

FOUNDATIONS OF

Engaged Scholarship

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W. ROSS BRYAN

Foundations
of Engaged Scholarship

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First Edition

W. Ross Bryan



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Acknowledgments

Alexandra Gonzenbach Perkins, Instructor of Spanish, Department of Modern Languages and Classics, University of Alabama

Alexandra Huechteman, Research Assistant, Public Health Major/Biology Minor, University of Alabama Honors College

Anneliese Bolland, Assistant Research Scientist/Assistant Director, Institute for Social Science Research/Office for Undergraduate Research, University of Alabama

Brett Austin, Student, Aerospace Engineering Major, University of Alabama Honors College

Chad Tindol, Vice Chancellor for Risk and Compliance, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, and Deputy General Counsel, University of Alabama System

Charles Yeganian, Husband, Father, Citizen, New York, NY

Davis Jackson, Program Coordinator of 57 Miles, University of Alabama Honors College

Garrett Barnes, Student Facilitator, Nicaragua Clinical Experience, Food and Nutrition Major/Biology and Spanish Minor, University of Alabama

Jackson Knappen, Student Facilitator, Nicaragua Clinical Experience, Biology and Spanish Major, University of Alabama

Jessica Stershic, Research Assistant, Mechanical Engineering Major/Spanish Minor, University of Alabama Honors College

Joshua L. Fuller, Research Assistant, Criminal Justice Major/Public Policy Studies Minor, University of Alabama Honors College

Karson Holmes, Director of Tuscaloosa Rocketry Challenge, Mechanical Engineering Major on the STEM Path to the MBA, University of Alabama

Kim Bissell, Director of Undergraduate Research and Associate Dean for Research, University of Alabama

Leslie Parkins, Assistant Director, Office of Civic Engagement, Duke University

Robert E. Witt, Professor and President Emeritus, University of Alabama Honors College

Ryan Alverson, Assistant Professor, College of Education and Human Services, Northern Kentucky University

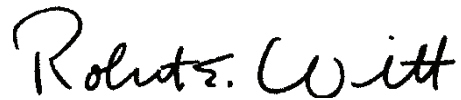
Foreword

THIS PROGRAM IS more than one of this institution's elite colleges or schools. It is a transformational experience.

During your time in this program, you will learn that asking the right questions is as important as knowing the right answers, that commitment and compassion are as important as competency, and that making a difference for others is as important as the success you personally achieve.

Thucydides said "we should remember that one man is much the same as another and that he is best who is trained in the severest school." This program is definitely not a "severe" school, but it will test, develop, and strengthen you. It will cause you to question ideas, values, society, the status quo, and yourself, and, in so doing, greatly enhance your horizons and your aspirations.

The essays in this book were written to help introduce you to an outstanding program and the experience before you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert E. Witt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert E. Witt
Professor and President Emeritus
University of Alabama

Introduction to Chapter 1

I HAVE HAD the pleasure of working with Joshua Fuller for the past couple of years as a student in my classroom and as my research assistant. In the following chapter we have tried to make a case for the how, why, and “so what” of education. It is a way for us to begin to question the philosophy of education, how we fund education in our society, and finally how much your education and educational opportunities should matter to you.

We ask large questions of educational institutions and the students who fill the seats within them. What is the purpose of you taking up a seat in your classroom? Is it to get a job? To become an enlightened citizen? Perhaps to make some connections with your fellow classmates, and the faculty and staff who can help you attain success in the future?

Additionally, we question access to education and how education plays a role in producing winners and losers in our society. This may sound harsh but education, more than any other institution, helps decide many fates of your fellow classmates.

We wrestle with all of these issues in the following chapter.

The Curious Case of Education

W. Ross Bryan, Joshua L. Fuller

IT IS IMPORTANT for us to begin with some simple, grand narrative questions to consider. The idea of education was not invented by your college and/or university, or by your K-12 experience. Many educational philosophers have discussed the notions and differences between “schooling,” “learning,” “indoctrination,” “liberation”, etc. For the purposes of this discussion, the chapter will seek to highlight “why” society educates and “how” we have constructed to school from K-16 and beyond, and give some framework to develop for the collective reader the relevance of modern education. More simply, we will try to answer the “so what” of education.

