is the only life worth living. When children

in class are confronted with the horrors of the holocaust and the reality of nuclear weapons, in the streets with the scourge of AIDS and the violent death of friends, when suicide is one of the chief causes of death among adolescents, it is clear that things have not turned out as well as could be hoped. The modernist promise that things not only will, but are, getting better has turned out for many youth to be an empty promise. Children need to learn that they are not alone. They need to learn that there are values greater than themselves to which they may commit their lives. This commitment adds meaning to life. With the collapse of the autonomous ego and the ensuing ennui, students need today to be taught how to reflect on the meaning of life and to discover the values that give meaning to that life.

Secondly, children in schools are exposed only to secular humanism, the new metanarrative. Many public schools are indoctrinating children into values that are contrary to the values of most religions:

> Life is about self-fulfillment and the fulfillment of satisfying one's personal desires rather than about learning to love God and neighbor; value claims, including moral claims, are relative and subjective rather than objective and absolute; freedom is essentially the absence of restraints rather than about the result of obeying God (or, for Plato, conforming one's life to the Beautiful, the Good, and the True); autonomy ought to be the chief goal of education rather than, as traditional Jews and Christians believe, heteronomy (living under the authority of God) (Baer & Carper, 1998, pp. 34-35)

These are the values that students are learning today. Although they cannot impose our own values on students, they can express to students a multiplicity of values from different perspective, especially as they converge on certain core values. Modernity rejected belief in a higher power as unscientific; it could not be empirically proven. Postmodernity provides believers with an opportunity to bring their beliefs into the public dialogue as one perspective among many. While the effect of this in the public dialogue of schools may be the relativism to which Baer and Carper refer, it does provide the opportunity for the believers' views to be heard. According to Browoski (1974), educators should encourage students to ask questions. "It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are

not here to worship what is known but to question it" (p. 160). It is tempting to consider students who question authority as being limited in intelligence or maturity, the reality is that they may be among our brightest and most mature students (Novak, 1970). While some religious teachers may find it disconcerting to have basic beliefs challenged by the questions of students, postmodern does provide the opportunity for these teachers to challenge the tacit value assumptions of their students, especially the secular humanism so current in many schools.

The Public Dialogue

As education seeks credibility as a profession, the development of a knowledge base has been of considerable interest (Hoy, 1994). Consideration of what knowledge to include in this base presumes that knowledge can be arranged hierarchically, with some knowledge deemed to be more essential; that knowledge determined to be more essential should be included and knowledge determined to be less essential should be excluded; that there are certain criteria by which to judge what is more essential; and that one person or one group is able to make this determination.

In the modernist perspective, truth was seen as absolute, universal, and necessary; and the more that knowledge reflected this truth, the more essential that knowledge was. Since this truth created "a priori structures" by which such a determination could be made, it was possible to develop the criteria. In every field there existed a group of experts who could determine in an objective fashion what was essential. In this paradigm of education, experts create knowledge, teachers deliver that knowledge to students, and students gather and store the knowledge (Caine & Caine, 1997). In postmodernity, all knowledge is relative; equal pluralism has replaced the hierarchical structure of knowledge and there is no body of knowledge that is absolute, universal, or essential. Instead of seeking a singular, or limited, identity based on exclusion of that which is non-essential, people seek the broadest possible fields to include as much as possible. The new paradigm of education is built on the beliefs that each individual creates meaning from many different sources, rather than being created by experts; that the goal of education is the

development of knowledge that is interactive, rather than the transmission of knowledge; and that is through real-world application that knowledge is acquired, rather than through gathering and storing (Caine & Caine, 1997).

Since people construct knowledge on the basis of their own beliefs and experiences, truth yields to opinion, beauty to taste, and goodness to preference; there are no criteria on which to make such determinations, nor can the determination of one group be better than the determination of another. Since postmodernism praises multiplicity and difference, how can we define what is core, and what is peripheral?

Many postmodernists argue that the meta-narratives of history have been oppressive. They have been developed by the dominant Euro-centric culture and have paid little attention to the voices of those who have been dominated (Welch, 1990). Few writings by women and even fewer by those from the Third World are contained in anthologies of classic readings (e.g., Shafritz & Ott, 1992). Lomotey (1995) asked: "Why, I wonder, should I be engaged in this discussion when other African American scholars are not? Where is the utility in my participation?" (p. 302). What many hold to be essential writings, others view as the influence of the dominant culture, and these postmodernists argue that the voices of others, the dominated, must be heard.

