Millard Clements
J. Lucien Ellington and Tadahisa Uozumi
Jane J. White
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Book Reviews

A Note from the Editor

Economic Education in Japanese and American Secondary Schools

Searching for Substantial Knowledge in Social Studies Texts

"Every Vietnamese was a Gook": My Lai, Vietnam, and American Education

A Note from the Book Review Editor

American Memory, 900 Shows a Year, Sandbox Society, The Nations of North America, The Handmaid’s Tale
TRSE is the official journal of the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies. Published quarterly, it is a general review open to all social studies educators, social scientists, historians and philosophers. A general statement of purpose, and submission, subscription and advertising information may be found at the end of the journal. © 1988 by the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies. All rights reserved.
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The editors wish to express special appreciation to the following scholars who served as referees of manuscripts submitted.

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Theory & Research in Social Education, ISSN 0093-3104, is published quarterly by the College & University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies. Membership is $20/year, $15 of the dues are allocated for subscription to Theory & Research in Social Education. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to: Theory & Research in Social Education, 3501 Newark St. NW, Washington, DC 20016.
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March, 1988

A Note from The Editor:

This is the first issue of *Theory and Research in Social Education* under my editorship.

At the present time we have received nineteen manuscripts for consideration. All manuscripts are either in the process of review or they have been reviewed. Seven manuscripts have accepted or have been accepted pending revisions suggested by reviewers. Reviewers often tend to be quite critical; there are more negative than positive reviews.

Several manuscripts were concerned with economic notions; economics appears to be a vital concern to a number of CUFA members. Some manuscripts were statistically oriented. A few manuscripts had an historical perspective. A few manuscripts were concerned with citizenship education. Some manuscripts appeared to arise from doctoral research. There was some diversity of perspective among those who shared their manuscripts with *TRSE*.

It is my hope that during my editorship *TRSE* will publish many different kinds of scholarship concerned with social studies education. Publishing recent doctoral research is quite appropriate for the journal. Scholarship dealing with women's issues, racial issues, environmental issues, economic issues, peace issues, political issues, historical issues and or philosophical issues of social studies education are all appropriate for this journal. Scholarship concerned with curricular materials and instructional activities have an important place in this journal. My intention is to include rather than exclude different perspectives on research and scholarship.

We all share a common faith that something we think of as research is at least one way we should seek to improve social education. We, as social studies teachers, want our students to come to some understanding of society and history, to be effective citizens, to avoid the aberrations of racial, religious and sexual prejudice. Through social studies education we hope to contribute to the development of a saner, more just, less polluted, less violent world.

Whatever this hope and aspiration, the actual world we live in presents a darker aspect: savage conflicts in Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, and East Timur. Torture, assassination, arms races, world wide environmental degradation and homelessness, poverty and despair in many United States cities are everyday realities. Often torture, assassination, and environmental degradation are claimed to be prog-
ress, or the defense of democracy or a struggle for social justice. The truths of our planet are infinite and many of them are painful. On our troubled planet what is wisdom in social studies education?

What research is vital to our professional concerns? What should we seek to know that we do not know? About social studies education? About human society? About being human? About the conduct of social inquiry? What research is relevant to our highest aspirations and yet grounded in an awareness of our human condition? What issues should be explored in TRSE?

It is a poignant reality of our professional life that often our research has not addressed these issues. We tend to be concerned with applied studies that involve variable manipulation. There are the usual dependent variables that may be measures of cognitive learning, moral development, teaching success or citizenship. The independent variables may be instructional styles, teacher characteristics or learner characteristics. Attention is given to changes in behavior. The aspiration is for "significance" when significance means statistical findings that are not attributed to chance. Research in social studies education is frequently imagined to be a social engineering effort to induce changes in the behavior of students. It is research based on assumptions about education, human beings and scholarship that are rarely acknowledged and rarely examined.

Research begins with imagination of one sort or another. When we engage in research we sometimes imagine education to be formal arrangements for passing information and skill from one group to another. We can say that teachers impart information or critical thinking skills or democratic attitudes to students. Some teachers may be said to be more skilled at this than others. The passage of skills and information from teachers to students may be facilitated or impeded by the abilities of students to learn. Some students are said to be more intelligent than others. In the past, some students have been said to be "culturally deprived" or to have other characteristics that are said to affect student performance. Schools, according to this form of imagination, impart to children with individual differences, fixed bodies of information in somewhat standardized ways. Associated with this image of schooling are cultural presuppositions about students.

Students are usually imagined to be aggregates of individuals with different mental capacities and social characteristics that may be associated with measures of verbal skill, social class, locus of control and gender identification. Variables that may be said to be characteristic of isolated individuals are imagined to be important rather than the social linkages and social connections that appear to form the basis of all social life outside of schools.

What appears to be an engineering style of imagination has absorbed the energies, the talents and the wisdom of several generations of social studies
researchers. Yet, it has not provided a really solid knowledge base for social studies education. Social studies continues to be a troubled aspect of the school curriculum. Our imagination has not expanded our horizon of understanding of the social basis of social studies education, it has not deepened our awareness of how society works in changing families, schools and communities, it has not confronted the traumas of social life at home or among the community nations.

We have most frequently imagined education to be an industrial process for the production of behaviorally defined educational objectives. But other images of education are possible:

*Social Education and social research relating to social education can be imagined to be social activity or simply social life.*

If we imagine social education to be social life in school, then we can seek to discover and to describe how school realities are socially constructed.

A social imagination would suggest that every school is engaged in problematic social activity. Any school is a social institution with a complex past and an equally complex contemporary political reality. Discovering what schools are and how they work becomes a responsibility of those with social as opposed to technological imagination. The questions posed about schooling by Murray and Rosalie Wax in Murray L. Wax, Stanley Diamond and Fred O. Gearing's *Anthropological Perspectives on Education* illustrate one social perspective on research in social education:

What kind of social roles emerge within the schools, among the teachers, the pupils, and the lay public associated with the schools? What social forms emerge within the context of the schools? Are there typical cycles of reform associated with the school system, similar, perhaps, to the reforming movements within the Catholic Church of which some culminated in the founding of religious orders and others in the rise of new sects? What happens to children within the schools; how are children transformed into pupils?

When imagination directs that school life is a focus of research, a very interesting array of research interests can develop. How is social knowledge constructed in classrooms? How is the social order of school life constructed? If we imagine schools to be living social arrangements, or cultures, then efforts to "improve" social studies education could be said to be deliberate efforts to change school cultures. How does one, or to what extent can one change a culture? What does it mean to reform a culture? Can cultures be reformed? How does cultural change occur in school? If we imagine schools to be places where social life takes place we can explore questions that do not easily arise through an exploration of technological imagination.
If we imagine that education is some sort of industrial procedure, then we can seek the quality controlled production of specified behaviors and attitudes among students with designated social characteristics. The Tyler Rationale can be seen as the conceptual basis for education that is imagined to be some kind of technological production. We can do research that is based on this engineering conception of education. We can also imagine that education is a paradoxical undertaking that provides opportunities for human liberation as it inculcates social blindness and nation state loyalties. Human life itself involves paradox, irony and too often tragedy. It can be no surprise that we can imagine that schools are places of paradox, irony and tragedy. Schools can be imagined to be places of hope and opportunity but they often can be shown to be places where dreams die.

A scholarship that addresses these complexities can add to the ways schooling may be understood. The improvement of education may depend to some extent on accurate information and analysis of realities of school life. This improvement of social education may come perhaps through technological imagination and perhaps through social imagination, but ultimately the improvement of education is a moral and a political issue. Our planet is burdened by the aftermath of Vietnam, racial tensions, environmental stress, religious conflict, social injustice and homeless families. The fundamental challenge of social studies education is not scientific, not technological, and not managerial. We face moral and political choices that science and scholarship can at best clarify. We can choose to engage in moral and political struggle for that which we think is important. We can seek to clarify the limitations of science as a basis for improving social studies education? There is a role for scholarship in the improvement of education and there is a role for personal witness and moral struggle. One contribution of scholarship may be to clarify the difference between the two.

Those with technological imagination and those with social imagination should explore the limits of the vision of education that they find congenial. There can be no one right way to think about education but there may be a number of different fruitful ways to address social issues of social education today.

I would like to invite all readers of this journal to join in the exploration and clarification of ways we may seek to make social studies more honest in its treatment of issues, more significant in its intellectual challenge, more important in the lives of students.

Millard Clements

Editor, TRSE
Economic Education in Japanese and American Secondary Schools

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Economic Education in Japanese and American Secondary Schools

Social Education in Japanese schools was limited to history and geography until the end of World War II. In 1946 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Monbusho, adopted with some modifications the American social studies curriculum model (Nagai, 1979). Content from several social sciences, including economics, now constitutes a major part of the curriculum of all Japanese schools.

Recently in American schools there has been rapid growth in economic education mostly within the social studies curriculum. In 1969 only four states mandated some form of economics instruction before graduation (Clark and Barron, 1982). As of 1986, 27 states now mandate some economic education with 15 states, including California and New York, requiring a high school economics course before graduation (Brennan, 1986). There is also a national support system for economic instruction including, but not limited to, the Joint Council on Economic Education and its 260 affiliated university and college centers for economic education.

Substantial economics content is now also present within the Japanese school curriculum. At the secondary level there are two required social studies courses with major economics components and a third popular economics-oriented social studies elective (Ministry of Education Courses of Study, 1983). The Japanese Research Council on Economic Education, a professional organization devoted to improving economics instruction at the pre-college level, is modeled after the American JCEE.

Because substantial economic content is now included in the schools of both nations, and Japan and the U.S. share enough important characteristics (democratic governments, high living standards, mixed market economies) cross cultural comparisons should enable educators to better understand what actually constitutes economic education in each society.
The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast economic education in American and Japanese secondary schools. Economics in the curricula, textbooks, select characteristics of teachers responsible for economics instruction, and the level of emphasis teachers assign to economic concepts were examined.

In 1947 Japan adopted the 6-3-3 grade system with lower secondary schools (7th-8th-9th grades) and upper secondary schools (10th-11th-12th grades) (Katsuta and Nakauchi, 1985). Japanese students must pass examinations in order to enter virtually all public and private lower and upper secondary schools. However, there are schools to fit the ability levels of almost all Japanese youth since over 93% (Department of Education, 1987, p. 39) of Japanese attend and graduate from upper secondary school.

Students in Japanese lower secondary school and first year upper secondary students take the same subjects. Although there are vocational upper secondary schools, where second and third year students take a ratio of academic and vocational courses quite similar to American high school vocational tracks, 70% of all Japanese high school students now attend academic high schools which feature a college preparatory curriculum (Katsuta and Nakauchi, 1985).

Economics in the Curriculum

The Japanese school curriculum, in contrast to the United States, is national and is established by Monbusho. Japanese teachers closely follow Monbusho-provided curriculum guides for each subject. The present social studies curriculum went into effect in lower secondary schools in 1981 and in upper secondary schools in 1982.

The two required social studies courses with large amounts of economics are ninth grade civics and tenth grade contemporary society. Many university-bound students also take the social studies elective, politics-economics, in upper secondary school. The length of each of these courses is the 10 1/2 month school year.

Economics constitutes one third of the Japanese civics curriculum guide. Economic concepts in civics include: the functions of prices, savings, and taxes; consumer education; occupations; trade unions; employment; and the role of business and government in the economy (Ministry of Education, 1983).

Economics constitutes 20% to 33% of the first year required upper secondary school course, contemporary society. Economic concepts in the contemporary society curriculum guide include: comparative economic systems; technology; the internationalization of the Japanese economy; national income; the business cycle; and balance of payments. Several economic concepts in civics are included again in the contemporary society curriculum guide. Economics in the curriculum guide for the upper secondary school elective, politics-economics, is largely a more in-depth version of
contemporary society and is approximately 50% of the course content (Ministry of Education, 1983).

In the United States, despite considerable evidence that junior high school students are developmentally capable of learning economic concepts, economics is usually not part of the junior high school curriculum (Davis, 1987). Economics in American schools is most often taught as a separate subject to high school juniors and seniors. Figgins and Young (1987) found in a national survey that a separate high school economics course was offered in 156 (90%) of the 173 schools from which responses were obtained. Of these 156 high schools, economics was offered as a semester course in 144 (76%) and as a year-long course in 12 (24%). Because of the dominant role of high school economics in United States schools, the American data in this study were drawn exclusively from the self-contained economics course.

Japanese and American Textbooks and Economics Content

In American schools, the textbook is in practice, the most important component in the social studies curriculum (Shaver et al., 1979). In Japan Monbusho guides are the curriculum, and textbooks are little more than detailed reflections of the guides, since Monbusho officials must approve all texts before use in schools.

Japanese secondary social studies textbooks are compact when compared to American texts and are almost always completely covered by the teacher during the academic year. Despite their size Japanese texts usually contain a higher percentage of quantitative economic content than American economics textbooks. Rohlen (1983) found 93 pages of detailed charts and graphs in one 217 page politics-economics text. The economics sections of civics, contemporary society, and politics/economic textbooks include graphs on rates of industrial output over the last 70 years for the five leading world economies, consumer prices, wholesale prices, wage demands, wage settlements, and world imports and exports for leading industrialized countries over the last 20 years.

American educators (Becker et al., 1981) who were part of a joint Japan/U.S. textbook study project were particularly impressed with the sophistication of the economics content in Japanese textbooks. An American college professor with the project remarked, "My university students would find it very difficult—the level of economic material for example is superb . . ." (p. 44) while an American high school teacher added, "A student who studies this textbook carefully will come out with a pretty good education in political economy—better I think than in social studies as offered in the U.S. . . ." (p. 47).

American reviewers in the aforementioned study also found Japanese social studies and economics textbook content to have more ideological diversity than American texts. Japanese authors were more likely to include
such topics as unemployment and labor relations. The absence of controversial issues in American high school economics has been well documented. Romanish (1983) and Ellington (1986) found in separate studies that controversial issues such as unemployment and the economic status of minorities tended to be ignored in economics textbooks. Japanese textbooks also devote more space to international economics than American texts. Authors of U.S. high school textbooks typically include a chapter on international economics near the end of the book.

**Economics Teachers: Selected Characteristics**

Although majorities of secondary economics-social studies teachers in both countries are men, evidence suggests a much higher percentage of males in secondary social studies in Japan than in the United States. While 32% of U.S. respondents in a 1982 national survey of economics teachers were women (Clark and Barron), in 1986 only 26% of all secondary teachers in Japan were female (Ministry of Education, 1987). Although Japanese gender-subject matter statistics are unavailable, most likely women represent less than 5% of Japan's secondary social studies teachers since in most secondary schools women teach home economics and physical education (Rohlen, 1983).

American and Japanese secondary social studies teachers responsible for economic instruction have less training in economics than in other disciplines such as history and political science. In the United States Clark and Barron (1982) and Bragaw and Hartoonian (1983) identified lack of economics content background of secondary teachers, while improving relative to the past, as still a problem. Johnson and Shima (1986) also identified lack of teacher economics training as a major problem in Japanese economic education. Interviews by the authors of this study in 9 different schools of 15 Japanese civics and contemporary society teachers revealed that the maximum number of economics courses any teacher had taken in university to be four.

In one respect lack of economic content background is even more serious an impediment for Japanese than American teachers. The long Japanese school year prevents teachers from returning to university for summer work, while in the United States increasing numbers of teachers are taking advantage of summer economics courses offered by university centers for economic education.

Although Japanese secondary social studies/economics teachers have less opportunity for continuing education than their American counterparts, the light daily class load of Japanese secondary teachers relative to American teachers is a major advantage for the professional development of Japanese social studies/economics teachers. Because in Japan all secondary teachers have, even with a five and one-half day week, from 3 to 10 fewer classes a week to teach than Americans, it is not unusual for secondary teachers to
conduct research and publish in their field (Rohlen, 1983). For example in one good, but not elite, Japanese upper secondary school included in this study, an annual academic journal is published, for which in 1986 three social studies teachers wrote articles.

One effect of highly-structured national curriculum guides and textbooks, university-entrance examinations focusing upon memorization of large amounts of information, and cultural beliefs that support authoritarian roles of teachers, is the well-documented (Rohlen, 1983; Duke, 1986; White, 1987) tendency of Japanese secondary teachers to almost exclusively use expository methods, emphasize the acquisition of facts, and teach by the book. While in the U.S., fact-oriented, textbook-centered teaching has been found in several major studies to be widespread in secondary social studies, more instructional diversity appears to exist in American classrooms than in Japan.

Approximately ten hours of observations of Japanese civics and contemporary society classes in seven different Japanese secondary schools revealed no information that would challenge Rohlen’s 1983 assertion in reference to pedagogy in Japanese secondary classrooms that "... efficiency is high and inspiration low" (p. 319). Japanese teachers in the civics and contemporary society classes the authors visited covered a large amount of factual economic content, by lecturing, writing information on the chalkboard, and referring students to textbooks. Teacher questions to students were largely confined to the fact and comprehension levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, and student questions to teachers were extremely rare.

Nevertheless, the level of economics content in Japanese secondary schools from a quantitative perspective was sophisticated compared to what an observer might ordinarily encounter in an American classroom. Ninth and tenth graders studied the effects of the rising yen upon the economy, exchange rates, and the economy of Japan since World War II.