For young scholars, or more specifically, university students entering college/university, it is paramount that you decide why you have chosen to be in the seat you have taken in the modern university. It is my understanding that you do not want to be living in your parent’s basement in four years. Trust that your folks do not want you to be there either. What do you hope to gain from this matriculation? Is it to obtain a job that will pay enough for you to take care of yourself in the way that you have become accustomed? Perhaps you are seeking to become an enlightened individual? (This is what all of your faculty like to think.) Or finally, and most simply, do you want to become socially mobile? Would you like to have a bigger house than your parental unit, a nicer car, a whiter picket fence to clearly delineate your and your neighbor’s property? You will need this demarcation to hold your beloved pet and 2.4 children. This is a quick, simplistic way to view the purpose of education, and it is certainly focused on the individual.

If we were to move toward the collective reasoning on “why” we educate, would it be as simple? For instance, I had an old professor, Gerald Unks (professor emeritus, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), who used to tell his students that “we all pay for the undereducated and the miseducated.” Dr. Unks told us we had to start with the understanding that “what we are really doing in education is deciding who has power in the next generation.”

At the writing of this chapter, this remains a truth. It does not, however, fully explain why we have chosen to educate the way that we do as a collective. It is possible to follow the line of thought we have covered for the individual: so that people can get jobs; move society forward by developing new knowledge and passing it on; and finally, progress with a higher standard of living. This is not as easily done.

What happens if people do not want to be educated? This notion seems silly but should be explored. Not everyone can have a high paying job ... can they? What would we do if everyone in our society had a college degree? Would that work as it relates to the job market? My generation had a great pop culture icon whose character was in a movie titled *Caddyshack*. Ted Knight played a character named Judge Smails, who told his caddy on the golf course that if he could not afford to go to college and law school, it was acceptable because “the world needed ditch diggers too.” How does this square with the American Dream and/or equal access to education? Quite simply it does not. Is education a product or a right that all citizens of our country should be afforded, or should it be viewed as a commodity that is available for individuals to purchase and benefit from? One thing is certain: education consumes a fair amount of societal resources. In fact, the United States spends more on primary and secondary public education than most developed nations. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), the United States spends \$620 *billion* on primary and secondary public education—6.4 percent of its GDP. Dividing that across all the public-school students in the United States, it amounts to roughly \$12,300 per public school student/per year (OECD 2014; Fast Facts, n.d.).

Is education a public good or a private good? How do we view it? Does it enable and/or empower the individual or society? Should it be controlled by the federal government or the local school board? The simple answer is that we cannot decide as a macro- or microcommunity. It has vexed us since the founding of our nation. Again, as Dr. Unks tells us, we all philosophically “pay” for education; should we not all benefit from it?

There are many different ways to discuss the “why” of education. David Labaree (2000) lays out three main goals of education in our nation’s history that can easily be framed as philosophies for our purposes:

Grounded in this contradictory social context, the history of American education has been a tale of ambivalent goals and muddled outcomes. Like other major institutions in American society, education has come to be defined as an arena that

simultaneously promotes equality and adapts to inequality. Within schools, these contradictory purposes have translated into three distinguishable educational goals, each of which has exerted considerable impact without succeeding in eliminating the others. I call these goals democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility. (1997)

Labaree's goals give us a foothold to interrogate the "why" of education in a bit more detail. In his democratic equality philosophy, education is seen as a public good to benefit everyone. It is required that all citizens go through the process of schooling so that they may be competent citizens. In this model, school is compulsory (everyone must attend) and is meant to be equitable. "One argues that a democratic society cannot persist unless it prepares all of its young with equal care to take on full responsibilities of citizenship in a competent manner" (Labaree 1997, 42). This philosophy lends itself to the idea that everyone must have the same curriculum, delivered in the same way, at the same time. This takes us to the need for a unified curriculum. If we are all being prepared in the same way for citizenship, then we must all have the same material and delivery methods (pedagogy). An easy critique of this model would lead us to the position that not all of us learn in the same way; one could also argue that we may also have different areas that we would like to learn about, and maybe have different levels of interest and competencies. However, we must keep in mind that these are philosophies and not concrete steps to educating society.