Giroux (1992) warns that the voice of those on the margins of society must be heard. Often people study minority cultures from the perspective of the dominant culture. Diversity is then "promoted in order to be narrowly and reductively defined through dominant stereotypes" (p. 58). Postmodernists argue that those on the margins of society must be brought to the center so that their own voices and histories might be heard. Since only those on the margins of society can speak for those on the margins, anthologies need to be expanded to include these voices.

So that the voices of the oppressed may be heard, postmodernists encourage the development of dialogue. The dialogue is a very ancient form of teaching. In contrast to his pupil, Aristotle, who wrote treatises explaining truth as organized and comprehensive, and from

which emerges a singular vision of the true, Plato wrote dialogues in which truth continues to emerge as the dialogue is maintained. Each member of the dialogue contributes to a philosophical vision that remains dynamic, as long as the dialogue continues, and represents a plurality of viewpoints.

According to Paulo Freire (1973), thinking is dialogic. No one can say "I think," because thinking involves more than a subject and an object. "Any act of thinking requires a Subject who thinks, an object thought about which mediates the thinking Subjects, and the communication between the latter, manifested by linguistic signs" (pp. 136-137). Thinking occurs when *we think*, and seek to reach mutual understandings (Pietrykowski, 1996).

In this postmodernist conception, the object is not the end of the act of thinking; rather, it is the mediator of the communication. Therefore, knowledge is not communicated from one subject to another (Freire, 1973); "...knowledge is produced rather than received" (Giroux, 1992, p. 156). Students are no longer passive receptacles into which knowledge is poured, but are active in their own construction of knowledge. Teachers are realizing that students construct different things in different ways, and so must adapt what they teach and how they teach to a wide diversity of styles.

As Giroux (1992) argued, not all postmodernists reject meta-narratives. They reject only those metanarratives that are viewed as "totalizing, essentialist, and politically repressive (p. 67). Metanarratives are helpful in understanding the broader relational and historical contexts in which people find their lives, their communities and their cultures. Some are more helpful than others. But no single metanarrative explains all. "Legitimate metanarratives ought to open the world to individuals and societies, providing forms of analysis that express and articulate differences and that encourage critical thinking without closing off thought and avenues for constructive action" (Rust, 1991, p. 616). He believed that there are certain values that are indispensable for human life. Students should be challenged to examine the sources of their own beliefs against the measure of these indispensable values (Giroux, 1983).

What is important in order to understand a reality is to study it in its culturally situated context of time and place, rather than in isolation from its specific context (Efland, 1996). The role of the teacher is to encourage the students to give voice to that experience which is rooted in their time and their place, and to affirm the students as people who matter and who have legitimate insights. The teacher is to help the students to acquire their own learning (Giroux, 1992). Students from minority cultures learn best when the experience is rooted in and respects their own cultures rather than challenging them to accept the majority culture's experiences (Pena, 1997).

In recognizing that students' perspectives are not those of teachers, and that the perspectives differ among the students, teachers can no longer can point to their experiences as normative (Gallagher, 1996). Students bring to class their own experiences, and will interpret the information presented to them in a lesson from their personal perspectives, which may differ considerably from the perspectives of their teachers. According to the postmodernists, we cannot demand that students adopt our perspectives as teachers; we must respect their perspectives and their knowledge, even when we deem them to be partial and distorted. We know this because we recognize that our own perspectives and knowledge are also partial and distorted, bounded by our experience and our culture. Thus, we dialogue with students in order to find what is common in our thinking, and what differs because it is rooted in our personal histories as professors and students. As educators we have a covenant "not only to respect the knowledge of the learner, but to respect the various pathways to knowledge which learners traverse" (Starratt, 1997, p. 43).

Our attempt to respect these various pathways should not mean that we reject all that has come before us in the modern era. Cathleen Loving (1997) opined that we cannot reduce the science of the past "to the same category with myth, mysticism, belief, personal agendas, or commonsense notions of the world" (p. 439). The voice of science, as well as the voice of the

teacher, should be respected voices in the dialogue; but respected as these voices may be, they must not drown out the other voices, especially the voices of the minority on the margin.