The following case study, illustrative of typical Japanese teacher and student behavior observed in this study, should assist readers in better understanding differences in styles of social studies/economics teachers in the two nations:

Civics class, Lower secondary school Tsu, Japan:

The bell has rung and the 43 ninth graders, the boys in summer uniforms of white shirts and black pants, and the girls in gray skirts and white blouses, rise and bow as the teacher walks in the room. The teacher bows back, everyone is seated, and the lesson begins. The topic is the effect of the recent rise in the yen’s value upon the Japanese economy. The teacher asks students to name possible good and bad effects of the yen’s rise. The teacher calls upon two students who rise to give answers. Two other students volunteer answers. Although one or two answers indicate confusion over the economic effects upon Japan of the rising yen, there are also cor-
rect answers such as cheaper overseas travel for Japanese and lower profits for Japanese exporters.

The teacher, after taking only a few minutes to ask the question, lists economic effects of the rise of the yen upon the chalkboard. All students in the class appear to be diligently taking notes. Several effects listed are: cheaper prices for Japanese abroad, increased difficulty for Japanese exporters, small Japanese companies going bankrupt, increased difficulty for foreigners to travel in Japan, and less difficulty for Japanese who wish to purchase foreign goods.

The teacher uses the current yen-dollar situation to introduce his lecture on exchange rates. The students follow the teacher with their textbooks and refer to several exchange rate graphs and tables upon his suggestion. All textbooks are open on the left side of student desks while notebooks are on the right side of each desk. Other than the opening ten minute dialogue between the teacher and students there are no questions in the remainder of the 50 minute period.

During the lecture the teacher explains several concepts that would be considered very sophisticated for American ninth graders, including the difference in fixed and floating exchange rates. The teacher writes important points on the board in colored chalk which all students copy down. Although it is hot in the classroom and noises from a nearby P.E. class drift in, all students appear to pay attention.

Teacher Ranking of Economic Concepts

The nature of economic content that is actually taught in Japanese and American secondary schools can be much better understood through systematic efforts to discover the relative importance teachers in the two nations assign to specific economic concepts. In a study to determine which economic concepts American high school economics teachers thought important, Figgins and Young (1986) administered a Likert survey comprised of the 22 major concepts in the Joint Council on Economic Education 1984 Master Curriculum Guide Basic Framework and the concept “Consumer Economics” to a randomly selected national sample of teachers (N = 173). Respondents categorized each concept based on the importance they placed upon teaching it in their economics classes. The five ranking categories ranged from very important (5) and important (4) to unimportant (1).

Procedures

The survey was translated into Japanese and administered to a randomly selected national sample (N = 88) of Japanese civics and contemporary society teachers. In order to monitor effects of translation upon understanding, respondents could identify any concepts not understood in the surveys. Also, 10 teachers in interviews were asked to give oral explanations of the concepts.
The data, as in the Figgins/Young study, were organized by rank order and percentages. In order to determine teacher rating of the relative importance of a concept in the classroom the number of respondents ranking each concept as very important (5) or important (4) were tabulated and converted to percentages of the total sample. The percentages of respondents rating each concept very important or important were then added. For example 82 (93%) Japanese teachers assigned the concept, Supply and Demand, a rating of 5, and five teachers (6%) gave it a rating of 4. Thus 99% of the teachers were categorized as considering Supply and Demand important.

As in the American study if identical percentages were obtained for two concepts, the concept that received the larger percentage of 5's was ranked one place higher. Although the same percentages of Japanese teachers assigned 5 and 4 ratings to Balance of Payments and Competition, Balance of Payments was ranked higher because a larger percentage of teachers rated the concept "very important" than was the case with Competition. The same occurred with the concepts Market Failures and Scarcity. The results of American and Japanese teacher concept ranking are presented in Table 1.

In order to examine possible differences between the proportion of American and the proportion of Japanese ranking a given concept the authors of this study used the percentages presented in Table 1 in a test of proportions (Ferguson, 1976). A statistically significant positive z score indicates a higher proportion of American teachers ranked a given concept as important, while a negative z score indicates a higher proportion of Japanese teachers ranked the concept as important. The results are presented in Table 2.

Findings

Since the economic systems of Japan and the United States share more similarities than differences it is not surprising that six out of the ten most important concepts in each set of rankings were the same with Supply and Demand ranked as the most important concept in the list by both Japanese American teachers.

The three concepts for which American teachers awarded high ratings compared to their Japanese counterparts, and for which significant z scores were obtained, were Opportunity Costs and Tradeoffs, Scarcity, and Economic Systems. In the case of Opportunity Costs and Tradeoffs there was limited evidence that a few Japanese teachers had problems with the translation. However, this concept most lends itself to classroom instruction in which case studies and other analytic procedures are utilized. Johnson and Shima in their 1986 study of economic education in Japan concluded that economic analysis did not fit the Japanese model of teaching. The substantial pressure Japanese secondary teachers encounter to prepare students for university-entrance examinations, in which the amount of material
memorized is much more important than higher level thinking, may very well account for the low rating of Opportunity Costs and Tradeoffs.

While a discussion of scarcity may be found in the beginning of virtually every American economics textbook, the concept does not appear in the Monbusho curriculum guides for civics and contemporary society. However the concept is assigned a prominent place in Monbusho guides for both 5th and 6th grade social studies. Japanese teachers, based on the results of this study, do not consider scarcity important in junior high or high school.
Of the concepts for which substantially higher American rankings were obtained than Japanese, the concept Economic System is perhaps of most interest. Even though the Japanese have a private enterprise-oriented economy, historically the Japanese have been much less concerned than many Americans with defending the ideological aspects of free enterprise. This cultural difference is supported by the comparative textbook study and by the low relative ranking assigned the concept by Japanese teachers.

Three of the four concepts that Japanese teachers ranked substantially higher than American teachers, and for which statistically significant z scores were obtained, were macroeconomic concepts. Macroeconomics, with its broad policy implications, is far more controversial than microeconomics. The study of fiscal policy, much of which focuses upon the debate over the role of government as economic manager, and, obviously, unemployment, are extremely controversial topics. While Japanese teachers considered these concepts among the ten most important in the survey, American teachers assigned the two low positions.

Economist James K. Galbraith (1987) strongly criticized the Joint Council on Economic Education curriculum developers for ignoring the relationship of macroeconomics to politics, competing macroeconomics theories, and controversy in general within macroeconomics. As cited earlier, reviewers in the Japan-United States social studies textbook study also criticized American textbooks for omission of controversial viewpoints in political economy. The high ranking Japanese teachers assigned to macroeconomic concepts relative to American teachers seem to support the contention that in Japanese economics instruction more attention is given to economic controversy than is the case in the United States.

Balance of Payments and Exchange Rates, with the largest variance in

<table>
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<tr>
<th>American - Rank</th>
<th>Japanese - Rank</th>
<th>z-Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Cost</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarcity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Systems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese - Rank</th>
<th>American - Rank</th>
<th>z Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance of Payments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Policy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significance at the .05 level
** = Significance at the .01 level
rank and the second largest z score of all concepts, is evidence of considerably more attention being paid by Japanese than American educators to at least this one international economics concept. Our observation is also supported by the findings of reviewers of economic content in social studies textbooks in Japan and the United States.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the "Points for Special Consideration" in the curriculum guide for contemporary society, Japanese teachers are asked to remember in their instruction that all social phenomena are related (1983, p. 25). It is ironic that the original American social studies model seems more in evidence in Japan in such fused courses as the two examined in this study than in the United States. While in most American secondary schools a variety of courses are included under the name social studies, at the secondary level most courses do not integrate the social science disciplines. This is certainly true in the case of economics in American high schools. With substantial evidence that students can learn economics effectively at an earlier age and in other courses than a senior high school economics class (Davis, 1987), the case appears strong for integrating economics concepts into other American social studies courses other than senior high school economics.

A lack of economics content is a problem for teachers in both nations. While Japanese teachers, because of lighter teaching schedules, can daily better develop subject matter knowledge than American teachers, Japanese teachers could probably benefit from the type of university-based continuing economic education program common to the United States. The fact-oriented teaching that occurs in Japanese secondary schools poses problems in almost all content areas and only significant reform of the examination system will bring about changes in the content emphasized and pedagogical styles of Japanese secondary teachers.

It is disturbing to American educators who prefer a treatment of economics that accurately reflects the academic discipline to find that ideological concerns apparently cause greater avoidance of controversy in secondary economics in the United States than in Japan. Also, with the increased internationalization of the United States economy, it is troubling that American economics teachers and textbooks authors seem indifferent to international economics when compared to the Japanese. Cross-cultural research utilizing the Figgins/Young survey or a similar instrument in other capitalist democracies such as West Germany or Canada might further inform American educators as to the influence of culture and ideology upon economics instruction in countries that are similar to us.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of the National Council for the Social Studies and other organizations, ties between American and Japanese social studies educators seem extensive enough that the time is propitious for an extensive cross-cultural study in which the economic knowledge of American and Japanese adolescents is compared and contrasted.
Endnotes

1. A test of proportions tests for differences between two samples proportions. Z-scores were obtained for each concept in the survey. The following formula was used:

\[
Z = \frac{\bar{P}_1 - \bar{P}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\bar{P}(1 - \bar{P})}{N_1} + \frac{\bar{P}(1 - \bar{P})}{N_2}}}
\]

Where \(\bar{P}_1\) = % of American teachers ranking a concept as important and \(\bar{P}_2\) is the corresponding % of Japanese teachers. \(\bar{P}\) = combined % of respondents from both samples for each concept. \(N_1 = 173\) (U.S. sample) and \(N_2 = 88\) (Japanese sample). Critical values for significance at the .05 level were \(z = 1.96\) and for the .01 level, \(z = 2.575\).

2. While statistically significant z scores were obtained for five other concepts (U.S.-Economic Incentives, Market Failures, Consumer Economics), (Japan-Inflation, Supply and Demand) the two groups assigned virtually the same respective rank orders to all five. The three concepts yielding significant positive z scores were ranked by both groups in the bottom 50% of the survey. Because the fused Japanese courses allow less time for economics, lower percentages of Japanese than Americans agreed upon the importance of concepts ranked low by both groups. In the case of Supply and Demand and Inflation the opposite was true. These concepts were ranked at the top of the survey by both groups. Apparently the higher degree of Japanese than American consensus with regard to these two concepts are a result of a clear articulation in the Japanese national curriculum as to what economic content is most fundamental.

References


Searching For Substantial Knowledge In Social Studies Texts

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Criticism of U.S. Social Studies and History Textbooks

Social studies textbooks are under fire again. This time the big guns from the left and the right, from outside and within the educational community are all setting their sights and hammering away at these large obvious targets. Although the criticisms vary, there seems to be general agreement among academic reviewers writing in *Theory and Research in Social Education* in the last decade that social studies textbooks currently in use are biased, bland, superficial and dull. (Anyon, 1979; Barth and Shermis, 1980, 1981; Clements, 1981; Romanish, 1983; Miller and Rose, 1983; Hahn and Blankenship, 1983; Larkins, Hawkins and Gilmore, 1987). A close reading of these articles, however, reveals that the authors hold differing assumptions about the nature and form of the knowledge that should be found in a history or social studies textbook.

The purpose of this article is to develop a description of the nature and form of knowledge that should be sought in social studies textbooks. This description of what I call substantial knowledge can be used by academic reviewers and teachers as a framework for analysis of social studies texts and for dialogue about what is happening in social studies lessons. I begin by critiquing two of the major recurring criticisms found within many of these review articles—that textbooks are not objective and that they lack substantial knowledge. Three characteristics of substantial knowledge are described based, in part, on the reviewers' criticisms of texts, on recent work being done in sociolinguistics, and on Geertz's (1983) description of how knowledge is constructed in a social science. I then use this framework to analyze excerpts about the industrial revolution taken from a third and a fourth grade social studies textbook and a children's biography.

The Lack of Objectivity in Social Studies Textbooks

One prominent theme within the reviewers' barrage of criticism is that social studies textbooks are supposed to be objective. Different academic reviewers express varying degrees of dismay, horror and/or outrage as they
display evidence that textbooks are not objective and "fair". Today's critics, who grew up in the forties and fifties, first experienced textbooks as described by FitzGerald (1979):

Those of us who grew up in the fifties believed in the permanence of our American history textbooks. To us children, these texts were the truth of things: they were American history. It was not just that we read them before we understood that not everything that is printed is the truth or the whole truth. It was that they, much more than other books, had the demeanor and trappings of authority. They were weighty volumes. They spoke in measured cadences: imperturbable, humorless and as distant as Chinese emperors. Our teachers treated them with respect, and we paid them abject homage by memorizing a chapter a week. But now the textbook histories have changed, some of them to such an extent that an adult would find them unrecognizable (1979, p. 40).

FitzGerald communicates well a child's initial impression that historical knowledge is objective, and that weekly doses of "the truth" can be handed down from on high through the serious measured words of a textbook.

Anyon (1979) warns us that young children learn "the accepted cultural and intellectual 'explanations' and justifications for prevailing social arrangements" in what she describes as "overly positive" elementary social studies textbooks. Anyon objects to these texts because they "will most likely not be objective, neutral or without a social point of view" (p. 42).

In a similar vein Romanish (1983) is dismayed by the ideological bias that he finds in modern secondary economics textbooks: "Texts that parade 'free enterprise' in the titles on their jackets are not books designed to promote economic literacy but are intended to foster beliefs in and appreciation of that system" (p. 2). Romanish claims that our society is as closed as the Soviet Union because our textbooks do not reflect a commitment to pluralism:

To impose on the young a set of beliefs and economic teachings without full opportunity to investigate and understand alternatives is to ape the pedagogical practices of those who are accused of indoctrination (p.2).

Romanish assesses bias in the textbooks using what he calls the "fairness doctrine": "Not unlike the concept employed in the media whereby opposing views or doctrines on controversial issues are given time or space in the name of fairness, so too in education should differing perspectives be awarded similar coverage" (p. 6).

It seems to me that these criticisms reveal a misconception of what textbook histories do. I am mystified as to why reviewers are so horrified to learn that textbooks are not objective. For example, when Anyon objects to young children acquiring social studies information organized from the cur-
rently prevailing point of view, she is acting as if a textbook can present an
unbiased, balanced account of what happened in our country’s past.

We must be careful not to adopt a “conduit” metaphor of knowledge
transmission for textbooks—the notion that a purely objective form of
knowledge can be constructed in textbooks that is not constrained by time
or place nor by values or beliefs of the culture within which it is written.
Textbooks are not neutral pipelines across the ages that link present-day
students with events as they “really” happened.

The Generation of Textbook Knowledge Within A Socio-Historical Context

Using the conduit metaphor of communication hides the fact that words
and meanings about past events do not exist independent of their speakers
and the socio-historical contexts in which they were spoken (Lakoff and
Johnson p. 10). Knowledge of what has happened and what is happening is
always constructed. Educational researchers, drawing on a body of work
that cuts across sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and psychology,
conceptualize knowledge as a complex social product actively constructed
by individual participants in face to face interactions with people, events
and their artifacts (Magoon, 1977, p. 652; Clements et al, 1966, pp. 17–26;
Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Knowledge in history, (or in political science,
economics, anthropology, or sociology) is constructed by specific authors
who are not neutral and who are influenced, either positively or negatively,
by the “accepted cultural and intellectual explanations” of the day (Anyon,
1979, p. 42). Roselle (1980) makes this point clearly when he reviews Fitz-
Gerald’s review:

What’s all the excitement?

The theme of Frances FitzGerald’s *America Revised* . . . is a simple
one: American history textbooks reflect and change with the concerns,
opinions, ideas, fads and values of society. Since this is also true of
novels, plays, art, music, sex, dress, food, and recreation (I could go
on) it is difficult to understand what all the fuss is about (p. 6).

And, it seems to me, that rather than representing opposing points of
view in their point-counterpoint series of articles, this is also what Barth and
Shermis (1980, 1981) and Clements (1981) were trying to say about how
textbooks are written. Barth and Shermis were not defending existing text-
books or the status quo: they were merely pointing out that textbooks are
products of their time, sensitive to the sensibilities of their social context.
They argued that “to understand the issues in social studies requires an
historical and philosophical analysis” (1981, p. 94). Clements also was argu-
ing that histories in textbooks are constructed, that “truth in some absolute
sense is not available” and that “The discovery of the multiple perspectives
by which people live may be more important than any effort to identify 'objective truths' about subjective realities" (1981, p. 91).

Textbook Knowledge as Interpretative and Evaluative

The very perception of our world is an act of interpretation (Barnes, 1974 p. 22). Sociolinguists have studies how experiences and events are transformed by an author as they are told to an audience or written down. Labov defines a narrative as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (1972, pp. 359-360). Accounts of past events in our country's history are often given in the form of narratives or stories. Even accounts that strive for a detached, impersonal style are still interpretative, as the author must select which events and aspects of events to include in his/her account and which to remain silent about. And, authors of social studies textbooks who base their accounts on primary source narratives, letters, diaries and documents are, in effect, interpreting interpretations. The transformation of events into discourse is an interpretative act and an evaluative one too.

In his study of the structure of oral narratives Labov found that narratives always have an evaluative point to make. Labov describes the evaluative point of the narrative as:

its raison d'être: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at.

There are many ways to tell the same story, to make very different points, or to make no point at all. Pointless stories are met (in English) with the withering rejoinder, "So what?" (p. 366).