In Labaree's social efficiency model, education is also seen as a public good. In this model, education is meant to fulfill job roles within society. If we need more widget factory workers, then we must create them in our schools. We will input widget factory knowledge into our curriculum, and students will be tracked into these pathways. In this way, curriculum is driven by the job market. This creates a socially efficient model for our students to follow. Students will be tested and tracked into job roles that they show competence in. The intent is not for Big Brother to have education as its tool; the intent is for us all to be working and able to earn a living. It is hard to dispute the fact that this philosophy lends itself to high-stakes testing, tracking of students, and ability groups. That standardized test you took in the fourth grade suddenly has much more significance. It may mean you are a line worker in the widget factory or perhaps have more potential and could possibly supervise the factory. This would lead to stratified curriculum at some point. The factory line worker would have a different set of values placed on their education than the leadership of the factory. Either

way, this seems a bit limiting of student's aspirations, although it certainly would be efficient (said the fascist ... wink).

The third philosophy is the one that is most closely tied to Judge Smails: social mobility. In this model, education is seen as a private good and goes to the highest bidder. Instead of curriculum becoming stratified, institutions become stratified. This stratification is generally based in cost to the consumer. Education will become commodified, and the quality will be dependent on what the student can afford. In this scenario, education will also become market driven in that institutions will change and bend to what the customer (student) wants. Meaning, as a professor I could theoretically sell my class to the students as "let me just take a few minutes and tell you how this freshman seminar will benefit your future self; you need this course and I am just the one to provide it for you. I promise you I will be funny and charming, and you will come out as a better student—just look at my ratemyprofessor.com surveys." We may be closer to this one than I originally thought. I think I just made myself queasy.

In classes, I get to this point and show a logo of Lexus and one of Toyota. Now, there is nothing wrong with a Toyota; I own two of them! I ask students if they would like the Toyota of education or the Lexus of education. Most students choose the Lexus version; the best part of this question is that the question is somewhat loaded. These hypothetical education companies are selling the same product, right? Toyota and Lexus are owned by the same company but the cars they make are not the same product. One is the luxury version, the upscale type, the high end; whatever it is, my initial thought is that we are basically talking about the same product. One just has more bells and whistles—a better sound system, leather interior, a moon roof, etc. If we are basically buying the same car or education, then why does one cost more than the other? In education it boils down to how society views this commodity. Is my degree from the University of North Carolina Asheville the same as one from Harvard? No. Why? Because society views it differently. And although I loved my classmates at UNC Asheville, maybe I would have had "better" classmates at Harvard. It is very possible that my having been educated at Harvard would have given me the ability to think differently or have power windows and a moon roof. Perhaps this is a good time to move to the "how" of education.

Here we meet Dr. Unks again. Remember when he said "what we are really doing in education is deciding who has power in the next generation"? We have discussed the "why" of education and we are going to now move onto the "how" of education. As a researcher and intellectual, I like to boil things

down pretty quickly and then create a space to work within. Let us assume that Dr. Unks is right. How do we operationalize this within schools?

To understand how this power plays out in students' education, let's start with what we value in education. Here is a fact for you to ponder: it would be pretty easy for me to walk into any kindergarten classroom in this country and tell you which students would go on to college or university. I could do this and be about 95 percent accurate. I only need to know one piece of information that has nothing to do with achievement or ability. All I need to know is what the student's parents or caregivers do for a living. This is a bold statement, and I have never tested it, but I would be willing to bet I could do it. This untested fact does not make me feel good and warm. In fact, it makes me kind of queasy again. Social scientists refer to this as *social reproduction*, defined by Pierre Bourdieu as "the reproduction of the structure of the relations of force between the classes" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 11). The idea is that we reproduce the same pathways for our children that we had. Being socially mobile is very difficult and does not happen often; is it even possible? Of course! However, it takes a tremendous amount of resources, hard work, and luck to do it.

