

theory that may clarify what general education means in a time of intellectual crisis.

In his last chapters, he deals not solely with Paulo Freire's "co-intentional dialogic" but what he calls the "conceptual dialogics" of the present reviewer, whose treatment of the disciplines as existential modes of sense-making he seems to approve. Indeed, he appears to be unusually generous when it comes to this reviewer's effort over the years to tap existential and phenomenological sources for a coherent pedagogy, one that leaves teachers free to choose and does not thrust them into subjectivism. Vandenberg's own words about what he calls the "elements" of the common general education he wishes to see hold great phenomenological relevance and summon up the sound and feel of Vandenberg's earliest book, the wonderful "Being and Education." Here he speaks again of the manipulable world, the play world, the natural world, the social world, the lived world, the world of books, the world of numbers; and he ends with a remarkably clear laying out of the "strands" of a humanizing curriculum.

The problems this reviewer has with the books stem, in part, from her own social activism, her interest in literature and the other arts, and her unabashed postmodern relativism. The books might have been improved if they were more impassioned, and if they made more use of anecdote, concrete example, "story." Near the end of the second book, things come alive when the Abraham and Isaac section of Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* is used; and there might well be more such moments. This commentator cannot but regret the underestimation of the arts, for all the sympathetic treatment of Gadamer's hermeneutics and the work done by Harry Broudy in opening up the world of arts to the young. Important and valuable though Vandenberg's pages are on equal access and diverse human possibilities, there is a peculiar neglect of the structural factors that constrain and often distort the work of schools. Homelessness, poverty, violence, the disintegration of families, drug addiction, AIDS: all are eating away at the very roots of humanization, as social support systems continue to decay, and networks of concern are torn. It is clear that it is not the responsibility of schools, as Vandenberg reminds us, to change the social order; society has to be such as to sustain schools that foster human rights and allow for human agency (and even witnessing the truth). It might have been well to disclose some of the darkness even as a dream of possibility is permitted to unfold.

Yes, it is clear, and it is cold, and it flows up to the end. The knowledge Donald Vandenberg makes available here can only continue flowing as it moves more readers (as it ought to) to choose existentially to "do" philosophy of education somewhat as this author does it. He offers us an important way of becoming human beings, moral agents with an authentic mode of being in the world.

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Reading Curriculum Theory: The Development of a New Hermeneutic by William Reynolds, New York: Peter Lang, 1989

In this work William Reynolds embarks on "a search for a voice to express my experience and understanding of curriculum theory texts" (p. 6). For him, not to

hear his own voice is not to question or oppose concepts, but to reproduce them (p. 207), to be “pulled in by the strong undertow and voice” of the texts. “Unclearness of one’s own sense of agency is to contest or resist in another’s voice—a parroting” (p. 215). “There is the potential to lose one’s voice in the text” (p. 211). Reynolds searches for “a voice or type of reading that would overcome this habitual perception” and provide “a sense of self, who can act in the world with his own voice” (p. 5).

Reynolds works out of this “new” voice by focusing on “conservative, reconceptualist and reproductionist divisions” of curriculum theory as delineated by Pinar. In particular he examines Adler’s (1982) “conservative text,” the *Paideia Proposal*, and the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) “conservative” document, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*; a “reconceptualist” text by Pinar (1976) called *Sanity, Madness and the School*; and Apple’s (1982) “reproductionist” text *Curriculum Form and Logic of Technical Control: Building the Possessive Individual*.

The hermeneutical reading that Reynolds attempts at once to demonstrate and question is based on Ricoeur’s hermeneutic phenomenology. Reynolds cites Ricoeur in outlining his hermeneutical task:

It is the function of general hermenutics to answer problems such as: What is a text? i.e., what is the relation between spoken and written language? What is the relation between explanation and understanding within the encompassing act of reading? What is the relation between structural analysis and an existential appropriation? Such are the general problems of hermeneutics. (Ricoeur, 1977, p. 321)

Taking up these general questions, Reynolds’ own discourse is an “attempt to explain how these questions are answered and how these answers have direct bearing on the understanding of curriculum theory and its texts” (p. 22).

What is a text? That is, What is the relation between spoken and written language?

For Ricoeur, in oral discourse “the interlocuters both efface themselves before the things spoken of, which in a way lead the dialogue” (1973, p. 160). But the act of reading is radically different: “More than a feeling or a mood, it [reading] necessarily implies taking of distance, which in its turn expresses the destruction of the primordial relation of participation” (p. 156).

The vis-à-vis of speaking/hearing, with its ostensive reference, Ricoeur calls *dialogue*. He considers spoken dialogue an inappropriate model for textual interpretation of written *discourse*: “the dialogical relation does not provide us with the paradigm of reading, we have to build it as an original paradigm, as a paradigm of its own” (1977, p. 328). Ricoeur is “most critical” of the hermeneutical tradition which takes the “dialogical situation as the standard for the hermeneutic operation applied to text” (p. 328).