Thus, as each history or recounting of past events is generated, it is always subtly or blatantly constructed around a point that the narrator is trying to make. For example, Johnstone (1988) recently analyzed how early "objective" newspaper reports of the flooding of the Maumee, St. Joseph and St Marys Rivers in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1982 were transformed within the space of several days into stories, complete with a cast of characters and a plot line, about "the city that saved itself."

In any type of accounting, evaluative choices are made about which events are considered reportable and which aren't and why. Evaluation can be embedded within a story in the way that the events are reported, in the way that emotions or the sense of drama are heightened, in the way that the opponents or problems to be overcome are intensified and made larger than life—all in an effort by the narrator to convince his/her audience why hearing or reading about these events is worthwhile. Even if a genre different than a narrative or story is chosen to communicate a history, speakers and writers use a variety of linguistic devices to "show their attitude toward their material and the way in which they want to show its parts to be related" (Tannen, 1982, p. 17).
Thus histories, and especially histories in textbooks, can be studied as literary creations. They always have a point of view, an evaluative point, a *raison d'etre*, a "So what?", a bias, or, according to Clements, they lie (Clements, 1981, p. 88). And, in addition to being a product of their times and shaped by the values of the author, they are also shaped by the author’s expectations of the audience to whom s/he is transmitting the story.

It behooves us as social studies educators to pay attention to how scholars in the social sciences have themselves struggled with the dilemma of defining sound scholarship within a process based on interpretation. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz reasons that:

> I have never been impressed by the argument that, as complete objectivity is impossible in these matters (as, of course, it is) one might as well let one’s sentiments run loose. As Robert Solow has remarked, that is like saying that as a perfectly aseptic environment is impossible, one might as well conduct surgery in a sewer (1973, p. 30).

Geertz argues that to commit oneself to an interpretive approach is to commit oneself to a study that is “essentially contestable.” Interpretative anthropology (or history, economics or any other social science we may choose to add here) “is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other” (p. 29). He goes on to add that, “Meaning, that elusive and ill-defined pseudoentity we were once more than content to leave philosophers and literary critics to fumble with, has now come back into the heart of our discipline” (p. 29).

Given that there will always be different versions of histories with different points of view, we must then ask, “Is academic scholarship or substantial scholarly knowledge possible?” We have learned from Geertz that academic scholarship consists in part of continued dialogue and debate in which we “vex each other” trying to get it right. But what does “getting it right” or (relatively right) look like? If we wish to transmit a body of public knowledge about the past, with “the accumulated traditions of the ages, traditions which have a value external to and independent of the knower” (Berlak and Berlak, 1981, p. 144) to the students in our schools via textbooks, as social studies educators we need to know: how is a good narrative of the past constructed and what does it look like?

**The Lack of Substantial Knowledge in Social Studies Textbooks**

The second major criticism made by the reviewers is that the information found in social studies textbooks is bland, superficial and vacuous. Cheney describes elementary social studies textbooks as superficial because they belabor what is obvious even to six- seven- and eight- year olds: that people live in families, for example, or that children go to school (1987, p. 16).

In a similar vein, when Larkins, Hawkins and Gilmore (1987) reviewed
four primary social studies textbook series, they found them to be so bad that they forthrightly proclaimed:

If asked to choose between teaching primary-grade social studies with available texts or eliminating social studies from the K-3 curriculum, we would choose the latter. Much of the content in current texts is redundant, superfluous, vacuous and needlessly superficial (p. 299).

Their categorization of noninformative information is useful in helping to evaluate texts as nonsubstantial:

a. needlessly redundant: When textbooks teach concepts such as "mother, father, and family" which virtually all school age children already understand.

b. superfluous information: When textbooks teach information, for example about community helpers, that children will acquire without formal instruction.

c. text inappropriate: When textbooks teach information, which although useful, should not be learned from a text. For example, it would be better for a teacher to actually take children on a field trip than to have them read about going on a field trip (p. 300).

Cheney also complains that textbooks are dull because they do not contain classic children's literature. She argues that readability formulas have ruined the "best specimens of style": "These calculations, which dictate sentence length, word length, and the number of new words that can be introduced, can lay waste to even the best of stories . . . . . . . With vital connections and colorful words lost, what was once meaningful and compelling becomes pointless and dull" (1987, pp. 15-16).

**Useful and Non-Useful Criticisms**

Unfortunately, not all criticism of textbooks is as specific and thus as useful as the criticisms cited above. Daniel Roselle predicted in 1980 that, "I have little doubt that textbook baiting will continue to be an increasingly popular sport in the United States. It is safe and fun, and many people can play the game together" (p. 8).

The recent reviews of social studies texts are a mixed bag of useful and non-useful criticisms. Less useful are the criticisms of textbooks, which although perhaps true, do not make connections to the realities that shape the daily work of social studies teachers. If a social studies teacher reads that all textbooks lie (Clements, 1981), or that current texts have achieved an excess of noninformation (FitzGerald, 1979c, p. 50), she is most likely to react with frustration as she sits preparing her weekly lesson plans based on mandated textbooks. Social studies teachers quickly dismiss ivory tower types who smugly write of bias and blandness if they do not suggest classroom practices that could alleviate these problems.
One of the goals for a description of substantial knowledge is that it should be usable by a broad spectrum of people interested in social studies education. It is troublesome that while researchers are unanimously castigating current textbooks as lacking certain key features of scholarship, buyers and users of the textbooks do not consider their criticisms. Curriculum specialists and teachers on textbook committees have enough to do working their way through seemingly endless evaluative checklists composed almost entirely of un prioritized traits. For example, one textbook evaluation form has twelve content characteristics, sixteen instructional properties, and six physical properties. Regrettably, evaluation of the content is confined to whether it is timely (not substantial) and the analysis of content is given equivalent weight with more mechanical and trivial decisions about print size.

Even if buyers and users of social studies textbooks are genuinely committed to locating texts with substantial knowledge, they may confuse how a message is communicated with what it says. The presence of characteristics associated with formal written language (Chafe, 1982) may be mistaken for evidence that substantial knowledge is present. Also, the presence of characteristics associated with informal spoken language may be perceived as evidence that substantial knowledge is not present. For example, if the writing in a textbook is impersonal, detached and abstract, it will be perceived as scholarly. Textbook writing that displays conversational-like features of discourse: personal involvement, emphatic emphasis, dramatic moments, writing in which the author expresses feelings or opinions—is perceived as less "reliable". There is a danger of confusing characteristics of formal written language, which is highly valued in our culture, with the substance it is meant to display.

History and social studies textbooks can be studied as if they are interpretative works of art and scholarship. University and school based educators can work together as connoisseurs and critics and texts. Eisner describes connoisseurship as, "the art of appreciation" (1985, p. 219). Eisner argues that, "The development of educational connoisseurship requires an ability not only to perceive the subtle particulars of educational life but also to recognize the way those particulars form a part of the structure of the classroom" (p. 221).

The Need for a Description of Substantial Knowledge

Researchers and practitioners need a common set of expectations which they can use to engage in dialogue about the form of knowledge found in social studies textbooks. Rather than fuming academics generating overgeneralized criticisms while teachers and administrators rush through sets of overly technical and disconnected evaluative criteria, we need to have all participants in social studies education engaging in dialogue about whether substantial knowledge is or is not present in specific textbooks.
How Social Scientists Construct Substantial Knowledge

Geertz’s account of how events are described can help in the development of a framework that both researchers and practitioners can use. Geertz argues that social scientists write about big ideas or what he calls “Grand Realities” such as “Power, Change, Faith, Oppression, Work, Passion, Authority, Beauty, Violence, Love, Prestige.” However, he notes that they are connected to and grow out of the study of “local truths”. As Geertz puts it, anthropologists have “an exceedingly extended acquaintance with extremely small matters” (1973, p. 21). The important thing about the findings is their “complex specificity, their circumstantiality” (p. 23). Geertz argues that it is through these elaborated findings produced over a long time that the big ideas can be given meaning. He concludes that, “The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions . . . by engaging them with complex specifics” (p. 28).

The Framework

Careful scrutiny of two major criticisms of social studies textbooks, recent work in discourse analysis, and a description of how substantial knowledge is constructed in a social science can be integrated to form a set of expectations, a set of criteria which can be used by all participants in social studies education as a framework for communication.

The first measure of whether or not there is substantial knowledge in a textbook should be based on the presence of the conceptualization of “big ideas”. The selection of the topic is what gives focus and meaning to text passages. In social studies texts the topics must be both significant within a social studies discipline, sufficiently simple so that students can understand them, yet sufficiently complex so that grasping the concept helps to reorganize the students’ understanding of what they have previously learned. Then, connections need to be made. Integration and coherence are based on connections between ideas and connections between each idea and its supporting documentation. Finally there needs to be elaboration: specificity of details supply verbal richness in the explication of the big ideas.

Thus in the search for substantial knowledge in social studies texts, social studies educators will look for:

- conceptualization of big ideas: articulation of a general vision, a grand reality, a major concept that is being studied;
- coherence and integration: explications, interpretations or justification by authors in which they support their “broad assertions” by connecting them with “complex specifics”; and
- elaboration: specific, detailed local facts and truths.

The knowledge constructed should also be appropriate for the age and interest levels of the audience for whom these texts are produced.
Searching for Substantial Knowledge in Third and Fourth Grade Social Studies Text

The Big Idea: The Industrial Revolution

One of the most important events that occurred in our nation’s history and that is still shaping our lives today is the industrial revolution. When I think about big ideas that I would want to transmit to students, I would argue that the shift from an agricultural to an industrialized way of life has changed everything from where we live (in large nodal cities) to who we live with (from extended to nuclear families) to what we do. It has changed the meanings of work and play. Industrialization and the resulting urbanization has changed the landscape, the way we use time, the nature of our dreams and our notions of success and failure. One of the common strands in our otherwise increasingly diverse heritage is that we are all members of a highly industrialized nation. Yet because the rise of the complex industrial state raised issues which are still unresolved today, I do not think we have agreed on what to tell the children.

How is this complex and complicated story currently being explained to children? I went searching for sources of written discourse. Deciding to try to hold the big idea or topic as constant as possible for purposes of comparison, I selected excerpts from three types of discourse about the industrial revolution found in use in the third grades of an elementary school. Using the framework for substantial knowledge I analyzed “A Story about the City of Progress” (Chapter 5, The Metropolitan Community, Allyn and Bacon, third grade); “Pittsburgh: A City Built by Coal and Iron” (Chapter 14, fourth grade, Ginn); and “The Bobbin Boy” from a children’s biography Andrew Carnegie and the Age of Steel by Katharine Shippen. An excerpt from each source is provided for the reader prior to my analysis of the passage.

I. A Story about the City of Progress

(1983, The Metropolitan Community, Chapter 5, pp. 81–109, Allyn & Bacon, third grade)

How an Old Farmhouse Came To Be in the Middle of the City

It was a warm Sunday afternoon. John and Mary Striver took their children, Jane and Jeff, for a ride. Mr. Striver drove the car downtown and turned onto a street that Jeff and Jane had never seen. Right in the middle of the block was an old, old house. It looked strange. It was the only house in that part of town. All around it were tall office buildings. Mr. Striver stopped the car in front of the old house.

“That’s a funny place to build a house, isn’t it?” Jane said. “I wonder why it’s here with all these tall buildings. And it looks so old, too!”
"Do you think it's haunted, Dad?" Jeff asked. "It looks spooky."

Mr. Striver laughed. Then he said, "Well, in a way it is haunted, Jeff."

Jeff's eyes opened wide.

"It's a long story," said his father. "That farmhouse was built in 1665. It is more than 300 years old. That is much older than any of the other buildings around it."

"But why would anyone build a haunted house here?" asked Jane.

Mrs. Striver smiled. "People don't build haunted houses," she explained. "they build the house first. It gets haunted later."

Jane laughed, "Oh, please tell us about it," she said.

The Industrial Revolution and Immigrants from the Old World.

"When the house was built," Mr. Striver began, "there was no town at all. There were only forests and a few farms here. This old house is all that is left of the little farming village of Progress."

Jane was looking all around. "But how did the village disappear? What happened to the forests?" she asked.

"How did the house get haunted?" asked Jeff.

"Well," said their father, "it's a long story. First of all, you know that making goods is called industry [in'dəs tre]. Industry can also mean all the places that make a certain kind of thing. For example, places that make paper are part of the paper industry."

"I've heard of the steel industry and the clothing industry," said Jeff.

"Good, said Mr. Striver. "You know a lot about industry. But do you know what the Industrial [in dəs'tre əl] Revolution was?"

"Yes," said Jane. "The Industrial Revolution was when people in England began to make things with machines in factories. Before that, they made goods mostly at home by hand." . . .

Analysis

The first two subsections of "A Story about the City of Progress" do not contain substantial academic knowledge as described by the evaluative framework. First of all, the "story" as it is called, is about a family taking a ride in the car to see and discuss an "old, old" or "haunted" house that tall office buildings have grown up around. This passage is a prime example of non-informative knowledge (Larkins, et al., 1987): knowledge that is inappropriate in a textbook. Rather than reading about going on a ride to see the different zones of a city, children might be better served by actually going on a ride or walk themselves.
And, children particularly do not need to read about an inane and inauthentic sounding family conversation in which the authors waste 303 words out of a 874 words (or 35% of the passage) discussing whether an old house is haunted or not. Although this "introduction" may function, in the worst sense of the word, as a motivational strategy (read gimmick here) designed to lure children into thinking they are going to get to learn about a topic of inherent interest to them, haunted houses, the true purpose of the textbook section is finally revealed when the boy Jeff asks how the house became haunted and the father responds with a teacher-like answer. He responds with an answer that does not match the question: a topic switch and a definition of industry that could be taken straight from a third grade basal reader glossary:

"How did the house get haunted?" asked Jeff.

"Well," said their father, "It's a long story. First of all, you know that making goods is called industry [in' das tre]. Industry can also mean all the places that make a certain kind of thing. For example, places that make paper are part of the paper industry."

A barrage of other questions then follow: Mr. Striver and the two children respond with definitions of the Industrial Revolution, goods, services, immigrants, The Old World, and the New World.

Unfortunately this is where our second criterion of substantial knowledge is violated. None of these concepts, which are important in their own right, are connected or integrated into the story about the old house. The line of thought is fragmented, incoherent. The definitions are barely strung together in a list of items. It would make more sense to directly present a formal list of vocabulary words with the directive that the students should study or memorize these words. The vocabulary words only confuse the passage when they are barely embedded within what is represented as a "typical" family conversation.

Ironically there is elaboration in this story but the major idea, the concept for which the elaboration is developed, is never mentioned or defined. Pertinent, germane observations are made by the characters about the process of urbanization but this concept is not formally introduced.

"When the house was built, "Mr. Striver began, "there was no town at all. There were only forests and a few farms here. This old house is all that is left of the little farming village of Progress."

Jane was looking all around. "But how did the village disappear? What happened to the forests?" she asked.

Later on in this section Jane asks,

"What did all the immigrants in Progress do for a living?"
and her father replies:

"Most of them got jobs in factories," said Mr. Striver. New factories were built. More immigrants moved into Progress. The village grew larger. Soon the village became a town." (p. 85)

This information coupled with information about building a factory "near the harbor or the river or a main road" (p. 85) so that goods could be carried to market could have been structured so as to explain urbanization and progress, a notion that needs to be discussed openly rather than being, most confusingly, the name of the town.

I am bothered that so much information is available for children to learn about an imaginary town (30 pages, one/tenth of the textbook). Although there are some admirable generalizations available later in Chapter 5: the occupations of the colonists, the effect the railroad has on Progress, how Progress became a manufacturing hub, I become nervous when actual historical events are not distinguished from the fake history and fake maps of an imaginary town. For example Jane asks questions such as "Was Progress the first colony?" and about the story of the slaves coming to Progress. All of the information seems curiously decontextualized and detached. Couldn't all that valuable text space have been devoted to giving specific details about the growth of a real town such as Boston so that the children could have some actual knowledge worth remembering and using (possibly in a later life beyond the classroom door)?

Rather than stories (lies) of fictitious specific information we need stories (narratives) of real places with real people. Children can learn to develop their own abstract generalizations if they have access to a set of "densely textured facts." They do not need textbook authors to give them hollow generalizations: they need sets of specific details to explore, build on, compare with or connect to the realities of their own daily lives.

A discourse analysis of this section of the textbook would further point out that while the information in the textbook is advertised in the title as being a "story", what follows is not a story. Although definitions of what a story is vary according to the judgment of members of the social group listening to the story (Heath, Branscombe, Thomas, 1986 p. 16) (Heath, 1983 chapter 5), it is generally accepted that stories are "narratives which include an animate being who moves through a series of events with goal-directed behavior" (Heath, et al., 1987 p. 17). In this chapter the conversation that the Striver family is holding does not go anywhere: it does not add more and more complicating actions and details until a point is made about the house.

By writing the piece in the form of a conversation, the authors employ many devices (usually associated with spoken narratives) for involvement. For example when the Strivers speak to each other they use tag questions:
"isn't it"; first person states of mind: "I wonder . . . . . ."); and hedges about the reliability of the information: "Well, in a way". Unfortunately, there is not substantial knowledge within the text for another participant—the reader—to become involved in. The student reader is not given any assistance in learning how to integrate this information into what s/he already knows.