An Integrative Approach

Postmodernity questions whether ethics and character should be separate courses in the curriculum. Knowledge and learning are viewed by modernists as bits of datum that can be arranged hierarchically and logically into sequential packages (Caine & Caine, 1997). This sequence proceeds in a series of uniform steps, each of which is a composite of the preceding steps. There is an assumption that development is progress and that progress is gradual and sequential (Doll, 1993). This is a logical extension of the modernist view of the world--a composite of discrete entities. In the postmodernist world, the quantum world, the subatomic particles are not things, are not discrete entities, but are "waves of probability ... possibilities of interconnections (Garmston & Wellman, 1995, p. 8). These new spheres are the everyday situations in which the students find themselves (Giroux, 1992). We cannot segment our students into a variety of roles any more than we can segment our own selves into roles. As teachers we must be willing as whole persons in the role of educators to meet whole persons in the role of students (Starratt, 1997).

Values must be integrated into every course. According to Marsden (1996), theology was the centerpiece of the first colleges in the United States. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were founded in order to prepare men for ministry. Then, as the liberal Protestant colleges developed, theology became a separate department and then a separate school, and eventually was marginalized. If values are not a part of every course, then students will perceive that values are not important (Buetow, 1989).

In every subject we need to ask value-laden questions. In science, we need to ask whether the ability to do something gives us the right to do it (e.g., nuclear weapons). In history we need to challenge the students to see that, although winners write history, sometimes the losers were fighting for higher values. In English we need to confront the realization that our

anthologies are often filled with the works of European men. Even in physical education, students need to learn that life is a value and maintenance of life is a value. We need to ask continually what kind of society it is that we hope to achieve through education and what virtues will sustain that society.

In the modernist perspective, there is a curriculum to be covered, and the teacher's goal is to fit the students into that curriculum. Experts have the task to create knowledge, teachers deliver that knowledge, and students are required to store that knowledge. The emphasis is on planning and control (Caine & Caine, 1997). This was the basis for Ralph Tyler's (1949) famous rationale:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain.?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained. (pp. 3-4)

This approach, according to Doll (1993), is based on a mechanistic and closed system of knowledge, which is limited to the discovery and presentation of that which is already existent, the already known. Goals drive the curriculum. The teacher is the driver, often of the goals established by others; "the student becomes at best a passenger, at worst the object being driven" (p. 28). The goal, continuing the mechanical metaphor, is the transmission of knowledge.

For the postmodernist, the goal is to mold the curriculum to the students, to fit content and the skills to the learners and their needs. The goal of the curriculum is to be transformative, to enable the students to first examine and perceive the world, and then to better understand themselves. Instruction and activities are not pre-planned but are determined by "student interests and the ways in which understanding is being developed in the student's mind" (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 235). Learning occurs as a result of the activities and experiences that engage the mind of the student (Dewey, 1933/1960). This is in contrast to Tyler's modernist perspective, in which educational ends are pre-determined (Doll, 1993).

Postmodernists are concerned about the manner in which students construct knowledge

from multiple perspectives and the multiple intelligences and learning styles which the students employ in constructing that knowledge (Caine & Caine, 1997). Students have different learning styles (Dunn, 1996). They possess multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993). We can determine their psychological type and assess their preferred style of learning (Hanson, Silver, & Strong, 1986). No longer can we presuppose that the lecture method is the most efficient way to achieve learning. That method developed at the universities of the Middle Ages, where only the professor had the text; professors read and lectured, students listened and took notes (Clark & Starr, 1996). Today, fewer and fewer students are aural learners. We now have a generation of students who grew up with television sets and video games. They are visual learners and we need "to use the visual learning skills of this generation and create a more productive learning environment" (Ferrera, 1997, p. 25). Multi-media and computer-enhanced classrooms provide us with the opportunity to teach in radically different ways in order to appeal to a variety of learning styles, of intelligences, or psychological types. A postmodern discussion of values needs to focus on the values implicit in the curriculum itself.