The dialectic involved in reading expresses the originality of the relation between writing and reading and its irreducibility to the dialogical situation based on the immediate reciprocity between speaking and hearing.... the writing/reading situation develops a problematic of its own which is not merely an extension of the speaking/hearing situation constitutive of dialogue. (1977, p. 328)

Drawing from ordinary language philosophy, Ricoeur proposes that any text has “translocated” three conditions of its writing: the original author’s intention, the original intended reader, and the original cultural/historical nexus of the writing. The text is open to possible worlds created with its appropriation by individual readers, and the sense of the text unfolds as meaning lived by the reader.

Reynolds does not see in this matter of the text further implications. He quotes Ricoeur as stating that in *dialogue* there can be a certain amount of univocity. But what Reynolds does not point out is that this referential relation of the text as *discourse* is what Ricoeur believes to be the inherent polysemy of the text. Reynolds goes on to say: “Ricoeur discusses speaking and hearing and I am suggesting that similar consequences [of reaching univocity] occur in reading and writing” (p. 201). With respect to conservative texts such reduction makes them “readily understandable.” He suggests that univocity results where there is little self-consciousness of underlying philosophical biases.

Positing that polysemy or univocity is somehow a stylistic or ideological feature of certain texts, Reynolds suggests that “the structure of the work, its sense, is what it says. The reference is what it’s about.” Hence the sense of the text refers to a “world of the text.”

With structural analysis (explanation) we are able to explain the sense of the work ... What then is the referential character of the text? By clarifying through objective procedures the sense of meaning of the text, we are able to move on to its referential aspects. This reference, Ricoeur believes, is possible when the literary text refers to possible worlds rather than using ostensive reference. (p. 42)

There is a subtle but quintessential understanding missing in Reynolds’ description. Text, for Ricoeur, is decontextualized than recontextualized as discourse—in a new situation “precisely, by the act of reading” (1976, p. 139). This is a concrete, existential appropriation. Rather than reference being an ideal aspect of the world of the text, Ricoeur suggests that while the sense of the text is the “internal organization.... the reference is the mode of being unfolded in front of the text” (1981, p. 93). Indeed, the referential function distinguishes Ricoeur’s hermeneutics from structural analysis (Thompson, 1981, p. 191). Without this referential relation there is no “relation between language and the ontological condition of being in the world” (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 20). Reference has its *telos* in the reader’s lived experience and is fused with the text’s sense when appropriated as lived meaning. This is the distinguishing dialectic of the hermeneutic situation of discourse.

A radical implication emanating from this missing existential character of the referential relation is an understanding of text that forsakes the constitutive act of reading. Hence Reynolds can write about a “projected world of the Apple text” and the “Pinar text’s vision or projected world.” The reader’s interpretation then becomes “some sense of a collective voice that I can join” (p. 214). Herein we read the “principal flaw” which Habermas ascribes to Gadamerian “ontologised hermeneutics”:

its insistence on understanding or accord, as if the *consensus* which preceded us was something constitutive, something given in being.... Habermas can have nothing but mistrust for what seems to him to be ontological hypostatization of a rare experi-

ence, namely the experience of being preceded in our most felicitous dialogues by an understanding which supports them. (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 86)

Ricoeur felt that the shift from the paradigm of spoken dialogue to that of written discourse requires a “new *Gestalt* of the dialectic [which] proceeds from the nature of the referential function of the text” (1977, p. 333). For the reader, “to understand *oneself* is to understand oneself in front of the text” (1981, p. 113). This existential condition differs from Reynolds’ understanding. To him, “the world constructed in the imagination is the world of the text” (p. 44).

What is the relation between explanation and understanding within the encompassing act of reading?

If my assertion above is correct and Reynolds does not encompass genuinely this quintessential referential relation, then the answering of Ricoeur’s second question becomes problematic.

Reynolds’ “new hermeneutic” follows a specific strategy—a hermeneutic arch. First in the arch is a “naive reading,” followed by a “critical reading,” and finally “hermeneutic comprehension.” Reynolds first provides a narrative about his naive reading of the three domains (often a chronological treatment). This writing is a reconstructed logic rather than, for example, a rich description of autobiographical notes or journal entries.

The next stage of analysis concerns binary oppositions which help to “explain the sense of the work” (p. 47). “With a structural analysis (explanation) a work is analyzed by its form (genre) and its individual difference (style) to other works of the same type. It is also analyzed by the basic oppositions within the work itself” (p. 47). The completion of this stage of explanation is not interpretation. The third stage of analysis then moves on to comprehension. “We have up to this point only dealt with the sense of the text ... Comprehension, the next point on the arch, is concerned with the reference of the text” (p. 47).

What is the relation between a structural analysis and an existential appropriation?

Where Reynolds would have us “clarifying through objective procedures” the hermeneutic situation, for Gadamer (1981) this requires us “to clarify what lies at the basis of our interests as far as possible. Only then are we in a position to understand the statements with which we are concerned, precisely insofar as we recognize our own questions in them” (p. 108). Methodologically, Reynolds’ explanatory process is to analyze binary oppositions which simply “emerge” from the text. What seems missing is a rigorous feminist, Marxian, Freudian, anthropological, or other contemporary discourse on binary oppositions as the backdrop for his choices.