II. Pittsburgh: A City Built by Coal and Iron

(1983, Chapter 14, Unit 4 “Communities in our land”, The People, pp. 150-161, Ginn, fourth grade.)

Andrew Carnegie helped bring a new method of making steel to Pittsburgh.

Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland. His family came to this country in 1848 and settled in Pennsylvania. While Andy was still very young, he went to work in a cotton mill for $1.20 a week. Later he worked in a telegraph office in Pittsburgh. As the years passed, he got better jobs. He saved all of the money he could.

Andy was sure that the iron and steel business was going to become very big. So he became part owner of a few companies by buying shares in them. Later he became the main owner of these companies.

Andrew Carnegie did all he could to learn better ways to make iron and steel. Once he went to England where he saw a new way to make steel. When he came home, he used this improved method. As he made money, he bought more steel mills. He became very rich. Iron and steel making became the biggest industry in the United States.

Then Carnegie sold all of his steel mills for 500 million dollars.

Carnegie used much of his money to help others. He had always enjoyed books. So he set aside money to build libraries all over the world. He gave money to build schools and churches and to train teachers. He helped Pittsburgh in many ways. For example, he started a famous school to train scientists and engineers. Today it is known as Carnegie-Mellon University. Although Carnegie is no longer alive, the money he left still does much good for people all over the world.

Pittsburgh became a major center for making steel. Mills and railroad tracks were built along the river for miles and miles. Smoke poured from the smokestacks. At night the fires of the steel furnaces lighted the city sky.

Other factories were built nearby to make all kinds of products from iron and steel. Many thousands of people moved to Pittsburgh to work in these mills and factories. Pittsburgh grew to be a very large city. It became known as “The City of Steel” (p. 157).
Analysis

In contrast to the "story" about the city of Progress, the narrative about Andrew Carnegie fits all the criteria of a story. Using Labov's structure of a narrative, we can see that there is an initial abstract which "encapsulates the point of the story" (Labov, 1972, p. 363):

Andrew Carnegie helped bring a new method of making steel to Pittsburgh.

There is an orientation in which the time, place, persons, activity and/or situation is identified:

Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland. His family came to this country in 1848 and settled in Pennsylvania. While Andy was still very young, he went to work in a cotton mill for $1.20 a week.

There are sequences of complicating actions:

He worked in a telegraph office in Pittsburgh.
He became part owner of a few companies by buying shares in them.
Later he became the main owner of these companies.
Once he went to England where he saw a new way to make steel.

The evaluation answers the question, "So what?" and is the point of the story.

He became very rich.

The results describe what finally happened.

Iron and steel making became the biggest industry in the United States.
Carnegie sold all of his steel mills for 500 million dollars.

Using the framework for substantial knowledge, we can see that this piece of text contains more substantial knowledge than the selection from Allyn and Bacon. There is a big idea or a main point: that a poor immigrant (Andrew Carnegie) can become rich in America. There is coherence and connection: all the information leads up to the main point. And there is some elaboration.

What is fascinating (and the fatal flaw in this passage) is that the elaboration is not about the main point of the story. The complicating actions contain minimal description: they condense complicated actions and concepts into curiously vapid verbs i.e. "He got better jobs . . . . He saved his money . . . . He became part owner . . . . He became the main owner." The students are not given much information with which to construct their own meaning about how Andrew Carnegie got ahead.

What is so fascinating about this story is that there is rich elaboration of the explanation of why he became rich. The authors transmit important
societal values and norms by specifying which actions and beliefs of Carnegie enabled him to get rich. Earlier in the story several points of external evaluation are made: a) Carnegie got better and better jobs, b) He had an idea and believed in something (i.e. the iron and steel business), c) "He saved all of the money he could." and d) Education was important: "Andrew Carnegie did all he could to learn better ways to make iron and steel." The importance of education is emphasized when we learn Carnegie even went all the way to England to learn something new.

Moving up a career ladder, saving money and getting more education was rewarded. It resulted in Carnegie becoming very rich. We learn in precise detail exactly how rich, "$500 million dollars." We are told what he did with his money: he helped others. More specifically he helped others through education, the building of libraries, schools and churches.

There is additional but selective elaboration about how what Carnegie did affected Pittsburgh: the mills and railroad tracks, "At night the fires of the steel furnaces lighted the city sky." People got jobs. Pittsburgh grew large. There are clear value lessons here. Even though there might be what can now be seen as negative side effects—the smoke pouring from the factory smokestacks, somehow we are made to feel that this is all right, and that it is O.K. to become very rich: the point is to use your money to help others.

III. The Bobbin Boy


The voyage by land and by sea had taken the Carnegies nearly three months, and now it was ended. They had reached Allegheny across the river from Pittsburgh. It was a rough, primitive town. People said it was celebrated for its mud, for its frequent flood and its epidemics of cholera.

The house where Aunt Anne and Aunt Kitty and Uncle Hogan lived was in a ramshackle district along the river bank, a shabby house that needed paint. Yet though they were poor (one of the aunts had a little grocery and Uncle Hogan was a clerk in a crockery shop), they had made such preparations as they could for the Carnegie's coming.

Across the alley there was a rickety shed with a loom which Uncle Hogan had used when he first came to America. In this shed the newcomers settled down, unpacking such small things as they had brought from home. And here Andrew's father began to work at the loom again. He made checked tablecloths this time which he tried rather unsuccessfully to peddle from door to door.

There seemed to be even less market for handwoven stuff in Pennsylvania than there had been in Dunfermline. He tried working in a fac-
tory for a time, but he couldn't get used to this strange kind of work and went back to his loom again.

That was why Andrew's mother, having sent little Tom to school, set herself to binding shoes as she had done in Scotland. And that was why Andrew, although he was only twelve, set about looking for work.

He found work after a short time—the Blackstock Cotton Mill needed a bobbin boy. That meant tending the machine that reeled the thread on spools.

"It will pay me $1.20 a week," he told his mother and father, thinking the amount seemed larger because it would be paid in American money. The hours were from six in the morning till six o'clock at night.

The new bobbin boy worked diligently, and before very long the manager sent for him to say that he would be advanced. Now his pay would be $1.65 a week, and the additional forty-five cents was very welcome in the Carnegie family.

It's in the basement," Andrew told them. "I have to tend the engine and the boiler." That was a great responsibility for a twelve year-old body. "Sometimes I'm worried," he told his mother. "If I put on too much coal, the boiler might burst. If I let the fire go down too far, the men will call down that they haven't got enough power."

"Do the best you can," Margaret Carnegie said, wishing that her boy could go to school instead.

But now another task was added to Andrew's job. He must take the finished bobbins that were sent down to him and dip them in a vat of oil. The oil was sticky and evil-smelling, and it stuck to his hands and could not be washed off. Soon his clothes and hair were filled with the smell. It was the smell that was the horror to him. Working there in the basement day after day he was conscious only of the nauseating smell. He never thought of giving up the job. William Wallace would not have given it up he knew. But day after day he went home weak and sick with the smell of the oil, and at night he woke from dreams of the steam gauges, to smell the evil odor of the oil again.

Now Uncle Lauder and his Cousin Doddy and the boys in Mr. Marten's school seemed far away from him, and he missed the click of his father's loom and the singing. But he kept on.

One night he was walking home to Rebecca Street when he met a group of boys about his own age standing at the street corner.

The boys started at the short, blue-eyed stranger with his white hair and the foreign cut to this clothes.

"Scotchie," one of them said.

And then they all began to shout at him. "Scotchie! Scotchie!" they shouted in derision.
Andrew stopped and drew himself up as tall as he could.

"I am a Scotsman," he shouted back. "Ay, I am a Scotchie, and I'm proud o' the name!"

But even as he stood there, with the sob in his throat, he knew that he was no longer really a Scotsman. He was beginning to be an American. And it was hard.

Analysis

Like the Ginn textbook story of Andrew Carnegie, Katherine Shippen's biography of Andrew Carnegie meets all the criteria of a story. Using Labov's (1972) structure of narrative we can see that although there is not an initial abstract, (this chapter is but one story in a series of narratives about his life): There is an orientation in which the time, place, persons, activity, and/or situation is identified:

The voyage by land and by sea had taken the Carnegies nearly three months, and now it was ended. They had reached Allegheny across the river from Pittsburgh. It was a rough primitive town. People said it was celebrated for its mud, for its frequent flood and its epidemics of cholera.

There are sequences of complicating actions:

The relatives the Carnegies came to live with were poor.
Andrew's father was unsuccessful.
Andrew had to work to help support the family, and couldn't go to school.
Andrew's job was dangerous: "If I put on too much coal the boiler might burst." (p. 43)
Andrew's job is disgusting: "Working there in the basement day after day he was conscious only of the nauseating smell."
Andrew is homesick for the people of Dunfermline, Scotland.

The complicating actions build up to a climax:

One night he was walking home to Rebecca Street when he met a group of boys about his own age standing at the street corner . . . . . . . .
"Scotchie! Scotchie! they shouted in derision!

And then there is a resolution:

Andrew stopped and drew himself up as tall as he could.

"I am a Scotsman," he shouted back. "Ay, I am a Scotchie, and I'm proud o' the name!"

But even as he stood there, with the sob in his throat, he knew that he
was no longer really a Scotsman. He was beginning to be an American. And it was hard.

Using the criteria of big ideas, elaboration and connectedness, "The Bobbin Bay" contains the most substantial knowledge of all three excerpts. The big idea of this chapter is to describe how difficult it was for Andrew Carnegie and his family (who had been displaced by the industrial revolution in Scotland) to survive and adapt to the life in America.

The story is connected, cohesive and integrated because each new topic introduced builds up the theme of hardship or enhances the sense of work and commitment it took for Andrew to overcome each hardship. There is much elaboration of specific details, each of which adds to the complicating action.

As contrasted with the first two excerpts, the sentences in this biography are longer: each idea unit is packed more compactly with information. Many more devices common to elaboration in written narratives are found in this selection (Chafe, 1984). For example there are many more prepositional phrases, often joined in pairs or in a series:

The voyage by land and by sea . . . . .

People said it (Pittsburgh) was celebrated for its mud, for its frequent floods and its epidemics of cholera.

Adjectives add a sense of liveliness and creativity, and there are many more dependent clauses introduced by a variety of subordinating conjunctions:

The house . . . . was in a ramshackle district along the river bank, a shabby house that needed paint.

The oil was sticky and evil-smelling and it stuck to his clothes and could not be washed off.

Also, rather than just telling about being harassed by bullies because he is a foreigner, the author's use of reported speech makes the climatic incident come alive:

"Scotchie," one of them said.

And then they all began to shout at him. "Scotchie! Scotchie!" They shouted in derision.

In sum, these devices for elaborating the idea units make the writing come alive and draw the reader into caring about what happens. Rather than a written piece seeming detached, these techniques actually heighten the reader's sense of involvement. There is a wealth of information available for a child to reconstruct his/her own set of meanings from this text about what it is like to be a young immigrant in America in the 1840's. There is
enough specificity of detail that students can relate incidents from Andrew Carnegie’s life as a boy to personal experiences that they might have had i.e. experiencing mud or floods, having a father out of work, having serious responsibilities and/or working diligently themselves as a child, nauseating smells, missing relatives far away, or being taunted by bullies.

Conclusions and Recommendations
The Inseparability of Form and Content

We can see how far we have gone beyond the conduit metaphor of communication in our analysis of these texts. As Barnes argues in From Communication to Curriculum (1976):

We cannot make a clear distinction between the content and the form of the curriculum, or treat the subject matter as the end and the communications as not more than a means. The two are inseparable (p. 14).

Much of the analyses of whether the knowledge presented in these three passages of text was substantive is based, in fact, on the form in which it was communicated.

As the form of the communication to be used in the classroom changes so will the form of what is learnt. As Barnes notes, “One kind of communication will encourage the memorizing of details, another will encourage pupils to reason about the evidence and a third will head them towards the imaginative reconstruction of a way of life.” (1976 p. 15). In the analysis of each of these passages, we asked how speech is being used by the author(s) for the conveying and shaping of information for children. What form of academic knowledge is being made available for students to use in their own construction of what happened in our country’s history?

In these three passages, history was presented in the form of a story. The framework for substantial knowledge: searching for a big idea; looking for how the central point is connected to enriching details; and looking for elaboration of specific details turned out to be useful and reasonable criteria. The framework helped us to see why and how “The Story of a City Named Progress” did not contain substantial knowledge; how “Andrew Carnegie helped bring a new method of making steel to Pittsburgh” was better and “The Bobbin Boy” was best. How the knowledge is structured is important because it is then more or less available for students to use in their own reconstruction of what happened in our country’s history. It is at the level of talk in the classroom that our current concern with the transmission and transformation of substantial academic knowledge is being won or lost. The genre of the discourse and decisions made at the sentence level of the discourse affect whether knowledge is or is not present to be used by students.
Four Recommendations

Four recommendations emerge from the use of this framework in the analyses of these texts:
1. Social studies discourse should be constructed around big ideas like the industrial revolution.
2. Social studies discourse should illuminate the big ideas with elaborated details.
3. Stories are one genre by which coherent bodies of substantial public knowledge can be transmitted to young children.
4. Social studies educators from both the university and the schools should use these criteria of substantial knowledge as a framework to engage in productive dialogue by selecting specific texts already present in teachers' classrooms and conducting joint analyses as educational connoisseurs.

The passages selected for analysis in this article were not a representative sample. They were a case study, the universe of texts and children's non-fiction literature available one year at the third grade level within an elementary school for teaching about Pittsburgh and the industrial revolution. Even within these two textbooks, the quality and the amount of substantial knowledge varies from page to page within a chapter based on the genre in which the information is transmitted.

Small collaborative discussion groups composed of teachers curriculum supervisors and social studies educators from the university—either professors of education or social scientists—could work together with selections from texts that the teachers are using. The model presented in this article can serve as a starting point with which to critique the form, genre and types of substantial knowledge and to launch discussions of how best to engage children in conversation with this knowledge. Fraenkel (1987, p. 203) reports that content analyses of textbooks comprise one of the three major forms of research being done in social studies education. But how much of that is currently used by or useful to teachers in their classrooms?

So What?

Nothing which has been discussed in this article is new. The problems with lack of academic rigor in textbooks is old. Many of the accusations and criticisms have been heard before: when the Committee of Ten met in 1892 to assert the value of a standard classical curriculum; when Progressive educators tried to figure out which knowledge is good for the millions of immigrant children pouring into the public schools at the turn of the century; when Sputnik was launched and challenged the rigor of our curricula vis-a-vis the Russians. As Armento notes in her review of research on teaching social studies:

A large gap exists between the theoretical conceptualization of the goals of social studies education and the realization of those goals in day-to-
day school practices. Social studies classrooms of today are little different those of 20 years ago, despite the expenditure of millions of dollars and the involvement of many creative minds in the development of innovative curricular materials (Stake and Easley, 1978, pp. 943–944.)

Armento goes on to note that “the conventional textbooks remain the primary instructional tool” and that “students tend to be generally apathetic toward social studies, describing their courses as boring.” What is troublesome is the relentless persistence of these problems after so much time and energy have been devoted to trying to solve them.

This article offers a way to start small, focused and meaningful conversations about social studies education. Many more voices and constituencies are needed to participate as we address relentless dullness and superficiality. Social studies researchers continue to hurl more generalized criticisms at samples of representative textbooks with only themselves as an audience while teachers are isolated in their classrooms, in unique contexts, with unique students and no one to talk to (Bolster, 1983). Joint use of this framework of substantial knowledge to critique textbooks would allow for conversations across hierarchical levels and boundaries that are usually never crossed.

Jordan (1985), writing about the success of translating information from educational research into educational program at the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program, concludes that information from educational research alone is usually not sufficient to provide solutions to educational problems. She explains that another step is necessary; the translation of this knowledge “into culturally compatible classroom practices and teaching techniques that then become part of a coherent program that can be put into practice by ordinary classroom teachers (p. 118). Jordan argues that, “Translation is mostly a process of selection and combination, rather than invention.” Jordan goes on to note that a multidisciplinary approach to research is required and that “effective translation is usually a collaborative enterprise” rather than something the researcher does alone. (p. 119). Social studies education needs a diversity of voices and experiences as we select and combine from what we already know.

The notion of substantial knowledge from the social science disciplines being transmitted in narratives is a small but perhaps pivotal notion because it is compatible with notions already within the conceptual repertoire of both researchers and teachers. Social studies education researchers and teachers can both be comfortable with the history of our country’s past organized into interpretative writings, and specifically in this article, with an emphasis on narratives and stories. Social studies researchers can use narratives as a frame for the way social science data is selected and organized to make a point. Teachers are comfortable with narratives and stories
because they promise to be a possible way of engaging and involving turned off and bored students. (See for example, Common, 1987, on the uses of stories in social studies teaching.)

Social studies researchers and practitioners need to collaborate on the construction of the problems we want to solve. We can see why recommendations by Anyon (1979) or Romanish (1983) that textbooks be required to give equal time to many points of view don't work because of the form in which information is transmitted. Narratives are usually told from one point of view and most often in one voice.

Yet the problem of bias and unfairness remain. Children need to acquire the story of our past from an ever increasing cast of characters. Recognizing that there are diverse points of view and many conflicts in our nation's history, the answer becomes, not to try to tell one narrative that offends no one (after all there has to be conflict to make the story interesting). Rather the answer is for school systems and teachers to transmit many stories.