What implicit and explicit messages are we sending and receiving about education on a very surface level? Are these messages laden with societal values? Meaning, as it relates to education and how we educate, what do we value? Specifically, how do we fund public schools? In the private realm, are there "good" schools and "better" schools? If you attended a public or a private school in your home town, I would be willing to bet you could give me a pretty good rundown on the best to worst schools both public and private. What is this calculation based on? Is it the physical building and quality of books within the school? Is it the average income of the school's teachers and administrators? Perhaps how good their football team is? Or maybe the achievement level of the students within the school? Would it surprise you to know that we spend different amounts on student's education based on where they live? There is a simple formula that is the basis for how public schools are funded nationally. It sometimes is supplemented by states and local governments but the fundamental formula is called Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE), and it is as follows: tax base multiplied by the tax rate divided by the number of pupils in the district. Jonathan Kozol (1991) dedicated a whole book to this notion, titled *Savage Inequalities*. He did a masterful job of highlighting the differences in public school funding, citing examples from around the country using districts adjacent to each other. This is a larger issue that can be teased out at another time but the relevance to this project

is the values we convey to our students when we see that society spends different dollar amounts on their education. Do we value some students more than others? Do we invest more in some students than others? Is this based on anything that they can control?

What about your education here, in college? Remember that 6.4 percent of the United States' GDP spent on education? Less than half of that—only 2.8 percent—is spent on postsecondary education, and most of that is delivered in the form of Pell and research grants (OECD 2014). General appropriations for colleges and universities come from state and local governments, and across the nation these bodies have steadily reduced their funding by varying degrees. In response, most colleges and universities have resorted to raising tuition costs to compensate for these losses, shifting a higher financial burden to the students these institutions serve. In the past ten years alone, postsecondary funding from student tuition has increased by 10 percent (SHEEO 2016). Why exactly have states reduced funding to higher education? Most research on the issue so far points to a sluggish recovery from the Great Recession; an ever-increasing number of college students to support (i.e., states must stretch the same dollars across more students); and states' requirement to keep a balanced budget, which becomes increasingly harder with less tax revenue to support state agencies and programs (Oliff et al. 2013).

What does this mean for higher education in regards to David Labaree's models of education? As colleges and universities continue increasing tuition costs to cover their spending, higher education will continue to become more and more of a private good, in line with Labaree's social mobility model. Without restating what has already been said about the social mobility model, one might predict that, in order to maintain prominence, institutions of higher education would target students with both the deepest pocketbooks and the best exam scores. In studying the socioeconomic gaps that already exist within higher education, Anthony Carnavale found that "among the most highly qualified students (the top testing 25 percent), the kids from the top socioeconomic group go to four-year colleges at almost twice the rate of equally qualified kids from the bottom socioeconomic quartile" (Oliff et al. 2013). Would we consider this fair, or equitable? Should two students, equal in every regard except for household income, be given different academic opportunities simply because one of them is able to pay more for a degree from the university they have both applied to? Is this the direction that we as a society wish to take our higher education? These are some of the questions

that you as a college student might want ask yourself during your time at such an institution.

Let us look at two ends of a spectrum: Illinois and New York. As it stands during the time of this chapter's writing, the Illinois governor and legislature remain in a months-long partisan stalemate, refusing to pass a budget for political reasons that go beyond just higher education. However, because of this lack of cooperation, public universities in Illinois have closed down for days at a time, cancelled spring break vacations, and had students shower in gyms—on account of hot water not being available in the residence halls. All of these horrors have been committed in attempts to save enough money to survive another academic year without guaranteed state-allocated funding for higher education, attempts that have a lot of universities “getting ready to walk off the cliff” (Seltzer 2016; Rhodes 2017).