The promise of reflection or grounding of curriculum theory in personal practice also could benefit from more interrogation. For instance, Reynolds affirms the facticity of Pinar’s and Apple’s radical critiques about schooling by simply asserting: “I have certainly witnessed the twelve effects of schooling, that Pinar elaborates on, in students and myself” (p. 212). Similarly, he writes: “I can listen to Apple’s text and realize that what it is saying about schools and teachers is true to my lived experience” (p. 216). Or “Most teachers and students in the schools where I have had experiences do not question, to any great extent, the inherently political nature of their work” (p. 160). Unfortunately, while these

assertions may be personally persuasive, little validation of these claims is provided.

Reynolds writes about the organization of the Pinar text (as with all three texts), that it is “so logical that it is possible to outline the plan” (p. 184). Apple’s text is described in an identical, nonsubstantiated manner: “The organization is so logical that it is possible to outline the overall plan” (p. 200). Having affirmed such immanent, unargued logic, Reynolds remarks, perhaps ironically: “How do such diverse worlds and consequences come from such similar reasoning?”

Reynolds aligns himself with Pinar in claiming that schools educate students to be “desire empty.” After such education, they are offered up into the hands of tyrants. Similarly, having accepted the truth of Apple’s vision, he asserts, “We must, indeed, attempt to change the schools from the dungeons that they are” (p. 216). Reynolds admits to being caught in a “black and white” picture of American education, one that portrays an “abysmal state” (p. 141). In view of Reynolds’ initial notion of voice, we are not party to the depth of self-criticism we might expect. That is, we could expect a more vigorous interrogation of the effects on his analysis of his own gender-specific, cultural, and historical consciousness.

Where I criticize Reynolds for not recognizing himself more fully in the dialectical moments of explanation and comprehension, this does not necessarily diminish his insights into the curricular texts studied. His analyses are provocative and often compelling. In any other study the call for such metacriticism would be less apparent. Such criticisms are made possible by virtue of the openings created by his difficult project.

Reynolds is as close to the reconceptualist family as one can be. Indeed, Pinar wrote in the introduction to Reynolds’ text: “Those of us who struggled during the 1970s to continue to the work of our disciplinary ‘parents’ can take pride in the sophisticated work now being performed by our students” (p. xii).

In order that the tension animating Ricoeur’s hermeneutic be maintained, the criticality that Reynolds boldly introduces must be relentlessly pursued. The struggle for understanding, given the problem of interpretation (what we might consider to be the “newness” of Reynolds’ project), is what Ricoeur calls meta-hermeneutics:

Distanciation from oneself demands that the appropriation of the proposed world offered by the text *passes through* the disappropriation of the self. The critique of *false consciousness* can thus become an integral part of hermeneutics, conferring upon the critique of ideology that meta-hermeneutical dimension which Habermas assigns it. (1981, p. 95).

It is significant that Habermas is completely excluded from Reynolds’ book, this despite the claim to have dealt with Ricoeur’s “most recent” hermeneutic writings. The key omission is the crux of the so-called Habermas-Gadamer Debate.

Reynolds relies on a secondary source to acknowledge a certain “weakness” in Ricoeur’s account of appropriation. To redress this weakness he accepts a dualistic conception: “the world of the text and ontological world respectively.” Reynolds suggests of this “condition of existential split and fault” that “a depth level of understanding [the ontological world]” is possible—one with a “direct

appearance of the self to the self which overcomes the condition of an estranged self" (p. 126).

Reynolds suggests that he can arrive and has arrived at a fundamental agreement with the "Pinar text's vision or projected world." Despite a number of crucial distinctions, he says, "I can find some sense of a collective voice that I can join" (p. 213). But Ricoeur wrote that he was "most critical" of this communion-like understanding of interpretation. As the "principal flaw" of ontologized hermeneutics, there is an "insistence on understanding as accord, as if the consensus which preceded us was something constitutive" (1981, p. 86).

My criticism of Reynolds' text is not intended to condemn its utopian and ideological character. Rather, I hope I may have suggested ways to make it more of what it seeks to be—a way of dwelling more radically in the critique of his own insuperable ideology. When writing about the broader context of communicative competence, Ricoeur proclaimed that if we do not understand "the dialogue that we are, then we cannot make sense of the dialogue that we ought to be" (1986, p. 250).

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Maternal Thinking. Toward a Politics of Peace by Sara Ruddick. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

The story I have told is not the only one about mothers or about peace. Many politics are needed, many wills, many moral and intellectual inventions. A feminist maternal peace politics is one story. It makes a beginning that, like birth itself, reviews hopes as old and at least as indestructible as war. (p. 251)

Ruddick's final statement summarizes much of what I like about *Maternal Thinking*. Her "story" is touched by a humility that can only come through a deep confidence that its message holds truth. The stories of women as mothers—her own stories and those of others, fictional and nonfictional—are skillfully woven throughout. To introduce a concept, to clarify a point, to deepen an