The framework for substantial knowledge is limited in that it does not screen for bias. Even though substantial knowledge was constructed about what to do with your wealth in the Ginn passage and how Carnegie had to overcome adversity in "The Bobbin Boy", they were both terribly one-sided. Working in collaborative study groups, teachers and researchers could share other sources of appropriate, authentic and substantial knowledge. For example, Virginia Burton's *The Little House* could make the point that was attempting to be made in the Allyn and Bacon attempt at a story and it is much better written. The stories with highly selective information about Andrew Carnegie might be coupled with selections on the air, working conditions and housing found after the industrialization of Pittsburgh in *The Good Old Days: They Were Terrible!* by Otto Bettman. Stories are also needed of immigrants who didn't adapt as the Carnegie family did: perhaps stories about families who went back to Europe from America. And at some point in a curriculum stories then need to be put in a larger context: studying our past is not just a series of stories of the great and not-so-great people (although that may be a place where teachers choose to start, especially with younger children.)

We are fortunate in social studies education to be working at a time when there is a renaissance in the disciplines from which we draw our knowledge. Because of the new social history and its focus on the history of various groups in American society: Blacks, Hispanics, blue collar workers, women etc., stories for the classroom (and/or the means to acquire these stories) are becoming available for the first time (Downey, 1982, p. 1; Sitton, Mehaffy, and Davis, 1983).

It is also fortunate for social studies education that there has been intensive interest lately by psychologists, sociolinguists, and ethnographers in the way that information is organized in oral and written discourse (Chafe, 1982; 1984; Tannen, 1982, 1984, 1985). An important focus of sociolinguis-
tics has been the challenging of the stereotype of the differences between oral and written communication. We are beginning to see how genre is often more important in the shaping of knowledge than whether it is presented in an oral or written channel. Much of the recent work on elaboration, coherence, and integration (Bernstein, 1979; Chafe, 1982, 1984; Gumperz, Kaltman & O'Connor, 1984; Staton, 1988; Tannen, 1982, 1984, 1985; Tannen & Chafe, in press) will serve us well as we work together as connoisseurs in our search for forms of knowledge that are not fragmented, detached or bland.

Although we are just beginning work on the construction of these problems, many of the solutions are already available and have been available for a decade. The February 1980 issue of *Social Education* published a series of articles that addressed how to use textbooks creatively with students. For example, Chapman (1980) describes how bias in a textbook could be studied critically by the students as a primary source.

Just as Andrew Carnegie vertically integrated the resources of an entire industry, just as Geertz and other scholars from the social science disciplines reorganize and integrate masses of specific data around a big idea, so too should we in social studies education vertically reorganize and integrate our resources around the notion of identifying and utilizing substantial knowledge in social studies classrooms. As critics and consumers of textbooks we need to be in dialogue together to use each other's knowledge. We need to expand the boundaries of whom we talk to. Within these expanded limits, with an expanded repertoire of experiences and ideas we can continue to vex each other as we try to move towards substantial knowledge in our social studies classrooms.

### Endnotes


2. Thanks are due to the following publishers for permission to reprint passages from their books:


3. The conversation" has suspiciously shifted to "teacher talk". The father asks what Heath calls A-I questions: he asks questions that he already knows the answer to (Heath, 1983 p. 130). The questioner does not genuinely need the information: he is just checking to see if the child or student can produce it.

4. which Frances FitzGerald describes as having "all the risks and rewards of pillow punching" (1979c p. 79).
References


"Every Vietnamese Was A Gook": My Lai, Vietnam, and American Education

David M. Berman

Dear My Lai, my heart aches
With the cry of my younger brother
Dying beside the corpse of his mother and grandmother,
Among the sound of guns
And barbarous laughter.

What I fear will happen, however, is that we will begin
to glorify the Vietnam war and somehow make it into something that it never was.

War is also fighting for noble causes.
from Personal Communication, College Professor teaching course entitled "The Vietnam War" (1987).

It is the intent of this essay to explore the American world view, visualized through the American experience in Vietnam, as a product of the American educational system and the manner in which secondary school students are taught the significant social and historical issues. The particular focus is upon how social studies curriculum is organized at the secondary level, how textbooks are written to accompany that curriculum, and how instruction in the social studies classroom is shaped by these forces. Teaching Vietnam thus becomes the avenue to explore the mythology and reality of an American high school education in the social studies arena and the mindset which often results from this instruction. By the same token, Vietnam, by virtue of the immediacy of the experience for many of us, and the historicity of the experience for our students, might also be viewed as a critical juncture, as an opportunity to understand the American educational process through the glare of a merciless war, and to reconsider the tenets upon which this process is based.

It is argued here that social studies curriculum, by virtue of its historical...
development on the one hand and its contemporary organization on the other, drastically inhibits what is taught about Vietnam in American public schools. Because textbooks are written in the curricular image, they serve to reinforce a political and historical orientation which orders a social studies education, an orientation which exploits wars as distant chronological benchmarks and distills the immediate reality of the Vietnam experience. Finally, through a focus on what is termed the My Lai massacre, it is submitted that there is indeed a connection between the institutional structure of an American social studies education, permeated by an ethnocentric bias which shapes the American world view, and the response of American soldiers to Vietnam and the Vietnamese, between what and how we teach our students about the world beyond the school, and their perceptions and responses when they enter that world.

Noam Chomsky wrote that "the American record in Indochina can be captured in three words: lawlessness, savagery, and stupidity—in that order" (1975, p. 54). Chomsky's terminology provides a framework for making the connection between education and the war in Vietnam, but an alternative order is suggested here. For the purpose of this essay, it is proposed that stupidity, defined as being given to unintelligent decisions or acts, a condition promoted by our educational institutions, is in fact the basis of lawlessness, which then creates the conditions for savagery to occur. The American educational experience and the implications of that experience as seen in the American war in Vietnam serve to illustrate this connection between stupidity, lawlessness, and savagery.

Social Studies Curriculum and American Education

Who makes the educational decisions which promote this stupidity one asks? And in the words of James Herndon in his anecdotal account of life as a junior high school teacher, "Who decided about the curriculum and who decided about the textbooks?" (1971, p. 101). "We (teachers) feel we have nothing to do with it, beyond the process of managing what is presented to us. Presented to us by whom? . . . Who decided that Egypt is just right for seventh graders? . . . Who decided that California Indians must enter the world of fourth grade kids, or that South America must be 'learned' by sixth graders?

"Nobody it seems, made any of these decisions. Noman did it. Noman is responsible for them. The people responsible for the decisions about how schools ought to go are dead. Very few people are able to ask questions of dead men. So we treat those decisions precisely as if dead men made them, as if none of them are up to us live people to make, and therefore we determine that we are not responsible for any of them" (1971, pp. 101–102). Herndon's questions reiterate the very concerns that educational reformers have raised for years and illustrate the role of tradition in the development of contemporary school curriculum.
According to some theorists, the stupidity begins with an educational system in general, and a social studies curriculum in particular, which is divorced from the reality of the world in which we live. Based upon a curricular structure which has remained virtually unchanged since "the era of national committee reports" between 1890 and 1920, American education continues to enforce these artificial constructs imposed upon knowledge to the detriment of such knowledge. As Murry R. Nelson wrote in an essay on the history of the field, "when my (teacher) friend wanted references concerning a strong rationale for social studies, I had to confess that the best arguments for such a rationale had been written in the period 1915-1930" (1980, p. 52).

The 1890-1920 era of national committee reports, in what is today considered the field of social studies, was dominated by the American Historical Association (AHA) whose members were primarily professors at the university level concerned about the preparation of secondary students for the university. In 1896, for example, the AHA-sponsored Committee of Seven studied the teaching of history at the secondary level and, in its report published in 1898 entitled The Study of History in Schools, recommended a four-block history sequence for high school students: Ancient History, Medieval and Modern European History, English History, and American History and Civil Government. In his study of social studies curricular organization, the noted historian Rolla M. Tryon wrote that "evidence of the Committee's tremendous influence on history in the high schools may be found in syllabi and textbooks published to conform to its recommendations, and the number of high schools offering and requiring the courses it proposed" (1935, p. 25). And over eighty years following publication of the report, Paul Robinson wrote that it "exerted a massive influence on the high school social studies curriculum for nearly a quarter of a century" (1980, p. 72). While social studies historians such as Robinson write of "history's demise within the social studies curriculum and the ascendancy of educators over social scientists and historians," primarily because of the inclusion of other social sciences in the curriculum, it must nevertheless be recognized that the organization of the contemporary social studies curriculum is in fact based upon the AHA's Committee of Seven 1898 report (1980, p. 75).

At the high school level, the curricular structure of today follows an historical sequence reminiscent of the 1898 report. During the tenth grade year, a World History sequence encompasses both semesters with a primary focus on a one-semester or even a year-long course often entitled Western Civilization. This course is the contemporary version of the 1898 Ancient History, Medieval and Modern European History, English History sequence. The other block in that sequence, American History and perhaps Civil Government, is the usual component of the social studies requirement during the 11th grade year, a course entitled simply U.S. History although
sometimes broken down into chronological or thematic components. It is only during the senior year that the influence of the other social sciences is seen with courses in government (Civil Government) and/or economics, often as required courses dependent upon state and district mandates, perhaps leaving room for elective courses such as anthropology, psychology and/or sociology. Geography, the other social studies subject, is usually offered as a separate course only during junior high school. The contemporary structure of the social studies curriculum with the field of history as the dominant curricular requirement belies its demise within an all-encompassing social studies program and belies as well as the ascendancy of public school educators over historians and other social scientists. It is this very historical influence on the social studies which, through its emphasis upon a chronological record of important events, shapes the nature of instruction and learning at the secondary level. If “in most cases, any treatment of the (Vietnam) war would come at the very end of the American history course,” in the words of one college professor (Dunn, 1983, p. 198), then it must also be recognized that, in the words of one high school social studies teacher, “sometimes we don’t even get to Vietnam” (personal communication).

With knowledge organized along parallel lines into subject matter specialties, based upon the recommendations of university-level professors during the 1890’s and early 1900’s, public school educators, inculcated in these traditions at the university, have continued to adopt the social science approach to social studies education, reflected in contemporary high school course catalogues. The basis of the U.S. History program in one typical school for example, was a two course-sequence organized in chronological fashion, a U.S. History A course, 1877–1920, and a U.S. History B course, from 1920 to the present (personal papers). And these courses were the consolidation of a U.S. History program once organized along both chronological and thematic lines into four separate courses, offered in separate quinmesters: Political and Diplomatic History, Intellectual and Cultural History, Social and Economic History, and Industrial and Technological History. Under this U.S. History curriculum, a student could complete the U.S. History requirement by taking two of the four courses without ever being able to integrate the various themes into a holistic framework. “Who decided about the curriculum?” asked Herndon. In this case it was a district social studies coordinator who imposed the curriculum upon a 24-member social studies department against the wishes of its teachers, the US History teachers in particular, who were unanimously against that curriculum. It is just such a curriculum that contributes to what Philip A. Cusick terms the “compartmentalization of knowledge” and leads to the “fragmentation of experience” for the students who must suffer under such programs (1973, pp. 206–212).

This experience is even further fragmented by a vertical organization in which students are tracked into ability levels based upon scores on standard-
ized tests. Thus a student would take such a test towards the end of his ninth grade year which would determine his placement in the four major subject areas: Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. At the above-noted school, there were some five vertical ability levels, classified here in descending order: level 9, Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors students; levels 7–9, college-bound students; levels 5–6, average students who might perhaps go on to college or at least graduate from high school; levels 2–4, students of lower academic ability often including those with handicaps such as the emotionally disabled; level 1, those who were illiterate. Required courses in the social studies were thus adapted across the five vertical levels in the four major subject areas to meet the needs of students across these levels. Students thus emerge with different fragments of knowledge, in different subject areas, based upon their academic level. And in the social studies, students emerge with different fragments of Vietnam for example, if there is time to teach Vietnam, depending upon the adaption of history courses to meet students' ability levels.

Given the nature of curricular requirements and the grid pattern which it imposes upon schooling, knowledge is structured so rigidly at the intersection of the boundaries of the academic disciplines, that the information presented to students, about Vietnam for example, if presented at all, is so divorced from the reality of that information that a chasm has been created between what is taught and what is real. Into this chasm fall high school and junior high school students who either drop out at the rate of approximately one million and a half each year (Mann, 1986, p. 308), or acknowledge the gap between what they must do to survive in school and what they recognize as relevant and meaningful. While dropout rates vary across districts depending on methods of calculation, according to both the Bureau of Census' and the Center for Statistics' methods, "nationally for the past decade, slightly less than three-quarters (of those at the age when students are expected to graduate) have completed high school" (Center for Education Statistics, 1986, p. 4). And in some major cities, the dropout rate is approaching 50 percent (Hedman, 1984, p. 355). In the words of one dropout on the relationship between school, social studies, and reality, "the stuff more or less that they was teaching in a sense, it wasn't really relevant to what was going on in the future. Who really cares if Christopher Columbus named Plymouth Rock (Thornton, 1985, p. 11). After all, social studies is primarily history, history is the study of the past (America pulled out of Vietnam in 1973), the past is the stuff of schooling, and schooling is separate from reality.

This chasm was echoed by Herndon who wrote seventeen years ago that "flax is what school is all about . . . I never knew what flax was, but I knew that if I kept it in mind and wrote it down a lot and raised my hand and said it a lot, I would be making it" (1971, p. 117). "The game is called 'Let's Pretend,' and if its name were chiseled into the front of every school
building in America, we would at least have an honest announcement of what takes place there” (Postman and Weingartner, 1969, p. 49). As poignantly as any contemporary study, these authors suggest that education in American schools is as much an implicit process as an explicit lecture designed to impart information downward from teacher to student, that “the substance of what is learned . . . is less indelible in the young person’s mind than other lessons which are taught and internalized . . . Thus, the school as a colonizing function is important for what is informally learned”, i.e. the maintenance procedures which the student must learn to survive (Raskin, 1973, pp. 25, 27). “Its most devastating effect is to produce in students a feeling of alienation from the educational process,” a “schizophrenia” or an “ecological imbalance” by virtue of the dissonance between explicit aims and implicit messages, between what is real and what is school (Postman and Weingartner, 1969, p. 49). In the words of one of my own high school students, alienated and schizophrenic in the educational sense, offering an explanation for her poor performance, “the only one I can give is that I was having ‘extreme’ personal problems at home. Most of the time I really didn’t care about my grades because I had so many other things on my mind; so many problems. I shouldn’t have let this interfere with my schoolwork, but I did” (personal communication).

In more analytical terms, flax and other games are seen in Cusick’s educational ethnography of Horatio Gates High School which “has not accepted (students) as active participants in their own education; rather it has systematically denied their involvement in basic, educational processes and relegated them to the position of watchers, waiters, order-followers, and passive receptacles for the depositing of disconnected bits of information. They, in turn, have responded by paying only a minimal amount of forced attention to ‘formal’ educational processes . . . ” (1973, pp. 221-222). Given the curricular structure within which public secondary education must function, divorced from the ‘real’ world as perceived by the student, schooling cannot help but promote passivity, conformity, and accommodation to the organization in order for the student to successfully proceed up the educational ladder. The school is “essentially a coercive system . . . The student is taught (a) that in a democracy he is his own authority, (b) that the essential element of intellectual emancipation is the questioning of all authority. Yet he is denied any genuine authority in the conduct of institutions that govern his life” (Sexton, 1967, p. 68). While it is not the intent of this essay to focus on the “discipline” problem which governs the “maintenance subsystem” of the comprehensive public school, it is suggested that the academic manifestation of the school as a “coercive system,” is a curricular organization locked in historical tradition, a textbook industry trussed in a “subjective-neutral” outlook, and educators bound within such institutional parameters who then create the “alienation from the educational process” and the denial of “intellectual emancipa-
tion” so necessary for “the questioning of all authority” in a democratic society.

Vietnam and American Textbooks

Nowhere is the gap between school and reality seen in starker contrast than in those textbooks written for the secondary school curriculum. Because they accompany the curriculum, these texts symbolize the critical problem of a social studies education not simply by what they include for students to read, but by how they include that information, as well as by what they fail to include. Given that they are written for students of various ability levels, that they are primarily historical, i.e., chronological in format, and that they are approved at the state level by textbook committees which must reject topics too controversial in tone for fear of offending various individuals and/or groups, is it any wonder that high school students receive an education which seldom mirrors the reality of the world outside the school? “Who decided about the textbooks?” asked Herndon, answered in turn by Frances FitzGerald in mocking fashion. “Way up in some office building sit people—ordinary mortals with red and blue pencils—deciding all the issues of American history, not to mention those of literature and biology. What shall we think of the Vietnam War?” she asks, and “What is the nature of American society and what are its values?” as expressed in its textbooks (1979, p. 27).