The story in New York, however, is much different. In April of 2017, New York governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law a bill that will make public college tuition free for all in-state students whose families make under \$125,000 annually (Spector 2017). At first glance, this sounds like an incredible step in focusing higher education as a public good, does it not? Totalling over sixty campuses and four hundred thousand students, New York's public university system—City University of New York (CUNY) and State University of New York (SUNY)—is the largest in the country (Spector 2017). It turns out that, as with everything in life, one must read the fine print. The new plan, entitled the Excelsior Scholarship, guarantees a full tuition on two conditions—one, that students attend school full time and graduate in the typical time frame that one's degree is held to (two or four years); and two, that students spend a year in New York for every year they received the Excelsior Scholarship (Chen 2017). While many see these conditions as fair for up to four years of free tuition at face value, several communities cite these as impediments to the goals of the scholarship. In examining some of the Excelsior program's fine print, it becomes clear that this is not simply a plan for “free college” for everyone in New York, and several aspects of the scholarship will actually hinder higher education efforts.

According to the Governor's office, only 39 percent of students in four-year universities attain their degree on time. At two-year colleges, the number is 8.5 percent (New York State 2017). The full-time student requirement for the scholarship is said to address that by improving graduation rates and cutting student debt at the same time. In the same month that Governor Cuomo released his plan for the Excelsior Scholarship, however, a new study by David J. Deming found the exact opposite of his claim to be the case—money

spent on institutional expenditures such as smaller class sizes, better faculty and counseling services increases college enrollment and completion, while tuition cuts for students result in very little, if any, increases (Deming 2016). Additionally, while New York's public education system already offers some of the lowest rates for in-state tuition in the country, nontuition expenses such as room and board, dining, and other fees amount to as much as two and three times as much as the cost of tuition, and the Excelsior Scholarship offers no assistance to students covering these costs (Friedman 2017). Excelsior has been marketed as a tool for middle-class families, and aptly so. The scholarship is a "last dollar" program, meaning that it only kicks in money after Pell grants and other financial aid packages are used, rendering many low-income students ineligible. Some point to existing programs like ASAP, a program within CUNY schools that offers many of the resources encouraged by the aforementioned Deming study, as a more appropriate target of increased funding. On the implications of Excelsior, former SUNY chancellor Johnstone remarked, "It will help a slice of middle-class students, but it's only a slice" (Chen 2017).

For the postgraduation residency requirement, the state plans to enforce it by transforming the scholarship into a loan charged to the student. According to the state's Department of Labor, 3.5 million jobs statewide are going to require associate's degrees or higher by 2024 (New York State 2017). Additionally, 80–90 percent of CUNY and SUNY graduates are already reported to remain in the state for work (Chen 2017; Webber 2017). One of the most vocal critics, however, Sara Goldrick-Rab, calls the residency requirement bad public policy, noting that other states like Tennessee that have begun to offer free tuition in public colleges have not included these types of caveats nor have they suffered because of it. Further, the requirement has the potential to reduce mobility if a recent grad cannot find a job in the state yet is offered a quality job elsewhere (Campanile 2017; Goldrick-Rab 2017). At a time when New York just marked a yearly net migration loss of 73,000, one might ask if there is indeed a correlation between the population decrease and the new scholarship requirement, which was not originally part of the proposal (Associated Press 2017; Webber 2017). Regardless of the intent, this residency requirement is a form of state protectionism, meaning the state of New York is, in effect, leveraging education against the market interests of itself. To go back to our widget factory metaphor earlier, it appears that New York needs more of its widget factory workers staying in the state, so they are offering to pay for the education one is required to have to make widgets. If David Labaree's second education philosophy, social efficiency,

was not clear before, allow New York's residency requirement to the Excelsior Scholarship to serve as a real-time example.

While there is plenty of room for debate between the fine lines of the Excelsior Scholarship program, it cannot go without saying that the state of New York has taken an incredible step in providing public higher education at a scale greater than any state before it. CUNY and SUNY campuses are expecting to see increases in enrollment as soon as the program came into effect in the fall of 2017, and many project other states to follow in the footsteps of this New York model. This book is being written at the same time as these debates are occurring, so we are unable to remark on how it has played out thus far. However, we will be eagerly watching the program and the developments it provides to public education at the secondary level.