Multiculturalism has replaced a monological vision of reality. Of particular concern in this dialogue are the biases that we bring to our studies. Do teachers desire autonomy, or is autonomy a masculine ideal, associated with the greater power and privilege that men's role are accorded in our society? (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990; Books & Slattery, 1997). Already many social studies text are being rewritten to include the viewpoints of Native Americans, African-American, Asians, Africans, Hispanics, and women, and our history of education texts need to be re-written to include these perspectives. Concern is expressed about gender bias in the study of mathematics and the sciences, and toleration of alternate lifestyles has become a controversial element of many health curricula; we need to be concerned about the continued influence of these biases in our profession. Noddings (1999) noted that discussions of the our human origins do have to be limited to discussions of creationism versus Darwinism. Rather the discussion of Darwinism as a part of a movement that includes Herbert Spencer, Carl Vogt, Paul

Mobius, and Edward Clark, can be used to raise questions in students' minds concerning biases such as women are inferior to men and non-Europeans are inferior to European, as well as the bias that the poor deserve to b poor because they are deficient in character and constitution.

The Values of the school

Finally, what are the effects of value education on the school? The school as a value-laden institution is not above moral scrutiny. Since students spend much of their life in schools, schools are a major part of their world. If we encourage students to examine their world from a critical and moral perspective, then by necessity students will examine their schools, especially the hidden curriculum. Anyon (1983), for example, wrote that "differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work" (p. 165). Apple and King (1983) argued that often children of lower social class as early as kindgergarten are trained to be members of an efficient work force, with its emphasis on obedience.

There is a mountain of evidence of gender bias in schools (AAUWEF, 1998). Books and Slattery (1997) aver that many requirements placed on children by schools (e.g., third person writing, distrust of intuitions, reliance on fact and not opinion) are a perpetuation of a patriarchal society).

Are there other values, especially in the hidden curriculum, which must be critically examined? As noted earlier, children have different learning styles. Are those learning styles differences being respected in the curriculum of the school? Since parents trust educators to do what is in the best interests of their children, and educators know that children learn differently, don't teachers have a moral obligation to teach show that all students can learn (Dunn & Denig, 1998). Capper (1998) suggests that such educational reforms as cooperative learning and site-based management are dangerous, unless one examines the end values of the reform. Hitler inspired cooperation and was very efficient. But his end value was not justice. In addition,

Carlson (1998) noted that the greatest threat to our democracy is not the free discussion of ideas, but two metaphors—student as work and school as efficiently-run business. Students need to challenge the implicit assumptions underlying their education.

Peter Senge (1990) argues that we can not understand something when we only understand the parts of it. We need to understand the whole, what he calls "system think, and how each part of the whole affects the whole. As noted above, minor changes in one part of the system can produce drastic changes in the whole system. Only by understanding how knowledge in one area is related to knowledge in another area, and how learning in one field interacts with learning in another field can we come grasp the interconnectedness of all reality. Many elementary and middle schools are already organizing programs of study that are multi-disciplinary. Some high schools and colleges are also moving in this direction with generic liberal arts courses.

In the modernist, sequential perspective on curriculum, learning is cumulative, and what is learned is measured in terms of the number of units covered and the number of hours in which teaching has occurred. Progress toward a degree is measured in terms of the number of units covered and mastered (Doll, 1993). School curriculum guides and state-mandated standards prescribe a certain number and a certain sequence of courses that must be accomplished for a diploma to be given. Syllabi for courses similarly determine competences to be mastered for a grade to be given. Because postmodernists propose that learning is transformational, they challenge educators to find ways to move beyond a mechanistic, accumulative measure of progress toward a grade and a degree and to find measures that take into account transformations that have occurred.

In the postmodernist perspective, time is an active ingredient that is necessary for development to be transformational and not merely cumulative; "transformations occur as interactions expand, increase, mature--over time" (Doll, 1993, p. 37). Because learning is transformational, we can not consider that a unit of study is ever accomplished. To cover a unit

of study (e.g., academic honesty) in ninth grade will yield some. As a student matures and gains additional experiences, insights will likewise mature and develop. Doll (1993) proposes that students be given the opportunity to re-visit units already covered so that students may gain additional insights and go into greater depth.

The challenge will be whether this recognition and incorporation of the postmodern themes of plurality, constructivity, and interconnectivity will enable a richer educational experience.

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