The definitive study of textbooks and what they (don’t) say about Vietnam is William L. Griffen and John Marciano’s examination of 28 high school texts which were/are used in schools across the country (1979). The authors conclude their study with the following statements. “Twenty-eight textbooks examined the most bitter conflict in recent American history without calling into question a single fundamental premise surrounding the conflict. The limited margin of debate and dissent was maintained, safe from attacks upon the honor and integrity of our leaders, or upon the nation itself. American high-school students, teachers, and parents could read these textbooks without considering the possibility that they lived in a nation that had committed the most blatant act of aggression since the Nazi invasions of World War II” (1979, p. 171). Analyzing the historical stages of American involvement in Vietnam, they look primarily at the political dimensions of the war but also note the human elements of this tragedy. In this regard, they write that the texts fail to examine both “the charge of United States war crimes” and “the full extent of human and ecological destruction in Indochina” (1979, p. xviii). It is just this human element, often lost in the political discussions of the American war in Vietnam, and the failure of the social studies curriculum and the texts which accompany that curriculum to portray this element, which is the concern of this essay.

Given the historical approach to knowledge in the secondary social studies curriculum, how much time can be devoted to teaching Vietnam if
the teacher is to cover the history of the country from “the founding of Jamestown” to the contemporary era, conceding a chapter on the original inhabitants of the continent? Witness the American history text of 973 pages which begins with a “Colonial America” unit, the first two chapters of which are “Cortez and Montezuma: the Conquest of the Aztecs,” and “Exploring and Conquering the Americas” (Weinstein and Gatell, 1981). Vietnam in this text occupies perhaps five pages interspersed with sections on Santo Domingo and Lyndon Johnson’s Policy, and with scattered references in various other parts of the text. Nowhere in this text, nor in other selected texts, are found any references to the numbers of American casualties, the dead or the wounded, the prisoners of war and/or those missing in action, those who returned home poisoned by dioxin, or those veterans with post-traumatic stress disorders (Ver Steeg and Hofstadter, 1981; Bass, Billias, and Lapsansky, 1983). In one text which does mention casualty figures, the statistics are for Americans only, “some 46,000 Americans had been killed, and more than 300,000 others had been wounded” (Drewry, O’Conner, and Freidel, 1984, p. 639). Depending on the reference somewhere between 45,958 and 46,163 Americans were killed in action, while there were some 47,205 combat deaths, yet the total number of deaths including the missing, the captured, and some 10,420 non-combat deaths from disease and accidents, was put at 57,625 by 1973 and 58,022 by May 1985, figures which are more accurate indications of the loss of American life (Baskir and Strauss, 1978; Thayer, 1985).

If these omissions were not serious enough, the ethnocentric bias of the texts is indicated by their failure to include information on others who were involved in the war. Nowhere are these figures on the number of casualties suffered by our allies, the Koreans, the Thais, or the Australians who fought with us, much less the casualties amongst the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and local militia. Nowhere are the ethnic minorities of the highland regions even mentioned, the so-called Montagnards referred to as the Dega or as the Ana Chu by Gerald Cannon Hickey, peoples who suffered both military and civilian casualties out of all proportion to their population, a people who were uprooted from their traditional homelands in political which verged on the genocidal (1982, xviii). “About a third of the estimated 1 million population were dead by 1975; 85% of their villages had been abandoned or forcibly evacuated” (Hickey, 1986, p. 62). Nowhere is there any mention of the casualties suffered by the civilian South Vietnamese population or the civilian North Vietnamese population, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), or the National Liberation Front (NLF), popularly known as the Viet Cong. Nowhere are there any figures which indicate the extent of the destruction of the environment by defoliation, and the continuing effects of dioxin poisoning upon the population and the land. Where is there any mention of widows and orphans created by the war, of
those maimed for life by the fighting, and of the beggars, panhandlers, prostitutes, and pimps who followed in the wake of the armies. In short, nowhere in these texts is there any realistic interpretation of the human costs of the American war in Vietnam. In 1979, FitzGerald wrote that "in most texts the reporting on the war is no more accurate than their predictions about it were... (and with one exception), All the rest of the texts are neither hawkish or dovish on the war—they are simply evasive" (1979, pp. 124-126). Contemporary texts indicate very little has changed.

In this context, what is also relevant here is that these texts are U.S. history texts, with a focus on Vietnam relative to American involvement in Southeast Asia. This distinction is crucial for it is a concrete manifestation of the organization of social studies curriculum which positions the teaching of Vietnam "at the very end of the American history course," and a reflection of an implicit bias in regard to the manner in which we as Americans view countries such as Vietnam. This bias is seen, for example, in dramatic form in the January 1988 issue of Social Education entitled "Teaching the Vietnam War," in which not one single article addressed as a primary focus the teaching of Vietnamese history and culture. The uninitiated would wonder whether there was a Vietnamese history prior to the European and American, analogous to US history textbooks which devote a condescending first chapter or section to the Native American, or begin the section on Vietnam with American or French involvement in the country. Where do we view Vietnam within the context of Vietnamese history and culture, outside of the Western and/or American perspective, in an attempt to understand American involvement in Vietnam from the Vietnamese frame of reference? Ignoring the Vietnamese cultural tradition, does it not become easier to impose an American mindset upon the Vietnamese landscape, to dehumanize the Vietnamese as a people, and to massacre "gooks" in their own villages?

Of the above texts, Weinstein and Gatell do write that the "indiscriminate use by American forces of napalm fire bombs and defoliant chemicals also weakened the moral position of the United States throughout the world," not to mention that they killed people, noting in the next sentence that the "escalation of the war cost thousands of American lives and billions of dollars in equipment," as if equipment and lives can be equated here (1981, p. 874). The most human passages of the text refer to "charred bodies of Vietnamese and their demolished villages—the aftermath of American air raids" and, in the following sentence, "the slaughter of 347 Vietnamese men, women, and children by an American unit (what unit?) on a search-and-destroy mission at My Lai (where the hell is My Lai?) on March 19, 1968" which came to be known as the My Lai massacre (1981, p. 897). The treatment of My Lai however raises additional concerns and epitomizes the difficulties in teaching Vietnam to high school students whom we choose to shelter from the atrocities of a brutal war.
There were our students, graduates of our high schools, who became our soldiers. In Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division, referred to as the Americal Division, the company which attacked Xom Lang, 87% of the 23 Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO’s) were high school graduates and 25% had college credits. Seventy percent of the enlistees and inductees were high school graduates as well and 19% had college credits. For Regular Army (RA) enlistees, 56% were high school graduates and 23% had college credits. For Bravo Company, involved in the assault at My Hoi, 85% of the 27 NCO’s were high school graduates, 41% had college credits, and three had college degrees. For the enlistees and inductees, 74% were high school graduates, 20% had college credits, and two had college degrees. The only RA figures indicate that two were college graduates. Of Bravo Company’s five officers, three were college graduates. Yet these men were scored by the Inquiry Report for, amongst other things, their “attitude toward Vietnamese... The most disturbing factor we encountered was the low regard in which some of the men held the Vietnamese, especially rural or farming people. This attitude appeared to have been particularly strong in Charlie Company, some of whose men viewed the Vietnamese with contempt, considering them subhuman, on the level of dogs” (Peers, 1979, p. 230). From where does this attitude come? While the factors which might account for the massacre were both complex and interrelated, it is suggested here that the mindset characterized by the imposition of an American intellectual framework upon a Vietnamese landscape is the analytical parallel of a mindset which considers the Vietnamese themselves as subhuman and creates the conditions for such a massacre to occur. The analytical and the experiential are but different frameworks which reflect similar perspectives and are indicative of the American inability to understand Vietnam, a characteristic reflected in a similar inability to understand Vietnam in American education today.

In the defense of his actions, Lt. William Calley, Jr., the Platoon Leader of 1st Platoon of Charlie Company, charged with the murder of 102 men, women, and children, stated that “I felt then and I still do that I acted as I was directed and that I carried out orders I was given... I never sat down and analyzed whether they were men, women and children. They were enemy, not people” (Life, 1972, p. 22). Under cross-examination by the Prosecuting Attorney, Captain Aubrey Daniel, who asked whether his men had fired at men, women, or children, Calley responded that “I didn’t discriminate between individuals in the village, sir. They were all the enemy, they were all to be destroyed, sir” (Life, 1971, p. 28).

Taking their cue from their Commanding Officer, the men of the 1st Platoon responded to questions in kind. In interviews with Richard Hammer, these men provided in their own words the connection between the destruction of war, the perceptions of law and lawlessness, and the savagery which
the unit inflicted upon the inhabitants of Son My village (1970). The nature of the mission was "to search and destroy. This is something we were told to do and we did it... This is the type of thing that you're in training you're told to do. When you have a search and destroy, this is what your orders are to do. You don't question it... A search and destroy is a mission... to destroy anything within that area." According to another soldier, "the lieutenant said, well, to go in and kill everyone... and if you don't kill everyone... you're gonna be shot yourself... so I think I killed about 18 or 20 people." It was apparently easy to kill these people, men, women, and children, if "they were all the enemy," in the words of Lieutenant Calley. As one of his soldiers said, "Vietnamese are funny people... They seem to have no understanding of life. They don't care whether they live or die."

My Lai and the American Mindset

The sentence noted above concerning the My Lai massacre contains two major errors as well as important omissions. First, the text figure of 347 casualties is incorrect. According to the Peers Inquiry Report, "the precise number of Vietnamese killed exceeds 400;" in addition, "a part of the crimes... included individual and group acts of murder, rape, sodomy, maiming, and assault on noncombatants and the mistreatment and killing of detainees" (Peers, 1979, pp. 295-296). And according to the report of the village chief to the district, six days after the massacre, the civilian casualty figure was set at 570 (Peers, 1979, p. 277). Finally, "according to those who survived, about four hundred and thirty-five people were killed" (Hammer, 1970, p. 5). The textbooks figure was very simply in error.

Second, the term My Lai massacre is a misnomer and is an indication of the ethnocentric bias which pervades our approach to the teaching of foreign cultures and a reflection of the imposition of the American mindset onto the Vietnamese landscape which contributed to the lawlessness and the savagery. The massacre took place in the village of Son My, rather than in the hamlet of My Lai, one of the four hamlets which composed the village. Each hamlet was further broken down into sub-hamlets, and My Lai hamlet, for example, was composed of four sub-hamlets, each with its own individual name. The massacre itself actually took place in three different sub-hamlets of two different hamlets: in My Hoi sub-hamlet of Co Luy hamlet, and in Xom Lang and Binh Dong sub-hamlets of Tu Cung hamlet. There was very simply no massacre of innocent civilians in My Lai hamlet. Why then is the slaughter referred to as the My Lai massacre?

My Lai has become synonymous with the massacre because, on American maps of this region of Quang Ngai province, the primary force of the massacre took place in what the Americans called My Lai 4, which was in reality Xom Lang sub-hamlet. In fact, seven different sub-hamlets in two different hamlets in Son My village were referred to as My Lai 1-6. The primary
target of the assault was what was referred to on American maps as My Lai 1, called Pinkville, what the Vietnamese called My Khe. According to Hammer, the "Americans had heard—and they had heard from many Vietnamese, including people who lived in Son My—that the Viet Cong were at My Lai in force. The helicopters brought C Company down outside what the American maps called My Lai 4, apparently convinced it was Pinkville" (1970, p. 60). In other words, the American military attacked the wrong target, a target indicated on American maps by incorrect terminology imposed upon the Vietnamese landscape in ignorance of the Vietnamese perception of the world in which they lived. "What one would not do is what American map-makers did; that is, to ignore the real names and give generalized names with numbers after them. Would an American unfamiliar with a new map with its own nomenclature know where a place called Hastings (5) or White Plains (3) or Mount Vernon (2) was? No more would he than would a Vietnamese asked where My Lai (4) or My Khe (3) was" (Hammer, 1970, p. 34). In a war fought in the villages, for the hearts and minds of the people, "most Americans, including Americans serving with the military in Vietnam, seem to have little comprehension of what the Vietnamese mean when they talk about villages and hamlets and sub-hamlets" (Hammer, 1970, p. 31). The American mindset which characterized this attempt to transform Vietnam into a world which Americans could understand was an exercise in cultural chauvinism, the inability to make what Frances FitzGerald calls "this leap of perspective" into "a world qualitatively different from its own," indicative of how America fought the Vietnam War, and illustrative of how America teaches Vietnam today (1972, pp. 6-8). If those who produce textbooks continue to convey these same biases to our students through the textbooks which they write, the teacher's guides which accompany these textbooks, as well as through the curriculum materials which supplement the courses for which textbooks are written, then students will continue to be educated within a mindset that set the conditions for My Lai, or what the Vietnamese refer to as Son My, the Son My massacre, to occur.

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What is most frightening about these interviews is that they seem to repre-
sent the dominant attitude of the American military towards the Vietnamese whom they were there to assist in the first place, and that what appears from this vantage point to be an aberration may simply be an extreme example of normal behavior. As one interviewee recounted, "It was completely illogical. I mean, why should they shoot them, but they were there... Whatever was there was supposed to be the bad guys." The so-called My Lai massacre did appear to be illogical yet the Inquiry Report stated that "it seems to follow that if these men were average American soldiers, and if other units with the same kind of men did not commit atrocities of this order, there must have been other overriding causes" attributed to the attitude of the men in Charlie and Bravo Companies, an indication that there were logical explanations to explain the aberrant behavior of "average American soldiers" (Peers, 1979, p. 231). According to the men of Charlie Company however, the point was that their behavior was aberrant only in the number of casualties, and expected of them by their officers and NCO's, who then not only covered up the massacre but took no disciplinary action of their own. In the words of one interviewee, "We were just out there shooting gooks... I've heard stories and talked to different people from different other units and, like that happens that people in villages get shot up a lot. But it just never seems to come down, you know" (Hammer, 1970). And according to another soldier, "I don't feel like this was some isolated circumstance. It's happened many times before and many times after" (Hammer, 1970).

That My Lai was hardly aberrant behavior is seen in the Winter Soldier Investigation conducted by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) from January 31 through February 2, 1971, in which more than one hundred veterans discussed American war crimes committed against the Vietnamese (1972). Convened "because veterans of the Indochina war knew that the occurrence at My Lai was not an isolated incident" (1972, p. xiii), "other than, perhaps, the number of victims killed all in one place, all at one time, all by one platoon of us" (1972, p. 2) the investigation was brought to another level with the argument that "My Lai was only a minor step beyond the standard, official United States in Indochina. It is hypocritical self-righteousness to condemn the soldiers at My Lai without condemning those who set the criminal policy of free-fire zones, strategic hamlets, saturation bombing, et cetera, from which My Lai was the inevitable result" (1972, p. xiii). The investigation was directed towards those who "created that policy; that set that standard of war bordering on full and final genocide" (1972, p. 2).

The attitude of the grunts of Charlie Company is reflected in the veterans' testimony during the Winter Soldier Investigation. In the words of one Marine, "There was an aura of hate in my outfit. I mean, a Vietnamese—there was no such thing to my unit as a friendly Vietnamese. Every Vietnamese was a gook. I've hardly ever heard the term Vietnamese. They
were always gooks" (1972, p. 27). In his "Letter from a Vietnam Veteran," Gordon Livingston writes that "what I objected to was not so much individual atrocities, for these can be found in any war; war itself is the atrocity. What compelled my stand was the evident fact that at the operational level most Americans simply do not care about the Vietnamese" (1969, p. 22). Reflected in the terminology by which Americans referred to the Vietnamese, "the universal designation for the people of Vietnam, friend or enemy," as "gooks," "dinks," "slopes," "slants," or "zips," Livingston raises fundamental questions concerning the nature of a war in which those who were assisting the nation in its war against its brothers lumped friend, foe, and innocent together, a manifestation of the mindset that allows friend and innocent to be killed as easily as foe (1969, p. 22). Such terminology "does say something about our underlying attitude toward those for whose sake we are ostensibly fighting. How can we presume to influence a struggle for the political loyalties of a people for whom we manifest such uniform disdain is to me the great unanswered, indeed unanswerable question of this war" (1969, p. 22). In my view, the fundamental issue of the American war in Vietnam concerns the American dehumanization of the Vietnamese, seen at the policy level in the imposition of an American mindset on a Vietnamese landscape, at the personal level in the characterization of all Vietnamese as "gooks" who "have no understanding of life" not caring "whether they live or die," and at the educational level in the sterility of curriculum and textbooks which gloss over the human reality of Vietnam in the interests of the institutional structure.

Conclusion

It is not the intent of this essay to focus on the war crimes of American soldiers but, in Livingston's tenor, to discuss what appears to have been an abnormal circumstance that in reality is a manifestation of an American mindset shaped in American public schools. In the words of one of my students who responded to Hammer's interviews, "The film was evidence of the military way of buckpassing. The soldiers were trained to take orders and the order was to kill everyone . . . You can't kill (the enemy) so you find an alternative target in the villages of My Lai. When the shooting starts, a kind of mob panic begins . . . This system's hierarchy said to go ahead and kill . . . Within our school system, we can find a parallel which is similar in structure. It can be to follow orders blindly, without individual discretion and ethics . . . We as a school system could in many ways lay the basis for mass conformity. We are not encouraged to question" (personal communication). This student, who will soon enter the public school system as a teacher, has recognized the ultimate folly of an American education which, by nature of the institution, educates as much by implicit design as well as by explicit instruction. In writing on textbooks, Griffen and Marciano, quoting Morgart and Mihalik, note that "through their pretensions
of neutrality and objectivity and through their suppression of data and alternative views, textbooks further the hegemonic process by establishing the "parameters which define what is legitimate, reasonable, practical, good, true and beautiful" (1979, p. 163). And in terms of curriculum, we have only to note Secretary of Education William J. Bennett's recent pronouncement of a traditional "core curriculum" for the mythical "James Madison High School," a curriculum which in the social studies sphere offers one year each of Western Civilization and American History with one semester each of the Principles of American Democracy and American Democracy and the World. How much more ethnocentric can we be, can our schools be, when the United States Secretary of Education, in "the first effort by the Education Department to specify in detail what students should be learning," proposes a social studies curriculum which ignores the contemporary study of Asia, Africa, and the Americas below the Rio Grande, as well as the historical backgrounds of American students whose ancestors came from those areas? (Washington Post, 1987, p. A5). It is argued here that curriculum and textbooks both, within the framework of the comprehensive public high school, shape the nature of education at the secondary level as much by what they fail to acknowledge as by what they embrace.