As consumers of higher education, students seemingly have more control of their educational dollars with regard to where and how they are spent. For the first time in many of their experiences they choose where to attend. However, this decision is based on many factors that are not very far from the democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility philosophies. To revisit a common thematic question, why are you here?

Again, we see this complicated by the idea of funding. Colleges and universities are not immune from the funding bug. In fact, institutions of higher education are arguably more affected by funding models. The Per Pupil Expenditure formula is not in play, but state appropriations, merit and needs-based scholarships, and access to opportunities certainly are. As an academic, I think that the three crown jewels of student satisfaction in their college choice are housing facilities, dining facilities/options, and recreation facilities (all in the student life realm). This fact does not keep me warm at night, but I understand that feeling at home and connected to their context is perhaps more important to incoming students than quality of instruction and/or faculty. Research tells us that a sense of belonging is paramount to success in higher education (Alverson 2015; chapter 3 of this project).

How do these facts help us better understand how we educate in K-16? To better explain, I will draw on the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu gives us this notion of cultural capital to use as a way to explain how we educate. As a reminder, this is directly tied to the "why" of education and the philosophies we discussed in the first part of this chapter.

For this argument, think about cultural capital as something you carry around in your pocket. You use this capital multiple times a day to negotiate

power and purchase things you want or need within your context. This concept can also be understood formulaically:

$$\textit{Social Capital} + \textit{Economic Capital} = \textit{Cultural Capital}$$

Social capital can be defined as who you know, or what societal contacts you have. Have you ever gotten a job because you knew someone who worked at the company? Other things such as race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation/preference/identity can function as social capital that give you contextual power and/or influence. Bourdieu warns us that these forms of capital are contingent upon context, meaning that any of these forms of capital matter only in particular ways in particular places. For example, as the professor of a class, I have a fair amount of capital and can give some of that to my students as it relates to class, our institution of higher education, or simply providing a reference. My capital, or the capital that my students may take from me, is less than if we were in a different context or if they needed my influence/power to help them get a loan to buy a new car. Banks and loan officers do not necessarily care if your professor thinks you are intellectually in the top 5 percent of the class.

Economic capital is a bit more simply defined. It is currency, dollars, rubles, chickens, euros—anything that can be traded or bartered with to gain something. One can certainly have a tremendous amount of economic capital and very little social capital, thusly lowering one’s cultural capital (reminder of formula: Social + Economic = Cultural).

Cultural capital is relevant to this discussion because this is the way we negotiate power in society. I would also argue that this is the primary way that we educate. As educators, we are providing students with opportunities to gain capital. Society has set up this structure for students to take advantage of “opportunities” so that they may “bank” their cultural capital (Freiere 1972). Students then use this capital to navigate their educational contexts. The chief piece of capital in and out of the classroom is grades; this subject is too large to enter into in this chapter but think, for a moment, how powerful a grade is to you. A pointed example is the significance of your standardized test score for college entry. A strong ACT or SAT score is very powerful and functions as capital within the context of higher education institutions; but as a reminder from Bourdieu, it would not matter much in my weekly pick-up basketball game. However, your ACT/SAT test scores along with your GPA had significant impact on where you chose to attend, who you were going to attend with, and how much you were going to have

to pay for this opportunity. While it may seem simplistic to funnel all of the “how” of education to this one concept, it is an elegantly basic way to think of it. Take a moment and think about how much this one concept matters in education, particularly if you keep in the front of your mind that what we are really doing in education is deciding who has power in the next generation.

In the coming pages, we will expand on how we educate by using other examples, but this is the most important one. For instance, why are you in the seat you are in right now? As far as I understand the purpose of this project, your professor wants you to begin thinking about grand narrative questions to consider while you matriculate. Your professor wants you to be exposed to foundational ideas and toil with them. Once you have developed your opinion on these large questions, you can begin to take on other questions, and develop your own thoughts and critique.