Within the background of an increasing American involvement in the war in Vietnam, Chomsky wrote that "a discussion of American schools can hardly avoid noting the fact that these schools are the first training ground for the troops that will enforce the muted, unending terror of the status quo of a projected American century" (1966, p. 485). Five short years later, now seen within the background of the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, this same theme was reiterated during the Winter Soldier Investigation. In the closing statement of the Investigation, Master Sergeant Don Duncan of the 5th Special Forces Group wrote that "for those of you who have never been in service and have listened to this testimony, you might well be amazed at how our people—our men, our boys, our sons—could do some of these things that they described in this room. Otherwise normal individuals, creating terror, torture, destruction, wanton. How could they have done this? How could they have been changed that dramatically in eight short weeks of basic training? I think the fact that so much can be done to so many men by so few people is the greatest testament to the fact that our colleges, our high schools, our everyday life is nothing but pre-basic training... The men did not become racists when they entered the service. They grew up with it. It was taught to them and it was taught to them in our schools" (1972, p. 164).

Viewed through the lens of the American involvement in Vietnam, it is argued that it is the failure of the American public schools, through a social studies curriculum which is embedded in historical tradition, shaped by sterilized textbooks, and directed by ethnocentric educators, to provide
students with an understanding of the world as it exists outside the school that must ultimately share the blame for the conduct of its graduates. How better to insure the stupidity of our students, "our men, our boys, our sons," than to educate them in the present tradition, graduates who are then sent off to fight and to die, for reasons which they fail to understand, in violation of international law, and who commit the savagery of a massacre on a Vietnamese village, and then justify that savagery through the same logic that we continue to use to justify teaching and learning in our public schools.

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Book Reviews

An Invitation to Scholars in the Social Studies

A field of study can be defined as “an association of people who have agreed to continue in communication with each other” (Tax, 1955). The field of social studies education is not an easy field in which to practice nowadays. Social studies educators are assailed by national commissions for the lack of quality of their product: undereducated, mediocre teachers; nonrigorous, uninspiring curricula; bored students (The National Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983; The Holmes Group, 1986; The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Ravitch, 1985; Hirsch, 1985; Bennett, 1986; Cheney, 1987). They are continually exhorted to improve (although the calls for reform seem rather self-serving, simplistic and contradictory.) Social studies educators need a place where they can regroup, reflect on their practice and rediscover their roots. This Book Review section of *Theory and Research in Social Education* seeks to become a forum where scholars in social studies can come together in conversation across time and space to do one of the things that we do best: read widely, think, and write.

At a time when our numbers are dwindling (the number of doctoral candidates entering social studies education programs has dropped) and reports of entire graduate social studies education programs going out of business at universities are not rare, we need to ask ourselves, “would our absence be noticed?” (Hymes, 1969). What is it that we do that cannot be done by others in other disciplines?

One of the functions that I think we serve is that of brokers of scholarly knowledge in the social studies. As both creators and users of research and literature in education, the social sciences and the humanities, we work constantly to put education students, teachers and administrators in contact with new and important ideas and works that have arrived on the scene, to acquaint them with ideas and works that are dead, dying or that still cast an influence over our discipline and practice, and, in general, to begin to help them connect the “little traditions” within which we all practice with the “great traditions” of the field (Redfield, 1960, pp. 57–58). I hope the book review section of this journal will be full of lively dialogue with which we can construct meaning about books and ideas that are important to our field.

I extend an invitation to both old and new readers of *TRSE* to submit book reviews and to submit them frequently. In an effort to encourage this
dialogue, I am widening the boundaries of what might be found in a more traditional book review section. I am encouraging the review of books that examine the theory, philosophy and politics of our practice. I am also encouraging the review of more pragmatic books that deal with the craft and art of the social studies educator. Reviews can range from raging denunciations of works that are seen as seriously flawed to more gentle uncoverings of underlying assumptions that need to be questioned. The boundaries of time have been pushed back: the newest works, essays on books that have been important in your practice, perhaps the best books you have read in the last ten years need to have their virtues extolled for those of us who have missed or forgotten them. There are many types of works that are important to our field: qualitative and quantitative research reports, think pieces, policy studies, biography, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Reviewers should not feel constrained by length; book review essays can be as short as two typewritten pages or as long as ten. The one commonality sought is that authors address why this book is important for social studies educators to read and to discuss how it has been or will be of use to us in our practice. We are not seeking consensus in our conversation (reviewers are encouraged to write “second opinions” of reviews with which they disagree.) but we are seeking coherence and connections between what is happening in our field, what is not happening and what might happen.

The book reviews published in this edition of the journal are a good cross section of the types of reviews that are being sought. Mary Rivkin considers a report from a federal agency that is influencing how the media, general public and many educators perceive our profession. Rivkin’s review is to be commended in the way she characterizes the genre: as “an exhortation,” and identifies its strengths, it is “rich with memorable quotes” and it is “provocative”; but she also thoughtfully uncovers some underlying assumptions. Rivkin shows the lack of fit between what American Memory claims should be done and the problems that we are facing today.

Rivkin's review is followed by reviews of two ethnographic studies: Stuart Palonsky’s 900 Shows a Year is reviewed by Jean Grambs and Sally Lubeck’s Sandbox Society is reviewed by Richard Jantz. Grambs provides an incisive, in-depth critique of Palonky’s underlying conception of what is important to know about schooling and thus what is important to “report out.” Jantz describes how Lubeck works with her central concept of enculturation and, like Grambs, attends to whether the author has accomplished that which ethnographers set out to do.

In each journal I would like to have a social scientist or humanities scholar review a book from their discipline that they feel is important and useful. In this journal Sari Bennett, a geographer, reviews The Nine Nations of North America by Joel Garreau. Reviewed in TRSE by Joyce Honeychurch in 1982, it was given a generally favorable review but the
longevity of its relevance was questioned. Bennett brings it to our attention because of its continued widespread use in undergraduate university geography courses. She quickly gains our attention. "'Forget the map.' The thought makes every geography teacher shudder." She then combines description, quotations and solid analysis to help us understand what it is about the book that makes it important for our reconsideration.

The last review is a discussion by Murry Nelson of a work of fiction, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Selected for review because "the book causes one to reflect on current society and the role of schooling and education in this society," Nelson discusses the "clarity, force and vividness of the writing" as well as why he uses this book with his secondary methods classes.

One of the ways I would like us to continue in communication with each other is by writing about books that we have read. As was done in this edition of the journal, I would like to publish between three to five book reviews each quarter. To submit a book review, follow the TRSE manuscript guidelines (using the Third Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association) and the format found in this section of this journal. Send two copies to:

Dr. Jane J. White  
1820 Tucker Lane  
Ashton, MD 20861.120

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Reviewed by Mary S. Rivkin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Being a form of social action, education always has a geographical and cultural location; it is therefore specific, local, and dynamic; not general, universal, and unchanging; it is a function of a particular society at a particular time and place in history; it is rooted in some actual culture and expresses the philosophy and recognized needs of that culture (American Historical Association, 1934, in Cohen, 1974, p. 2592).

This observation by the American Historical Association provides a useful perspective from which to consider the recent pamphlet, *American Memory*, by Lynne V. Cheney, head of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Fundamentally an exhortation to improve humanities and foreign language education in the country's elementary and secondary schools, it recognizes some of our present needs and expresses a philosophy that is now current. It also offers some answers to these needs. But, it oversimplifies and ultimately leaves us without substantial guidance.

Cheney's analysis has four sections: the value of humanities and foreign language education; the textbooks for humanities education; the teachers; and recommendations. Humanities, defined here as history and literature, are neglected, and yet they alone enable us to realize where we have been and who we are. Foreign language education, if pursued sufficiently, permits us to read the humanities in the languages of other cultures and understand those as well. Current textbooks are barriers to education, as banal basal readers neither interest children nor present good literature, and overstuffed, timid history texts actually prevent students from making any meaning out of the information therein. Finally, writes Cheney, some teachers are excellent at transmitting culture but most are undereducated (though educable) and oversupervised and overburdened by members of an overgrown bureaucracy who are "outsiders" (p. 26) to the classroom. Three major recommendations follow logically: 1) children should study,
not social studies, but more history, and more literature, and they should begin foreign language study in elementary school; 2) textbooks should have more substance, and original literature and documents should be used; and 3) teachers should study more history, literature, and foreign languages in college and in continuing education, and should be freed of those burdens which interfere with teaching and learning.

The recommendations of this persuasively written booklet are in line with other calls for educational reform characteristic of this decade. Furthermore, who would deny the value of knowledge of history, literature, and foreign languages, the salience of good textbooks, and the need for better educated teachers who have the freedom to concentrate on teaching? However, I think the analysis does have weaknesses in three areas: it misunderstands the social sciences and social studies; it ignores the demographics of the current student population; and curiously in a document advocating a greater knowledge of history, it implicitly invokes a Golden Age of Education, which historically never existed.

Taking each of these areas in turn, it is probably accurate to say that social studies educators would agree with Cheney's observation that the term “social studies” has been used to describe insubstantial courses. On the other hand, it is overreacting to say therefore that elementary age children should now study only history instead. It is no doubt true in the global village that sticking with the hoary spiral of home, neighborhood, community, etc., as social studies topics gravely underestimates children's knowledge and capability; alternatively, focusing only on the past with young children who live in the present, is not much more sensible. Geography, economics, anthropology, and sociology all have insights and methodologies to contribute to children's understanding of their world.

Furthermore, I am not sure that simply saying “study history” is helpful. A key issue here is “whose version?” Interpretations of history change as their times change. As Frances FitzGerald (1979) observed in her critique of American history texts, those of the fifties portrayed America as “perfect, the greatest nation in the world, the embodiment of democracy, freedom, and technological progress” (p. 10), but the texts of the seventies, responding to social changes, presented an America beset by troubles. The multiracial, multicultural perspective that now predominates in texts is plagued by unresolved questions such as: Is our society a delicate balance of groups or do we have integration of groups? Do we have a dominant culture? Should we have one? (FitzGerald, 1978, pp. 97-98.) Knowledge is a supremely human creation and is constantly being recreated. Historical knowledge only appears to be fixed—it too undergoes constant reinterpretation.

It may be that our society needs to study, that is reinterpret, history at this point as a way of refurbishing our self-concept. Given the tumult and disappointments of the past two decades, perhaps we no longer understand
ourselves well and wish to look further back for inspiration as to who we really are. We have more than 200 years of events and images to sort through; possibly this "particular society at [this] particular time and place in history" needs to do that. This need is reflected by the publication of *American Memory*.

The second concern I have is about students. Where are they in *American Memory*? Some, we are told, liked studying the *Aeneid*, some were brilliantly knowledgeable about the Constitution, and statistics show that increasing numbers of them are enrolling in foreign language courses. How do students in general feel about the prospect of increased and more challenging humanities courses—will more drop out, will more stay in? The reason American schools greatly expanded their narrow classical curriculum was to meet the needs of the diverse population that suddenly became their responsibility after 1900. Is the still diverse population ready now for a more narrow curriculum? Do students care if half of them do not know in which half-century the Civil War was fought? When the Committee of Ten in 1892 asserted the value of a standardized classical curriculum for its relatively homogeneous high school population, even then not everyone agreed it was good for students. Ten years after the report had taken effect on schools, the father of adolescent psychology, G. Stanley Hall (1905) observed that because in the adolescent the need for variety was greater than at any other period in life,

> [h]e does not want a standardized, overpeptonized mental diet. It palls on his appetite. He suffers from mental *ennui* and dyspepsia, and this is why so many and an increasing number refuse some of the best prepared courses. (p. 509)

Hall's observation is still relevant.

Furthermore, while Cheney apparently conceives of education as a teacher, a student, and a well-written book, my experience and observation suggest that contemporary education is much more diverse. Students learn economics from their jobs, geography from our unparalleled mobility, and endless jumbles of politics, anthropology, and sociology from television, movies, and radio. As FitzGerald (1979) notes, today's students suffer from an overdose of information that needs sorting (p. 19). The dilemma for both students and teachers is how to make all this information coherent and to connect it to the experiences of people in other times and places. Books surely help in the meaning-making, but the complexity of contemporary education has eroded their primacy.

The primacy of the book, however, is one of the indicators of what I interpret to be *American Memory*'s rhetorical invocation of a mythical Golden Age of Education. This period, which ended around 1900 and began perhaps with the youth of the Founding Fathers, was characterized by young people's reading good books and being ennobled by them. Since
teachers were barely trained in those days and mass schooling had just begun to occur for elementary aged children, the presence of children in schoolrooms with wonderful, well-educated teachers was not the essence. The books were. The following passage concludes Cheney’s chapter on textbooks:

History is full of stories of young people learning from great works. One thinks of Lincoln working his way through the Bible. Or one thinks of Frederick Douglass struggling through *The Columbian Orator*, a collection of classic orations used as a schoolbook in the nineteenth century. (p. 20)

What is not stated here is the irony in this context that neither man read these books in school. They read them because they wanted to, because these books were available, and because books were the main way to gain information beyond the immediate environment. To choose these two persons as examples is more ironic when one recalls that Lincoln’s formal education was probably less than six months and was highly discouraged by his illiterate father, and that Douglass’ education was both illicit and haphazard. To compare students in our mass schools to these lonely intellectual strivers is forced. Our Lincolns and Douglasses will emerge, but probably not through our prescriptions for their reading.

Other important books in the Golden Age were *McGuffey’s Readers*. Cheney admires them, rightly, for being laden with good literature, and even implies they are usable today. However, what she does not state is that they are also sexist, classist, and racist (Spring, 1986, pp. 145-46). Furthermore, even in the Golden Age when they were highly popular, their influence on children was probably more limited than *American Memory* suggests since most children in the nineteenth century were not in school most of the time.

The most telling reference to the mythical Golden Age, however, is the description of The Committee of Ten:

In 1892, a school reform commission met that was distinguished in its membership and decided in its views. Known as the Committee of Ten, the panel called together scholars from universities—a young Princeton professor named Woodrow Wilson was among them—and representatives from the schools. As participants saw it, cultural content should be central to what was taught and learned. The Committee emphasized the importance of literature (as well as “training in expression”) and recommended an eight-year course of history. This plan of study the Committee stressed, was for all students, not just those who would be attending college.

For a time a curriculum of the kind the Committee of Ten endorsed prevailed. Gradually, however, an opposing view came to dominate:
Schools should concern themselves not with intellectual life, but with practical life. (p. 7)

The Committee of Ten years were clearly the Golden years. However, only a fraction of students were even in high school at that time, 10 percent at most. But what was suitable for the affluent and/or motivated and bright students had to be changed when urbanization, immigration, and industrialization forever, ineradicably altered the nature of secondary education in the first decades of this century. The development of alternative curricula for the new students who constituted the new schools was monumental, unprecedented, enthusiastic, and as a social effort ought not be denigrated. Enrollments rose from about 300,000 in 1890 to about 4 million in 1930. That is immense social change and to recall wistfully the decisions of the Committee of Ten is a rhetorical device to persuade us to abandon eight decades of struggling to deal with modern society. The Committee of Ten was pre-modern.

I admire American Memory for being rich with memorable quotes and being provocative. I think it is an attempt to buck ourselves up in a time of national uncertainty, and for that I say hurrah. But ultimately, I think it palliative and shortsighted. Adding courses, even ones with good books and good teachers, is not going to be enough, even to accomplish Cheney's goal of preserving cultural memory. Indeed the central task may be first to invest a usable cultural memory through the reinterpretation of history.

Moreover, as Cheney rightly observes our cultural memory can indeed be obliterated by many things, and while our schools may unwittingly play a role, surely other forces are even more significant. We are now enmeshed in a crisis in the rearing of our young which, if not well-resolved, will as surely obliterate cultural memory as any book burning or statue removal.

In the preindustrial age parents worked and raised children simultaneously. Industrialization began a separation of adult work and child rearing that resulted in today's mass schools. Still, during most of this century the home and the school complemented each other—the schools to prepare for the work world, the home to sustain and develop the person. Now, however, mothers have followed fathers out of the home and the home complements the school much less effectively. Many children are not being acculturated. They lack the daily consistency that family and community life once provided. They are no longer nourished by a coherent culture. For such children, mere cultural memory is an empty cup when there is precious little to remember or reason to care about remembering.

A crisis for the schools, and the rest of society, is here no less than it was in the early twentieth century. New institutions or arrangements are needed for children. Will we respond as educators did then with ingenuity and enthusiasm or will we retreat, as Cheney advocates, into older patterns of thinking that events have already made outmoded?
References


All of us who are graduates of an American high school have memories of that experience which constitutes 'our school.' But this experience gives us only a small window on the total institution, and unless we have gone on to high school teaching, how things looked from the teacher's side of the desk was very hazy. Thus we should welcome a book whose purpose is to give us this view, and, in deference to the research community, to do it in accord with the objective guidelines established for ethnographies. Palonsky reviews the methodology he utilized, and provides references to the standard authors in the field and previous ethnographies. However, the resulting book fails to meet the research standard described.

The research site was selected because it would hire the author as a full-time teacher when he needed a job; the school is atypical in many respects, serving an affluent, white, suburban district, with most students college-bound. Had the author observed the protocols of scholarly ethnography, the elements which are common to American high schools could certainly have been gleaned from this setting, and the significance of the differences made clear. The author has chosen another pathway—entertainer and critic. The title indicates that putting on a show is how the author views teaching; he does not tell us why this is a significant characteristic. Instead, we are provided with racy vignettes of the success he has in being a showman, including showing an R-rated movie and having a water-pistol
fight with his class. The author reports verbatim conversations, in many of which he makes a witty, cute, or telling riposte. Authenticity of reporting appears to be of less interest when providing proof that teachers, students and administrators often use 'locker-room' language and are sexist and obscene in both private and public discourse. Again, the significance of such usage in shedding light on the values, mores and norms in the contemporary high school is ignored; the author seems to revel in the shock value of these quotes for their own sake.

Characterizations of the various administrators are almost wholly negative and unpleasant. They are shown to be uneducated, of limited vision, semi-competent, and altogether of a lesser quality than a few of the dedicated teachers. Most of the experienced teachers are reported to be dull, burned out by a boring, inane, enterprise. The clothes individuals wear and their physical appearance are of great interest to the author although the ethnographic importance of these attributes are not indicated. The often overwhelming feeling of frustration that teachers feel because of institutionalized barriers is reported, but lacking is any insight into why the institution in spite of this is a lively and productive enterprise. Nor do we get a picture of the institutional structure as anything but ridiculous, created and upheld by people of limited talent. The sarcastic reporting, with many cruel observations of colleagues and administrators, conveys to the reader more of the flavor of a personal story—or even a vendetta—than a scholarly observation.

Occasionally the author interrupts his narrative to provide some factual data on the school district, and a few footnotes reference a scholarly source. Anecdotal material is followed by generalizations about that school and school system. These, however, rarely show the structure or the dynamics of the enterprise.

One finishes reading the narrative part of the book, the first 173 pages, with a feeling that the author was trying to write two books: an ethnography and a best-seller—a real life Up the Down Staircase. It is unfortunate that neither goal is realized. A classic in school ethnography, such as Gertrude McPherson's Small Town Teacher (1972) provides a model of the participant-observation technique from which some very important insights into the workings of the system can be derived. In McPherson's study the new teacher was innovative—as Palonsky claims to be also—but she used her experiences not to laud her own competence, but to show how, and possibly why, the institution dealt with her as it did. Palonsky seems only to want to show us how clever he was, how much the students loved him, and how feeble the system was in dealing with others with less flair. The author's style emphasizes the colorful and shocking so that much of the narrative reads more like mediocre fiction than objective reporting.

The author is so clearly angry with the way the system is organized that even the most sympathetic reader may well be left with a feeling that he pro-
tests too much, his rhetoric drowning out his scholarship. We need objective, detailed, descriptions of high schools. Teachers and schools are under attack today in a way bound to be confusing and discouraging. Institutional persistence in the face of such criticism needs explication which could be helped by authentic ethnography studies. This book unfortunately adds more irritation than enlightenment and may feed the prejudice of fellow scholars who have suspected all along that ethnographic research is not a dependable source of knowledge or insight.


Reviewed by Richard K. Jantz, University of Maryland

Children playing in sandboxes, putting together puzzles, or stacking blocks are common occurrences in our society. Everyday, parents send their children to preschools and Head Start Centers to engage in such activities. Parents meet there; teachers talk there; children play there; educators often visit there; but, too often little is done to help us understand and bring us new insights into the enculturation process that is occurring there through these everyday events. Lubeck's *Sandbox Society* is an attempt to do this.

*Sandbox Society* is an ethnographic comparison of two early learning experiences—one in a preschool where the teachers and students are white; the other in a Head Start Center where both the teachers and students are black. Lubeck sees the enculturation of children as a two-fold process: (1) the means by which the individual becomes part of the group, and (2) the means by which the group is reproduced and perpetuated. Lubeck speculated that external influences beyond the preschool or Head Start Center were strong influences on the teachers and consequently affected the enculturation of their students. A set of four questions guided Lubeck's investigation:

1. What external conditions influence child rearers?
2. What adaptations do people make to these conditions?
3. How are these adaptations conveyed to children? and
4. What behaviors do children manifest as a consequence?

The study took place on an inner suburb of a major mid-western city. A pilot study in the same area was conducted in an integrated preschool for one semester and involved visitations twice weekly resulting in approximately 100 hours of field observations. Based upon this pilot, Lubeck identified activities and space as being important areas for observations. The resultant study involved half-day observations on alternate days in the Head Start Center and the preschool from September to mid-November. At this point the decision was made to continue observations in the Head Start Center on a full time basis and to shift from being primarily an observer in
both environment to that of being more of a participant in the single environment. Lubeck explained this decision

The decision to remain for a longer period in the center was based on two cherished assumptions in ethnography. (i) that the researcher goes in to find the question (it took longer to find); and (ii) that one stays in a setting until one understands it. In addition, I felt a sense of responsibility to the teachers. They were helpful to me in my project, and I felt obligated to finish out the year helping out in the classroom. Previous experience with middle-class preschools made Harmony comprehensible in a way that the Irving Center was not, though, in fact, the comparative method made ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions apparent in a way they had not been before. (p. 57)

The primary methodology employed in ethnographic research is the use of a participant-observer. In many instances involving field investigations in education, the time period in the field is short and the role of the investigator is basically observational. In the Head Start Center, Lubeck experienced the initial problem of being a white observer in a black environment where “observer” often meant “judge”; Lubeck recognized the problem and shifted her role from observer to participant.

I was beginning to understand that I had been searching for answers to my questions in terms that made sense to me. But I knew the most important thing that I was able to learn all year—that I didn’t know anything, and that I needed to begin again. (p. 54)

Unlike highly quantifiable studies where observer variability across environments and time is a problem and needs to be tightly controlled, in a comparative ethnography, the participant-observation schedules need to be adjusted as the research questions are modified and the need for the subjects to trust and confide in the researcher increase. Lubeck’s study is a clear indication of why and how this can occur—“during these weeks, the gradual change in role which I experienced was vital to ‘the finding of questions’ and the ‘doing of ethnography’”. (p. 55)

The ‘doing of ethnography’ resulted in the isolation of potent and observable differences between the two programs in the areas of time and space, activities and materials, and in the nature of teacher-child interactions. Meals and group time dominate the time allocations at the Head Start Center while free play dominated the preschool schedule. Space is shared with adults and children in the preschool setting while there tended to be separate space for adults and children in the Head Start Center. Activities in the preschool setting were more divergent, object-oriented. They were more individualistic and focused upon change. The activities in the Head Start Center were more convergent, people-oriented. They were consensus building and led to social bonding.
Adults in the Center spent much time with each other. Their behavior tended to reflect patterns of behavior found in extended family networks. They worked closely together and structured group-oriented activities for their children. These Head Start teachers appeared to have structured "time, space and activity so as to reinforce values of collectivism, authority and traditional (repetitive) modes of interaction that reinforce the group experience. By structuring time, space and activity so that children do what others do, while also conforming to the directives of the teachers. The teachers seem to socialize children to adapt to the reality which they themselves experience." (pp. 137-138)

In contrast, the adults in the preschool setting encouraged the development of individuality. They spent most of their time with individual children and were responsive to individual requests. The classrooms seemed "to reinforce values of individuality and autonomy and to promote positive feelings toward change." (p. 137)

The external conditions that influenced the teacher, their adaptations to the two environments and the children and the consequences of these adaptations on the behaviors of children, were summarized by Lubeck:

Both the black and the white women in the respective settings have clear ideas about how children learn and about how they should behave. They convey their own life orientations and expectations to children by creating total environments that reinforce values that give their own lives meaning. The learning environments thus become different means of reaching different ends. The Head Start teachers work closely together and reinforce collective values; the preschool teachers work alone with children much of the time and encourage values of individualism and self-expression . . . In both cases, the teachers live in families very like those of the children they teach, and, in both cases, they structure an environment that is consonant with their experiences outside of school (pp. 133-134)

Lubeck’s study is a result of her graduate work and is written as a thesis with slight variation from the traditional five chapter study. Her chapter two is a review of the literature and clearly describes the theoretical perspective that she brings to the study. The methodology is described in the third chapter and the setting in the fourth chapter. Three chapters contain descriptions of the use of time, space, activities and materials. The chapter on patterns of interaction primarily focuses on adult-child and adult-adult interactions with a clear emphasis on how adults transmit social knowledge. It is difficult to tell whether this is a bias of the study or a pattern that clearly emerged from the observations. In the last chapter Lubeck relates her study toward a theory of cultural transmission. At times, holding to the thesis format interferes with the flow of ideas. There are too many headings and subheadings to serve as transitions for ideas. One might contrast the flow of
this book with Liebow's *Talley's Corner*, which is not written as a graduate school requirement.

Lubeck is not an early childhood or social studies educator and did not approach the problem from the teaching/learning perspective. She clearly stated in the preface and throughout the text that she was primarily interested in factors in the teachers' environments external to the school that affected the socialization of the teachers and the subsequent influences of these forces on the structuring of the environment and the socialization of the children. Her examinations of the child's use of time, space, activities, and materials seemed to be based on the adult enculturation processes and did not provide insights on how children socialize other children into groups and patterns of behavior.

Nevertheless, the socialization and enculturation of values that occurred in these environments are of primary importance to educators. Lubeck asks, "What would happen if teachers themselves had the opportunity to work in different social contexts and the skills—and the luxury—to analyze their own practice?" (p. 151). The powerful role of the teacher as a model and transmitter is evident in this study. Although the study did not address such areas as the development of stereotypes and bias, the finding that the teacher is strongly influenced by conditions external to the school has strong implications for the development of gender and racial awareness on the part of children and for the child's construction of social inequalities. The external conditions that influence teacher behaviors and the resulting adaptations teachers make to their classrooms and students need to be understood. Lubeck's study is a beginning step in that direction.


Reviewed by Sari J. Bennett, Geography Department, University of Maryland-Baltimore County

"Forget the map." The thought makes every geography teacher shudder; yet these are the first words on the cover of this regional geography book written by an editor of the *Washington Post*. Forget the political map of North America with its 50 states and numerous nations separated by boundaries that often make little sense. Replace this with a new map of the continent divided into more comprehensible regions, chunks of space with a capital, a distinctive hinterland, emotional allegiances, and different views of the rest of the world. These regions are the *Nine Nations of North America*, and Garreau’s description of their people, culture, political environment, and unifying attitudes provides not only immensely good reading, but also incredibly good geography.
A region is an area unified by one or more characteristics. Geographers have always used regions as tools to examine, define, describe, explain, and analyze the human and physical environment. Regions define manageable units of space upon which we build our knowledge. Regional treatments of North America are common; most use a traditional framework: New England, Middle Atlantic, South, Midwest, West, and so forth. While these works provide information on history, climate, economic activities, and population, they do not often provide a "feel" for the region. This is where Garreau excels. Gathering information from two years of travel and hundreds of interviews, Garreau has given life and personality to each nation. Through his regional analysis we gain the geographic background necessary to understand why residents of these nations react in particular ways to political, economic, and social issues.

Through almost 400 pages Garreau takes us on a tour of our continent from a refreshingly new perspective. So vivid are his descriptions, I am tempted to quote one after another. Listen to this! Isn't this just like the region? At least a one line description is necessary to set the tone for each nation.

**New England**—the nation that “prides itself on being the only really civilized place in North America, a kind of Athens of the continent” (p. 16).

**Foundry**—whose steel in the form of barbed wire, rails, and steel skyscrapers changed the geography of the nation. The gritty cities of the Foundry form “... North America’s Gulag Archipelago ... the continent’s chain of urban prison camps” (p. 58).

**Dixie**—whose boundaries are more defined by emotion than any other nation. “The South has changed so much in the past decade or two that change itself has become Dixie’s most identifiable characteristic” (p. 130).

**The Islands**—with Miami as its capital has drugs as its number one industry. “... Miami was transformed into the intrigue capital of the hemisphere, reinforcing the dissimilarity between South Florida and the mainland to which it was only physically attached—an island very much like Hong Kong” (p. 174).

**Mexamerica**—the nation that “couldn’t exist in its present form until the advent of advanced aqueducts, air-conditioning, and the automobile” (p. 220).

**Ecotopia**—a contraction of Ecological Utopia is defined by the “mountains that snare the Pacific clouds and force them to drop their rain. ... Ecotopia is the only place in the West that is blessed by bountiful water” (p. 254).

**Empty Quarter**—“... is the repository of most of the continent’s spirit-lifting physical endowment. It has the only sizable quantities of Quality One air left in North America ...” (p. 302) “It is also the land energy minded cynics are calling the National Sacrifice Area” (p. 302).

**Breadbasket**—which is “so homogeneously northern European ... that
what passes for ethnic conflict here has to be imported from a Europe of hundreds of years ago” (p. 344).

Quebec—“ends up being a nation, not because of industry or armies or stirring political rhetoric, but because when you’re there even if you were to ignore language, you know it’s no place else” (p. 388).

Also included in this regional geography are the aberrations, those places which do not fit the behavior of their location: Washington, D.C., Alaska, Hawaii, and New York City, very specifically defined as Manhattan south of 98th Street on the West and 86th Street on the East.

A problem associated with all regional schemes is defining where one region ends and the next begins. Garreau takes extraordinary care to trace the limits of each nation, justifying their placement across state and sometimes national boundaries. Sometimes the boundary is based on dialect, politics, climate, or economics. The Breadbasket is divided from the Empty Quarter at the line where “carbohydrates become more important than hydrocarbons” (p. 332). Sometimes Garreau uses a statistical variable to establish the boundary, such as the percentage of land in farms or the percentage of land controlled by the federal government. Other times, the boundary is more impressionistic . . . “the line leaves Dixie behind somewhere south of Beaumont, where the twenty different greens of the piney woods yield to the reds and browns of the drylands, and gumbo begins to give way to refried beans” (p. 221). The southwestern third of Connecticut is severed from New England because of the influence of New York City. “The New England line is firmly drawn at the point where fanatic Boston Red Sox rooters become the minority” (p. 17).

Although this book is more than seven years old, it remains, for the most part, an accurate picture of the continent. The economies of some nations have changed considerably, New England’s for the better, the Breadbasket’s for the worse. No longer can we call the latter “the nation that works best” (p. 331) given the farm foreclosures. Yet we can see in Garreau’s analysis of the Breadbasket how the current situation evolved. “For the fields that appear so empty are full of high-finance, personal deals, and family histories . . . there’s a truth in farming out here: it is absolutely and physically impossible to push enough food out of the land to pay off a mortgage at these prices” (p. 347). While economies change, the political orientation of each nation, its character, and attitude toward important issues do not. If we all had read geography of North America in this way, perhaps we would have less geographic illiteracy in the nation today.


Reviewed by Murry R. Nelson, Pennsylvania State University
It may seem questionable if not totally inappropriate to review a work of fiction in this journal, let alone what might be called science fiction. Nevertheless, it is wholly appropriate since the genre of futuristic fiction is analogous to historical fiction and the book causes one to reflect on current society and the role of schooling and education in this society.

The handmaid, Offred, narrates the events that occur after the country of Gilead is taken over by a fascist, self-righteous group not unlike the Moral Majority. In order to uplift women, they are enslaved and used as breeders for those in control. The practices of enslavement and reproduction, however, are not presented in such a cross manner; rather, the rulers see their mission as one of salvation, the kind of logic that led to actions like destroying the village to save it. Their logic is more subtle at times, just as Atwood’s writing is. More than anything else, this is a chilling story by a brilliant author. Certainly it could have easily fallen into pedantic prose and doctrinaire stances, but Atwood simply does not allow that to happen.

Beginning with Offred’s limited view of the “new” world, we learn gradually of her past as she learns more (with the reader) of the new order of things. She is of the Commander (Fred) and can leave the house once a day to walk to food markets to shop. Reading is now forbidden to women (to keep them purer), and once a month she is required to lie on her back while the Commander attempts to impregnate her. This is her purpose in life—to reverse the declining birth rate.

As Offred learns more through forbidden conversations, she discovers that the world has not become pure; rather, those in control have merely hidden their vices and limited their enjoyment to the few or the outcasts. Hypocrisy lives unchecked.

Atwood carefully builds her story, captures the reader’s interest and arouses concern; for this, above all else, is a disturbing, chilling tale. The Handmaid’s Tale will be a prominent influence to readers who discuss scenarios of the future. No book that I have read in the past five years has been so compelling or so thought-provoking. I will use this book with my secondary methods class to generate discussion about the future, educational goals, and political action. It also serves as a goal for all who write; it is a model of clarity, force and vividness. While we all struggle to find good methods texts, I feel confident that this work of fiction will serve my students and social studies in an exemplary, unique manner.

From its haunting beginning until its historical notes at the end, The Handmaid’s Tale will entrance and teach.
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