We have discussed the “why” of education and mapped to “how” this is actualized in K-16 education. Some of these philosophies are in direct contradiction with each other as well as the ideas concerning how education gets played out in society. How can we explain this phenomenon to ourselves and, most importantly, the students who are receiving our educational efforts? We have a very hard time agreeing on the overall purpose of education in American society; is it any wonder that there are huge inequalities in how education is enacted? For a better understanding of the next step in this thought exercise, we will move to answering the “so what” of education. It will not illuminate some magical answer, far from it, but we may make more sense of education and why it should matter so much to us.

Education has historically been seen as the great equalizer of societal ills (Unks, 2000). It has been called on to rid us of isms, inequalities, and injustices. While I am not quite sure how fair it is to put this on education’s shoulders, teachers and federal, state, and local school administrators have been trying to address various and sundry movements for over a hundred years. The Russians launched Sputnik, and thus began the space race. Education will catch us up and we will beat them. Racism has become a societal anchor? Education can fix that! Japanese car doors close better than ours? Our nation (and our schools) must be at risk (A Nation at Risk, 1983). We need to fix our schools—right now!

The very first text I was required to read as a doctoral student was John Willinsky’s 1998 book titled *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire’s End*. It was a comprehensive way to discuss why the philosophy and actualization of education matters to a society. In his work, Willinsky goes to great lengths to show that the Western notion of education is rooted

in imperialism and colonialism, to show that this historical indoctrination has given educators the opportunity to create the purpose, the result, and the societal mattering of education. Willinsky encapsulates it this way:

To establish the degree to which our current ideas of education may have been influenced by the global forces of imperialism, I lay out, in the following three historical chapters, the different ways in which imperialism was bent on taking a knowing possession of the world, on setting that world on public display for the edification of the West, and on developing the principal forms of schooling that might serve both colonial state and colonized native. (2000, 19)

When I discuss this piece of Willinsky's text in class, I always make a big show of drawing out precisely how I do this in the classroom, because educators remain implicated in this system. As a teacher I always spend the first day of class selling myself and this syllabus that is in front the student. I tell some jokes, tell them about me and my background/experience, discuss why this course (which I refer to as the greatest class ever) will benefit them and their future selves. I casually ask them what they would like to discuss in the course and make a grand show of saying (in the most benevolent manner) "I know what I think about this subject and how it relates to the world we live in, but I am most concerned about what YOU think" (taking knowledge). I then write down their thoughts and concerns, and go back to my office to weave their wants, needs, and ideas into the fabric of the course. In the very next class, I present them with an updated syllabus filled with their thoughts and ideas on what we will cover throughout the semester (public display for edification). I convince them that I am a benevolent educator who simply wants to make the world a better place by sharing in some discourse (serving the colonizer). Now, gentle reader, am I a bad guy? I don't think of myself as a bad professor, but I think Dr. Seuss would have a field day with me! It seems Grinchy in some ways, doesn't it? If education tried to extract itself from this imperialist model, how would we do it? What would we have to do? Foucault (1979) warns us that we need to at the very least examine where and how students sit, the time allotted to lessons, how non adherence to school is played out, and how the curriculum is developed and who it benefits from it. Conversely, don't we need order? Don't we all benefit from a shared notion of what and how school is articulated? Shouldn't we all learn in the same way, or at least learn the same type of stuff? What about the Great Books? Are they all of a sudden not so great anymore?

Upon closer examination, my role is to create content on what I know; dress it up, and make it pretty and wanted by the students; convince them that it will benefit them in some way; and then ultimately sell it to them. Certainly, a cynical way to look at education, but put this scenario back in the Willinsky model in K-16 education. It hits all the notes of imperialism, doesn't it? I am the colonizer and you are the colonized. I am creating little Rossites to go out and make the world a better place. Right?

What is "right" is not on my side. My daughter is six years old and understands enough of the world to relate to the good versus evil calculations. As college students, you all understand that this calculation can sometimes be very complicated. Are we sometimes complicit in really rotten and awful things? Of course we are. Life is complicated. Example: Is Darth Vader a bad guy? He is not a bad guy in the beginning or at the end, right? Who decides what good and bad is? More explicitly, who decides good and bad classes? Good and bad schools? Good and bad professors? Is my worth as a professor simply about how popular I am on ratemyprofessor.com or the college's satisfaction surveys given out at the end of the term? Do we value my entertainment and joke quality more than actual transfer of knowledge to the student? (Don't answer that one.)

In part, Willinsky is interrogating the idea of power and control of curriculum. If we take a step back and look at education in totality, we have to ask ourselves an additional question, which is "who decides what we learn and how we learn it." This is not the same as the "why," "how," and "so what" of education; it is related but slightly different. Who decides what we learn and what truth is? What is the difference in truth and knowledge? In Philosophy 101 we learn that there may be a big *T* truth and a little *t* truth. We find out that truth is subjective and can certainly be manipulated or massaged. Our role in education is to pursue truth in all forms. However, who is pushing truth and, perhaps more importantly, who's ideology is being promoted? Remember, controlling education is tremendously powerful.

Gerald Unks discusses the way schools are set up as a factory:

The model that emerged as "the ideal" was not based on any psychological knowledge or established educational philosophy. The ideal school was based on a model borrowed from business and industry—the factory. Much that goes on in schools—the division of educational task into twelve "grades," the division of the school day into periods, the ringing bells, the system of quality control (A, B, C, D, F), the idea that everyone in the class should be working on the same material at the same time and at the

same rate—all can be explained as remnants of the decision to base American schools on the factory model. (2000, 100)

Are students made in America fine motor vehicles? This notion that once students travel through the assembly line, gaining valuable skills and knowledge as they go through the factory is ridiculous. Yet, we are bound by this idea that after having gone through this machination process, competent and engaged citizens pop out at the end ready for the showroom floor. My old professor Dr. Unks (2000, 101) puts a fine point on how our factory model of schooling has worked historically: “Most college students will admit that they were never really challenged in high school. Twenty-five percent of our population is functionally illiterate. At least 15 percent have never been challenged by the school to work up to full capacity simply because the mold was no challenge for them. What industry, other than publicly funded bureaucracy, peopled by mindless ninnyes, could stay in operation with a 40 percent rate of failure?”

This seems a bit harsh but these numbers are backed up by current research and reporting. The Literacy Project (Staggering Illiteracy, n.d.) reports that 50 percent of adults in our country can’t read a book at an eighth-grade level, 45 million are functionally illiterate and read below a fifth-grade level, 44 percent of American adults do not read one book in a year, and six out ten household do not buy a single book in a year. These numbers are staggering and highlight the failings of how we have actualized schooling in our communities.

Who has built the factory and what product should we expect to see as an output? In “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus” (Althusser, 1971), the reader is presented with a framework to better understand society and societal power dissemination. Althusser presents the reader with pillars or tools used by the state to promote or push ideology; he calls them Ideological State Apparatus (religious, educational, family, legal, political, communications, and cultural). Althusser posits that the ideological state apparatus define and qualify social order. If we were to define what being an American is, we could start with an examination of the ideological state apparatus and how they have helped construct this notion of “Americanism.” Among these, he lists education as perhaps the “dominant Ideological State Apparatus” (104). Althusser describes the educational ISA as so powerful because it is the premiere way for societal power to be reproduced.

It takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most ‘vulnerable’,

squeezed between the family State apparatus and the educational State Apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses old or new methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy). (104)

The educational state apparatus and its presentation is not meant to bog down our conversation; I include it to simply put forth the idea that education is controlled by ideology, and that the ruling class controls that ideology and will use education to reproduce itself and the structures that benefit it. We could have discussed this in the beginning of this chapter with the “why” of education, but that would have been a little soon to discuss class struggle and “social reproduction”. However, it does help us get deeper into the “so what” of education.

The following chapters will, hopefully, illuminate and examine other foundational pieces of how education works and the purpose of education benefits you and society at large.

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